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AN APPROACH TO LITERATURE

AN APPROACH TO LITERATURE

A COLLECTION OF PROSE AND VERSE

WITH ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

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489

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To
MARK VAN DOREN

Contents

GENERAL INTRODUCTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION 9

INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT STORY 25

The Wish Book	*George Milburn*	27
The Luck of Roaring Camp	*Bret Harte*	35
La Mère Sauvage	*Guy de Maupassant*	41
An Episode of War	*Stephen Crane*	44
The Killers	*Ernest Hemingway*	46
The Two Faces	*Henry James*	50
Jerico, Jerico, Jerico	*Andrew Nelson Lytle*	56
Some Like Them Cold	*Ring Lardner*	62
Spotted Horses	*William Faulkner*	70
The Gentleman from San Francisco	*Ivan Bunin*	78
The Three Strangers	*Thomas Hardy*	88
The Washerwoman's Day	*Harriette L. Simpson*	99
The Lottery Ticket	*Anton Chekhov*	101
I'm a Fool	*Sherwood Anderson*	103
Araby	*James Joyce*	108

INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY 113

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Skeptic*	*Vernon L. Parrington*	116
Ring Lardner	*Michael Gold*	119
Guy de Maupassant	*Henry James*	120
Self-Reliance	*Ralph Waldo Emerson*	125
A Note on American Heroes	*Donald Davidson*	133
Culture Versus Colonialism in America	*Herbert Agar*	139
The Idea of Progress	*Charles A. Beard*	148
Society in the Light of Reason	*C. E. Ayres*	154
Culture and Anarchy	*Matthew Arnold*	157
Literature and the Modern World	*T. S. Eliot*	167
Michigan Magic	*John T. Flynn*	171
Why Liberalism is Bankrupt	*Nathaniel Peffer*	178
The Cosmic Whirlpool	*George W. Gray*	186
The Stars	*George Santayana*	192
Of the Resemblance of Children to Their Fathers	*Michel de Montaigne*	193
Old China	*Charles Lamb*	196
Dream Children: A Reverie	*Charles Lamb*	198
On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth	*William Hazlitt*	200
The Ecstatic Moment (From *The Renaissance*)	*Walter Pater*	203
Pulvis et Umbra (From *Memories and Portraits*)	*Robert Louis Stevenson*	205
The Chill of Enthusiasm	*Agnes Repplier*	208

INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL 213

The Scarlet Letter	*Nathaniel Hawthorne*	217

INTRODUCTION TO BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY 309

The Life of Marcus Antonius	*Plutarch*	311

The End of General Gordon	*Lytton Strachey*	331
John Caldwell Calhoun	*Christopher Hollis*	366
The Life of Samuel Johnson (Selection)	*James Boswell*	393
The Significance of the Frontier in American History	*Frederick J. Turner*	405
INTRODUCTION TO POETRY		419
Section I		429
Sir Patrick Spens *		429
Frankie and Johnny *		431
Agincourt	*Michael Drayton*	432
Bonny Barbara Allan		433
How They Brought the Good News	*Robert Browning*	433
La Belle Dame Sans Merci	*John Keats*	434
Section II		435
Edward *		435
Lord Randall		437
The Bonny Earl of Murray		437
My Last Duchess *	*Robert Browning*	437
Mr. Flood's Party	*Edwin Arlington Robinson*	439
The Lady of Shalott	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	440
The True Lover *	*A. E. Housman*	442
Bredon Hill	*A. E. Housman*	443
The Bishop Orders His Tomb	*Robert Browning*	443
The Haystack in the Floods	*William Morris*	445
Section III		446
The Eagle *	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	447
When Icicles Hang by the Wall	*William Shakespeare*	448
Winter (From *The Seasons*)	*James Thomson*	448
To Winter	*William Blake*	448
To Autumn	*John Keats*	449
Ode to Evening	*William Collins*	449
Il Penseroso	*John Milton*	450
The Lotos Eaters	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	452
Mariana	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	452
The Woodpile *	*Robert Frost*	453
To Daffadills	*Robert Herrick*	454
The Grasshopper	*Richard Lovelace*	455
Sonnet 18	*William Shakespeare*	455
Sonnet 73	*William Shakespeare*	455
Sonnet 97	*William Shakespeare*	456
The Wild Swans at Coole *	*William Butler Yeats*	456
The Tree of Man	*A. E. Housman*	457
The Night-Piece to Julia	*Robert Herrick*	457
The Mower to the Glow-Worms	*Andrew Marvell*	457
Song	*Edmund Waller*	458
The Bugle Song *	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	458
Ah, Sunflower	*William Blake*	459
Ode to the West Wind	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	459
The Tiger	*William Blake*	460
Section IV		460
Neutral Tones *	*Thomas Hardy*	460

* All poems marked by an asterisk are analyzed.

Rose Aylmer	*Walter Savage Landor*	461
To a Mouse	*Robert Burns*	462
On the Late Massacre in Piedmont	*John Milton*	462
The Parting	*Michael Drayton*	462
Sonnet 87	*William Shakespeare*	463
To Ianthe *	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	463
Composed upon Westminster Bridge	*William Wordsworth*	464
Storm Over the Alps (From *Childe Harold*)	*George Gordon, Lord Byron*	464
Upon Julia's Clothes	*Robert Herrick*	464
Jenny Kiss'd Me	*Leigh Hunt*	464
On an Invitation to the United States *	*Thomas Hardy*	464
His Books *	*Robert Southey*	464
Fidele's Dirge	*William Shakespeare*	467
Sonnet 31	*William Shakespeare*	467
They Flee From Me	*Sir Thomas Wyatt*	467
Death the Leveler	*James Shirley*	468
At Her Window	*Frederick Locker-Lampson*	468
Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter	*John Crowe Ransom*	468
How Do I Love Thee	*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*	469
Sonnet 104	*William Shakespeare*	469
Section V		469
That the Night Come *	*William Butler Yeats*	469
The Cloud *	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	471
A Song for St. Cecilia's Day	*John Dryden*	473
On Time	*John Milton*	473
Song (From *The Tempest*)	*William Shakespeare*	474
Fair and Fair	*George Peele*	474
The Light of Other Days	*Thomas Moore*	474
Come Down, O Maid	*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*	474
From "Song of Myself"	*Walt Whitman*	475
A Voyage (From *Comedy of Errors*)	*William Shakespeare*	475
Juliet Appears at the Window (From *Romeo and Juliet*)	*William Shakespeare*	476
Tomorrow and Tomorrow (From *Macbeth*)	*William Shakespeare*	476
These Our Actors (From *The Tempest*)	*William Shakespeare*	476
Description of Hell (From *Paradise Lost*)	*John Milton*	476
Flight of the Fiend (From *Paradise Lost*)	*John Milton*	476
How Fra Lippo Lippi Painted the Church (From "Fra Lippo Lippi")	*Robert Browning*	477
Dedication to *Don Juan*	*George Gordon, Lord Byron*	477
The Garden of Proserpine	*Algernon Charles Swinburne*	477
From an *Essay on Criticism*	*Alexander Pope*	478
Portrait of Garrick (From "The Retaliation")	*Oliver Goldsmith*	479
Section VI		479
Ode on Melancholy *	*John Keats*	479
Bright Star *	*John Keats*	481
Kubla Khan: Or a Vision in a Dream	*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*	482
Ode to a Nightingale	*John Keats*	483
A Prayer for My Daughter	*William Butler Yeats*	484
Private Worship	*Mark Van Doren*	485
To a Skylark	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*	485
Song *	*Thomas Carew*	486
The Immortal Part	*A. E. Housman*	488
Experience of the West	*John Peale Bishop*	488

HAMLET SOLILOQUIZES (From *Hamlet*)	*William Shakespeare*	489
MACBETH THINKS OF MURDERING THE KING (From *Macbeth*)	*William Shakespeare*	489
VOYAGES VI	*Hart Crane*	489
SECTION VII		490
THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN *	*Thomas Hardy*	490
SONNET 55	*William Shakespeare*	492
ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD	*Thomas Gray*	492
DOVER BEACH	*Matthew Arnold*	493
TO MARGUERITE	*Matthew Arnold*	494
ODE ON A GRECIAN URN	*John Keats*	494
THE SECULAR MASQUE	*John Dryden*	495
LONDON *	*William Blake*	496
LONDON, 1802 *	*William Wordsworth*	496
THE LIE	*Sir Walter Ralegh*	498
TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE	*Michael Drayton*	499
THE SONG OF THE SHIRT	*Thomas Hood*	500
PRAYER FOR MERCY	*Lincoln Fitzell*	501
HIS PILGRIMAGE	*Sir Walter Ralegh*	501
MUTABILITY (From *The Faerie Queene*)	*Edmund Spenser*	502
ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY	*William Wordsworth*	502
TO HIS COY MISTRESS *	*Andrew Marvell*	504
THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US	*William Wordsworth*	506
SONNET 129	*William Shakespeare*	506
SONNET 146	*William Shakespeare*	507
A PSALM OF LIFE	*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*	507
THE FUNERAL	*John Donne*	507
THE SALUTATION	*Thomas Traherne*	508
THE CHARIOT	*Emily Dickinson*	508
UPON NOTHING	*John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*	508
ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD	*Allen Tate*	509
THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE	*William Shakespeare*	510
INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA		513
HEDDA GABLER	*Henrik Ibsen*	519
R. U. R.	*Karel Čapek*	549
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	*Oscar Wilde*	572
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA	*William Shakespeare*	593
GLOSSARY		629

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General Introduction

WHY do people read? The usual answer to such a question would be: "For information and for amusement." But does this reply really answer the further question: "Why do people read literature?"

People do read *Who's Who,* or *The Boston Cook Book,* or *A History of France* for information But what sort of information is contained in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"? Or what sort in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King?* If any information at all is contained, it surely is not the sort of information that one finds in a book of chemistry. Literature in general does contain, incidentally, much information, especially much historical information; and it is possible to derive from it a great many facts dealing with customs, beliefs, or events of the past; but even the inclusion of this sort of information will hardly in itself justify literature. The sceptical student would be quite right in pointing out that to justify the reading of literature because it accidentally contains history is to miss the point. And he might add that he preferred to take his history straight—not cluttered up with something else.

People do read books and magazines, novels and stories for amusement, of course, but the term *amusement* is entirely too vague. It in itself will not furnish a justification for reading literature either. Many people are able to state quite honestly that they have never found literature very amusing, and presumably might go on to say that if the pleasure derived from reading is the justification of literature, they see no reason why they should not continue to read the confession magazines and westerns which they really enjoy, or, if they don't like to read anything at all, why they should not do something else which gives them pleasure.

Clearly the point here is that there is enjoyment *and* enjoyment—that there are certain pleasures to be had from reading literature which may be obtained in no other way, pleasures which the person who does not know literature will simply have to do without. All this is very true. The reading of good literature is not after all a stodgy and solemn matter. Such reading gives a great deal of pleasure; but the people who argue for literature do not always go about making their points in the best way. For example, to say that literature gives a "higher" pleasure is not very convincing unless one can point out just what this higher pleasure is. Furthermore, such a term, as a term, is unfortunate in its implications of intellectual snobbery.

There is such a snobbery often hidden in the statement that literature is "cultural" or that it is "uplifting." But what is "culture," anyway? There is such a thing; it exists (sometimes, one feels, in spite of its most vocal proponents) but the statement that one should read good literature because it is cultural is simply another way of begging the question.

The appeal to authority evades the question also. One ought to be impressed with the fact that the men whom we remember in all ages have loved literature, and it is an argument of force that the people whom we regard as cultured today are those who know literature. But it is always possible that these people are wrong, after all; and at any rate the sceptical student will be quick to point out that the statement that other people have found literature valuable is not quite the same thing as a clear statement of its value for him. Moreover, if the case for literature is so strong, why can't it be stated in so many words, clearly and positively? It can be stated, but not briefly, for an understanding of the meaning of literature can come only from a study of literature itself.

The questions just raised are taken seriously in the work that follows. We shall try not to quibble or sidestep the real question, or to retreat into some vague statement that literature is "cultural" and that all the "best people" have always enjoyed it. We shall try to answer these questions directly and frankly. They surely deserve no less than this in the preface of a book which frankly proclaims itself an anthology of "literature."

The question of the value of literature is, as a matter of fact, not very hard to answer provided one understands what literature essentially is: that is, what sort of information it gives, and how it is related to, and how it differs from, scientific information. And these points can perhaps best be made by examining a concrete case.

Suppose that we take an incident, a fairly sensational one and yet the sort of thing which appears in the newspapers every day, and compare the various sorts of accounts of it which one finds, including the one contained in the newspaper. A man murders a girl with whom he is in love. How do the various accounts

of this situation differ? What is the purpose of each of them? How do the literary accounts differ from the practical and factual accounts? Where does literature as literature begin?

Let us consider first the report that the coroner would make on the situation; second, the indictment based on the murder; and third, the account which would appear in the daily newspaper.

Coroner's Report

State of Louisiana
Parish of ——

An inquisition taken at the home of John Doe on the 23rd day of January, 1924 before the Coroner of the Parish of ——, upon the view of the body of Porphyria Blank there lying dead. The jurors whose names are hereto subscribed, having sworn to inquire on behalf of the State, when and by what means said Porphyria Blank came to her death, upon their oath do say:

That Porphyria Blank came to her death by strangling, having been strangled to death by one John Doe found at the scene of the crime, in a state of quiet hysteria which precluded him from making any coherent statement.

In testimony whereof the coroner and jurors of this inquest have hereunto subscribed their names on the day and year above written.

Legal Indictment

State of Louisiana
Parish of ——
Twenty-First Judicial
District Court

The Grand Jurors of the State of Louisiana, duly impanelled and sworn, in and for the Parish of —— in the name and by the authority of the said State upon their oath, find and present:

That One John Doe late of the Parish of ——, on the 23rd day of January in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-Four, with force and arms, in the Parish of ——, aforesaid, and within the jurisdiction of the Twenty-First Judicial District Court of Louisiana, for the Parish of ——, did unlawfully, feloniously, with malice aforethought kill and slay one Porphyria Blank by strangulation.

Contrary to the form and the Statutes of the State of Louisiana, in such cases made and provided and against the peace and dignity of the same.

District Attorney for the 21st
Judicial District of Louisiana

Local Girl Found Slain By Rejected Lover

Miss Porphyria Blank, 21, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Blank, of Barton Park, was found strangled this morning in the cottage owned by John Doe, 25, who was apprehended on the scene of the crime by officers Bailey and Hodge. Doe was found holding the body in his arms, and appeared to be in a stupor, his only reply to repeated questioning being, "I killed her because I loved her."

According to members of the Blank family, Doe had paid attentions to Miss Blank for the last several months, though it was strenuously denied that his regard for Miss Blank was returned. Miss Blank's engagement to Mr. Roger Weston was announced last month. Mr. Weston could not be reached for a statement. Mrs. Blank was prostrated by the news of her daughter's death.

The slain girl disappeared last evening at approximately eleven o'clock from a dinner party given at her parents' home in honor of the approaching wedding. The family became alarmed when it was discovered that she was not in her room, and instituted a search for her about midnight. The police, who were promptly notified, in the course of their search knocked at Mr. Doe's cottage, a building some quarter of a mile from the Blank estate, at five in the morning. Receiving no answer, they forced the door and discovered Doe sitting with the dead girl in his lap. She had apparently been strangled; Dr. Reynolds, Assistant Coroner for the parish, who examined the body, stated that, from the condition of the body, death must have occurred at about midnight.

Doe, who has been charged with murder, could give no coherent account of what happened.

All three of these accounts are concerned with facts, and *only* with facts. But they are concerned with the facts as viewed from three different standpoints. The first is a scientific standpoint, the second legal, and the third journalistic. The language of each of these is different, for each of these three professions, in trying to attain the special kind of accuracy it needs in dealing with its subject, has developed a vocabulary and a form of expression of its own. The primary purpose of each of these accounts is to give information. But they are not literature.

These pieces are not literature, and were never intended to be literature; but a literary man, a writer of fiction, poems, plays, or even essays, might take one of these reports as a starting point for his own special kind of work. Assuming that a literary man should write his story, play, or poem about the situation described in these reports, what would he be

trying to do? But it may be clearer to point out first what he would not be trying to do. In the first place, he would not try to give *merely* the facts—or if facts, another kind of facts, a kind which does not appear in the *practical* and *scientific* reports given above. If giving the practical and scientific facts were the primary interest, then he would be going to a great deal of trouble for nothing. A person anxious to arrive at the facts, a person wishing to get a resumé of the news, would not turn to a story or poem based on the incident; he would quite properly turn to his newspaper.

Moreover, almost any poem or story or play based on the incident would probably leave out facts which the man of practical interests would want to know: e. g., the address of the house where the dead girl lived or a technical description of the state of the dead girl's lungs and of the bruises on her throat.

In general, these factual accounts attempt to tell who was murdered and who was the murderer, and when and where and how and why. The man writing a story or poem or play will be interested in going beyond these details. He will be interested in giving a human meaning to the bare facts—especially in dealing with the *why* of the story. This humanizing of the facts is one regard which distinguishes any literary account from the three accounts given above.

Someone may point out, however, that in saying this we are not being quite fair to the newspaper story; that if we had only read further in the newspaper's report of the murder, we should have found some human-interest material. He would go on to point out that the reporter, after having set the facts before us, would then have attempted to make us see and feel a little more vividly the whole situation involved in the murder. Certainly it is quite true that a few days after the murder, we should in all likelihood discover in the newspaper some feature story which would attempt to give us a sense of pathos or terror or sorrow—which would attempt to tell us how the dead girl looked, and what the murderer was thinking about, and how he could have been prevailed upon to kill her, etc., etc.

All this is quite true. Human interest stories do appear in the newspapers, for people are not satisfied to live merely upon a diet of facts. They are hungry for color and humanity; they do want to *feel* as well as to *know*. But this only means that people, as a matter of fact, do have the sort of interest which literature attempts to satisfy—that a great many people who never actually read a poem, for instance, are interested in some of the effects which are best given by poetry. Literature, then, including poetry, is not a mysterious and strange sort of thing which can make its appeal only to a special class; on the other hand, everyone is interested in the artistic account of life as well as in the practical account. The question is not then: "Is literature necessary and important to human beings generally?" But rather: "Are people generally reading good literature or bad?" A "sob sister's" story, *in its intention,* is literature and appeals to a literary interest. We shall see this quite clearly if we compare a typical sob sister's account of the murder with a poem on the same subject; and in making this comparison we shall also see why the former is bad literature and the latter, good. (We might substitute a good story based on the situation for the poem, or for that matter a good play. The point made would be the same.)

The Sob Sister's Story

The dead girl, beautiful and peaceful in death, her scarlet lips slightly parted as though whispering a caress to her lover, her blue eyes gentle and unquestioning as a baby's, lay in the murderer's arms like a child who has been rocked to sleep. Her golden hair falling in profusion about her shoulders all but concealed the cruel welt of red about her throat. The murderer, clutching his still burden to him, like a mother holding an infant, appeared dazed. As the police came in, he rose to meet them, still carrying his precious burden in his arms. The officers had almost to force him to relinquish her. He could not answer questions—could merely clutch the closer to his breast all that remained of the girl he loved better than life, and mutter, "I loved her, I loved her," like a man in a dream. A few hours later when I saw him in the sordid surroundings of the 10th Precinct Station House, so different from the cozy cottage which had been the abode of a tragic love, he was still dry-eyed, though his face wore a ghastly pallor. But when I tried to question him, I became aware of the terrific strain under which he suffered, and he showed all the signs of a man on the verge of hysteria. When I tried to draw from him the motive for the pitiful tragedy, he could only reply, his pale boyish face like a mask: "I killed her, but God didn't say a word, a word."

At last he managed pitifully to say: "I killed her so that she would be mine alone for always!"

And this is the irony of fate! The very greatness of his love made him strangle her. Separated as they were by wealth, social position, and all that that implies, it was only in death that they could be united.

Who are we to pass judgment on such a love?

Compare this account with the following poem:

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

The rain set early in tonight,
  The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
  And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
  She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
  Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
  And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
  And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
  And made her smooth white shoulder bare
And all her yellow hair displaced,
  And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
  Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor,
To set its struggling passion free
  From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
  Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
  For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
  Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
  Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
  Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
  In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
  I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
  I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
  About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
  I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
  The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
  That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
  Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
  And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

Both the sob story and the poem are attempts to get at the motives and feelings of the murderer, and to make the reader respond to the pathos of the situation. Both writers are obviously trying to get inside the murderer's head and make the reader feel what the murderer was feeling. But the methods are different.

In the first place one notices that the poet makes his treatment really dramatic by speaking in the murderer's own person. He imagines, for the purpose of the poem, that he *is* the murderer. He is therefore not bound by the mere historical facts of the situation. Now, the sob sister also is trying to get inside the murderer's personality, but her method is much more clumsy, for she is bound by fact and she cannot identify herself with the man. This is the first and one of the most important advantages which the literary man enjoys.

Looking further, suppose we compare the motive for the murder as given in the two accounts. The sob sister's treatment is much more general, and, consequently, much more crude. It is true that she tries to tell us why the act was performed, but she cannot give us the direct perception, the picture, of the moment when the man looked into Porphyria's eyes and asked himself how his happiness with her could be preserved.

The sob story account is crude because the motive as *stated* in it could be applied to a number of types of men and situations. For example, the murderer, in so far as the sob sister's account goes, might be an unusually sensitive and meditative man or he might be a man of action with uncontrollable impulses to violence; and he might have arrived at his decision after long brooding, or in the heat of a momentary fury. Her account of the motive would fit either case, and a number of other cases as well. The question is this: "Does the reader know better the man in the sob story or the man in the poem?"

There is a difference, moreover, between telling the reader the motive—even between having the murderer tell the motive—and building up the whole situation which led to the act so that the reader feels it, and feels it as credible. Granting that the poem is successful to a degree in accomplishing this, how does the poet do it, and how does the sob sister fail to do it?

In the first place, the poem is better organized for building to a climax. There is the description of the weather, then of the bleakness of the room, and then of the contrast after the girl's entry into the room. All of these serve to indicate why the thought of the girl's leaving again, the return of the previous bleakness and hopelessness, could crystallize the despair into a sudden decision. How is the decision made credible to the reader? The murderer says, "I found a thing to do," in order to preserve the happiness. Here the poet is attempting to reproduce the murderer's own feelings at the time. The murderer will not call it *murder* even to himself, for he is not thinking of it as murder. He is completely obsessed by his desire to keep as it is the present moment of happiness. The statement, "I wound three times," carries further the psychology of the murderer, for it implies the methodical, calm, and apparently reasoned process of his mind. Then he says, "I am quite sure she felt no pain." This more fully indicates the detachment of the lover from ordinary considerations. The whole act, which seems so incredible on the face of it, is made credible by the poet's penetration into the psychology of the murderer. The sob sister is in possession of most of the facts: she remarks that the murderer was dry-eyed, pallid, and strained, and she quotes the speeches that might have served as a key to the understanding of the man. But the arrangement she uses is haphazard.

In the second place, because the sob sister does not have a firm grasp on the nature of the murderer, she feels the need of trying to awaken the reader's emotional response in some other way. She resorts to description that is calculated to pull the heart strings of her readers. She knows that the scene has a pathos about it; but since she has not imaginatively mastered the psychology of the murderer, she has to get her effect by setting up a superficial excitement in using highly colored description. Examination will show that the sob story has more phrases that are ordinarily thought of as being "poetical" than the poem has. For example: "Her scarlet lips parted as though whispering a caress"; "lay in the murderer's arms like a child who has been rocked to sleep"; "clutching his still burden"; "clutch the closer to his breast all that remained of the girl whom he loved better than life"; "like a man in a dream"; "cozy cottage"; "ghastly pallor"; "pitiful tragedy."

The motive of the sob writer in using such language is a literary motive; she is trying to make language convey an emotional reaction—something more than mere facts. But she has to resort to it in such a strained manner because she has only a superficial kind of fact, the historical fact of the situation, to deal with; she hasn't been able to grasp the psychological fact which the poet uses. This means that the effect of the sob story is *sentimental.*

Why is it sentimental? The really grown-up reader grasps the fact (though he may not state it to himself in so many words) that the sob sister has tried to stir his emotions without knowing exactly why they should be stirred *and* without showing exactly what emotions should be stirred. We usually think of the sentimentalist as being a "mushy" person. And so he is. He is having so much pleasure sloshing around in a warm bath of emotions that he doesn't care where the emotions come from or whether they are appropriate to the situation which is supposed to call them forth. For example, take the person who builds up around a cat or a parrot all the profound emotional life usually devoted to another person or a family. We call such a person sentimental. We say he lacks a sense of proportion and is immature. A cat is worth a certain amount of affection, but a cat is, after all, only a cat. Consequently, a really grown-up person, when he talks with a gushy sentimental person, or reads a gushy sentimental poem, far from being seriously stirred, merely feels amusement or disgust. How, for example, does such a person feel when he reads the sob sister's account?

In the paragraph before the last, it was mentioned that the sob sister expresses herself in a *strained* manner. She distrusts, quite rightly, the bare factual outline of the event; she wants to make us feel the pathos. But the only way that she knows is to overwhelm us with pitiable pictures and adjectives. She has little real imagination herself, and consequently knows nothing about leaving something to the imagination of the reader. She does not know that much of the best writing, both in poetry and prose, merely directs the imagination of the reader so that he feels that he has discovered the meaning of the experience for himself, and consequently feels it to be much richer. She does not give, as it were, the reader a map, so that he can follow his own investigation, but instead, hauls him into a sight-seeing bus—a rubberneck bus—and shouts out to him through a megaphone what to look at and what to feel about it.

For example, the poet is treating a situation that does have a tragic and ironical aspect: a beautiful young girl is killed by a young man who loves her very dearly. But the poet has too much respect for the reader to feel it necessary to beat it into his head by direct statement and repetition. The sob sister, however, is constantly using words such as *pitiful* and *tragic,* and in the end must make the statement about "the irony of fate."

All of this has a bearing on the kind of language the sob sister uses. It has been said earlier that the

phrases in the sob story are more like what is ordinarily thought of as "poetical" than the phrases of the poem. Why, then, aren't they really poetical? The reason why they are not can be put in three ways. First, the phrases are "false alarms." Second, they appeal to "stock responses." Third, they are worn-out.

Why should one call them "false alarms?" The phrases are emphatic and exaggerated and try to appeal immediately to deep emotions. But the reader is not ready to believe in those emotions, unless he, like the sob sister, is a sentimentalist. The old story of the boy who cried "Wolf! Wolf!" is relevant here. People grow indifferent to false alarms, and the readers grow indifferent to highly emotive language when they find that the writer is really faking and cannot prove that his signals to deep emotional response are justified. The poet in "Porphyria's Lover" makes a much more guarded use of such language, and the result is that the poet gets a response from the reader. He has prepared for it.

It is easier to touch off the emotional responses that people have been taught they should have. No one knows this better than the advertising man, who tries to connect his product, no matter what it is, with some common feeling. One may see pictures of beautiful young girls on advertisements ranging from soup to cigarettes, or pictures of a mother and child on billboards advertising everything from automobile tires to men's overcoats. The advertising man knows that people have been taught to revere mother love, and so he tries to connect the feeling for his product with the respect in which people hold the idea of maternity. In reality, most truly grown-up people feel that such practice is a trick that vulgarizes and debases the emotion to which the advertiser appeals. Now, in the sob story the writer is trying in the same way to "sell" us on the "pity" of the situation. By her comparisons, she constantly appeals to the reader's pity for an innocent child. Now that sort of pity is not the basic emotion appropriate to the situation. It is too soft and simple, but the sob sister uses it because she believes that it is the thing to which the greatest number of people will respond most readily.

A comparison with the poem will show why this kind of pity is "too soft and simple." In the poem, the fact that the girl is unable to make up her mind to choose whom she really loves is made clear to the reader; as a matter of fact the motive for her murder turns upon this fact. Consequently, the reader's response to the poem contains a judgment on the girl as well as mere pity for her. And if one considers carefully the way in which the poet has told the story from line to line he will notice that the poet has implied a mixture of these two elements. One is made to feel pity—one is made to feel that the lover pities the girl with something of the protective tenderness of an adult for a child. But this tenderness is merely implied—"little throat"—"little head" etc.—"No pain felt she," etc.—the poet does not insist so much on the childlike character of the girl that he turns the reader's response into mere pity.

In discussing the phrases used in the sob story it was said that, in the third place, they are worn-out. Everybody has seen them many times before: Any cheap story of tragedy will have phrases like "ghastly pallor," "scarlet lips parted as though whispering a caress," "like a child who has been rocked to sleep," etc. Such worn-out phrases are called *clichés*. Such phrases at one time were original and embodied a new and vivid description. But their constant use and misuse has robbed them of any sense of freshness or originality. They no longer carry with them any conviction that they represent a real and sharp perception—that is, that the writer has carefully observed the thing he is writing about or has felt anything about it. The use of *clichés,* therefore, is one way the writer takes to appeal to stock responses in his readers. It is the usual method for getting the usual response, and the presence of *clichés* is one of the best indications that the writer has no actual interest in his subject but is avoiding the task of waking the reader's imagination by giving him a new and accurate perception.

For example, consider one of the typical phrases in the sob sister's description: "like a child who has been rocked to sleep." With it compare the lines from "Porphyria's Lover":

> As a shut bud that holds a bee,
> I warily oped her lids.

The first thing that strikes the reader is the newness of the lines quoted from the poem as opposed to the stale quality of that from the sob story. That is, the first is a *cliché* and the second is not. As has been previously pointed out, the sob sister is merely trying to find an easy way to emphasize the pathos of the situation. But the poet was trying to make his comparison carry a more accurate and more particular meaning. What is the picture brought to mind by the poet's comparison? The picture is that of a person who, in an idle moment, has closed between his finger and thumb a blossom into which a bee has entered. Then he cautiously (the poet says *warily*) releases the blossom to look at the bee. He meant no harm to the bee; he was merely playing with it or teasing it. This tells us something about the murderer's mind and about his motive. To have the murderer compare his action in strangling the girl to such an innocent thing

is to indicate that the murderer has lost contact with the mature world of right and wrong and of practical affairs. The fact that such a comparison could occur to the lover—and the poet enforces this point by having the whole poem told in the first person—indicates that he does not feel guilt—that he is really detached from the normal world in which we live.

We may say, then, that in his relatively short piece of writing the poet has given us more penetration into the psychology of the murderer than the writer of the sob story has. Since this penetration impresses us as successful we can more readily surrender ourselves to the emotional effect intended. Furthermore, the poet does not have to strain for his effect, for the pathos or the irony of the situation, because he has a real grasp on the underlying motivation. He can afford to suggest rather than to demand that we react in a certain way. The feeling of experience as a result of the poem is based on understanding; it is not detached from understanding and judgment. Therefore, it is not sentimental, for as we have observed, sentimentality is the enjoyment of emotion for emotion's own sake, separate from intelligence.

We have been contrasting the sob story, which is a crude and unsuccessful attempt at literature, with Browning's poem, which, though not a great poem, represents well enough within its scope what literature does. But the sob story might equally well have been contrasted with a good short story, play, or novel using the same material. Every contrast made between the sob story and the poem can be paralleled by a similar contrast between the sob story and one of the other literary types. For a successful performance in any of the other types depends primarily on the intelligent penetration into the "meaning" of the situation. And here we come to the purpose and ultimate justification of all literature. Literature gives us a picture of life—not the picture that science gives and not a picture that is actually (historically) true, but a picture that is true in the sense that it gives many important things which science from its very nature cannot give; and it presents this picture to us in its most vivid and moving form. We *are* interested in what people think and feel and why they act. The best proof of this is simply the fact that people do read books, do go to moving-picture shows, do read magazines, do talk about each other—and that all these activities are aspects of our interest in literature. Such activities set out to do what literature sets out to do. People do read literature all the time. Unfortunately, much of the literature which they read is bad, bad not because it is not approved of by the high-brow, not because it is not cultural, but bad because it is cheap in its appeal, crude in its handling, and sloppy in its treatment of emotion. The issue then is not whether the student is content to do without literature; it is rather whether he will be content with bad literature rather than good. It is even possible that a person who thinks that he has no taste for or understanding of literature may discover, as he analyzes its content and effect, that it satisfies him in a new and important way. He may have said: "I don't like literature; I like life." But he may discover that literature is a part of life, concentrated and interpreted so that all other parts of his life assume an added interest.

Introduction to Fiction

I

WHAT IS IT?

FICTION, like the essay, drama, poem, sermon, or philosophical treatise, is the presentation of an author's way of looking at life. The writer has certain *ideas* about life, even though he may never bother to state them to himself in general terms: every man has a "philosophy." In addition, and perhaps more importantly, he has certain *feelings* about life which are intimately connected with his ideas. In these two respects he is like all other people, differing from them only in his desire to give his ideas and feelings a form so that they can be communicated to other people. The preacher, the philosopher, or the essayist would perhaps be more interested in the ideas than in the feelings; at least, he would tend to state his ideas in general or abstract terms, even though he might use a number of concrete examples to illustrate his points. But the writer of fiction would incorporate his ideas and feelings about life in the presentation of action rather than in general statement. His purpose, then, is to make the reader observe and share in certain selected and controlled pieces of human experience so that he can share the idea and the feeling which the writer has about life in general —share what might be called the writer's "vision."

It may be said that the poet and the dramatist, for example, have this same purpose. That is true, of course. The difference lies, not in the purpose or impulse, but in the mechanics of presentation. We know that a play is communicated to the audience by dialogue, that is, by conversation, spoken by actors on a stage. We know, too, that poetry, in the first place, doesn't look like prose on the page, and we know that it strikes the ear differently. There are other, and perhaps more fundamental differences among the literary forms, but these will be discussed later. For the moment, it may be said that the fiction writer uses prose to tell a story, which is assumed to be made up.

We have said that fiction, like other types of literature, springs from a desire on the part of the writer to give form to and thereby to communicate his own ideas and feelings about life that he observes or experiences. And it may be added that the impulse that leads people to read fiction is fundamentally the same as the impulse that leads to its creation. That is, the reader wants to understand the ideas and to participate in the feelings prepared for him by the author. But since the writer of fiction does not necessarily state his ideas directly and always incorporates them in action, we may state the matter in this way: the reader wishes to share in the experience prepared for him by the author. This experience involves both idea *and* feeling, belief *and* emotion, and fact *and* interpretation. It is a piece of life given meaning and direction. It feeds our fundamental curiosity about life at the same time that it enables us to extend our experience of life.

This curiosity, however, can take a number of forms, which in the reading of a given piece of fiction are always involved with each other in differing degrees of emphasis, but which can be separated out for the purpose of making our present analysis clearer. These forms of curiosity may be expressed by the questions:

1. What happens next?
2. What are people like?
3. Why did what happened happen?

Suspense

It is probable that the average person, if asked what kind of story or novel he likes, would reply that he likes one that keeps him in suspense, that makes him want to know what will happen next. In other words, he likes a story with a good "plot" and "action." Certain critics, who might be called literary snobs, have tried to persuade themselves and other people that the novel or story that appeals to this first kind of curiosity by building up suspense is a crude or worthless kind of writing and is not artistic. Such critics, as we have said, are literary snobs, and do not realize that suspense is fundamental to all fiction because fiction deals with people in action. The real objection to the usual adventure story is not that it makes use of suspense, but that it lacks other things.

But suspense can work in different ways. Curiosity about the outcome of a piece of fiction, even the simplest curiosity in what is called the "action story" (adventure or detective fiction), depends on other fac-

tors, and by *itself* cannot account for the interest one takes in such a piece of writing. Let us take the case of a detective story, a type of fiction in which the element of plot suspense is very strong. The story is about people, after all. There are the criminal, the detective, and a number of other people. Our interest in the story, our suspense even, depends to a large degree on the way in which these people call our sympathies and antipathies into play. The story is not about X, Y, and Z, but about Archibald Donaldson, the polished and suave gentleman who commits seven murders before detection; Henry Milton, the gruff police inspector who has a softer side after all, and who collects old china; and Isabel Ravenal, the heiress whom the inspector saves from Mr. Donaldson. X, Y, and Z must have certain personalities, and these personalities must react on each other before the reader can feel that they are people; and unless the reader, even for the moment, accepts X, Y, and Z as people, he can have no interest in the story, and the plot cannot provoke his suspense. For instance, the story is like a pin-ball game. Nobody cares, in general, whether a small metal ball falls into a hole in a polished board. We care only when some value can be attached to the fact: when we are pleased with our own skill, are concerned with beating another person, or have some money bet on the event. We assign some value to placing the metal ball in a particular hole when we play the pin-ball game; and so we assign some value to the behavior of X, Y, and Z when we accept them as people. We like or dislike them. They violate or support our ideas about human conduct and about right and wrong. That an interest in mere plot cannot exist by itself, even in the detective story, is amply illustrated by the fact that the most successful and popular writers of detective fiction have a decided gift for characterization and can make the reader believe, for the moment anyway, in their people. Take, for instance, Conan Doyle, Dashiell Hammett, and Rufus King.

But the interest the reader has in the characters of a story is not the kind of interest that can be satisfied with a mere description such as would be given in a character sketch in an essay, for a story is an account of characters in action. The characters are doing something, and the reader wants to know the *why* as well as the *what* of the affair. This applies even in cases of the purest action story. For instance, there is our detective story. If the matter of the villain's motive is not explained on acceptable grounds, the reader feels cheated, and all the excitement of the unraveling of the plot and the detection of the criminal cannot fully compensate for this defect. The writer of detective fiction who makes his criminal a mere lunatic has cheated the reader by avoiding the problem of motive. A good plot does not exist by itself, but as a result of the relationship of characters to each other. Therefore, the motivation of a character in a story—one of answers to the question *why*—is of fundamental importance.

We can, however, go a step farther. Characters not only act, but are acted upon. We all know that people change with time and experience. A young man growing older changes. We may feel that whatever he becomes was not entirely a new creation, but was always inherent in his character. Circumstances, to which he himself has probably contributed something, have brought about changes in his personality. The degree to which he influenced his own development may be great or small. We know how physical weaklings have, by force of will, made themselves, as Theodore Roosevelt did, into vigorous and effective men; but we also know how vigorous and effective men have been ruined by circumstances apparently beyond their control. One of the factors of most constant interest in fiction is this relation of character to event. A character in a story does something to fulfil some motive, but in doing so he starts a train of action; then, this train of action has certain effects on him. At the end of the story or novel he may be a very different man from the man at the beginning. Not only his external fortunes in the world may have changed, but his internal make-up may have changed. Our curiosity about this relation of character and event and about the changes within a man gives rise to one of the most abiding forms of suspense in fiction—or, for that matter, in drama. And one of the greatest tests of a fiction writer's skill is the way in which he handles this matter of character development.

But all pieces of fiction, even pieces of good fiction, do not emphasize character development. It is a rare and difficult achievement for a writer. But all writers of fiction, even the most inexpert or the most crude and sensational, have some concern with the other relationships between action and character. These relationships are so intimate and so complicated that we may be justified in saying that action and character are two aspects of a larger whole which we call a piece of fiction. Perhaps we can arrive at a better understanding of this larger whole, however, by trying to define the one aspect of *plot*.

Plot

Plot, we said, provokes the curiosity about what happens next and provides the answer to the question. A plot is what happens; a plot is the action. At least, speaking loosely, we define it in that way. But is any

action, or anything that happens, a plot? Looking from the window of a moving train at night we see, under a streetlamp, a man strike a woman with his fist, so that she falls to the pavement. That is a piece of action. But it is only a *piece* of action and not a full action, in the sense that a story or a novel possesses an action. We see, in a moment before the motion of the train draws us away, the expression on the two faces, and then the descending blow, and the woman's fall. We experience a feeling of horror at the random brutality. But when the horror passes we may begin to try to reconstruct the series of actions leading up to the concluding action of the blow. In other words, we try to explain away the random and meaningless nature of what we saw from the train window and try to put it into a comprehensible form, or at least into a form that we can contemplate as a progression of events, for such an arrangement of events is a step toward making something comprehensible. We are struck by horror. We wonder that such a thing could happen. Then we try to relate the thing that happened to the previous notion we have had of the way the world is operated; in other words, as critics are fond of putting it, we try to "interpret" life. But we try, in so far as we are artists, fiction writers, for instance, to interpret it without robbing it of its power to give a direct experience—the feeling of something happening in real life. Therefore, we put our interpretation into a plot, or action, instead of into some abstract statement about life.

Unity

Our plot, or action, differs, then, from the random piece of life seen from the train window—from what critics sometimes call a "mere slice of life"—by being a unit. Unity, however, is not by any means mere simplicity. To take the view that mere simplicity is unity would be like saying that an amoeba is more unified than a man. A piece of fiction may have many parts and still be unified if the parts have *adequate* relations. This is an important point in the discussion of fiction, and a point to which we shall recur in a number of connections, especially in discussing some of the stories included in this volume. It should be clear enough that the unity of a story such as "The Wish Book" is gained by methods very different from those which give us the unity of "The Gentlemen from San Francisco" or "Araby." For the present, however, we can say that the action of fiction is different from the scene picked up from the moving train, or from most things we observe in life, by reason of its unity or completeness. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. That is, we begin at a point where we can pick up all the pertinent facts, and we end at a point where we feel that something has been accomplished with those facts. For instance, the story of Porphyria as given in the poem by Browning has a quality of completeness not found in the legal indictment or the newspaper report of the incident.

Logic

One thing closely associated with this idea of unity, or completeness, in fiction is the idea of *logic,* which in addition helps to distinguish the action of fiction from the piece of action in life. It has been said that truth is stranger than fiction; this is but one way of saying that life sometimes appears to be more illogical than fiction. Very often in real life we see people do things for motives which we cannot understand, but a novelist whose characters behave without motivation which we can understand does not satisfy us. This logic of fiction may take many forms and all forms may not be found in a single piece of fiction, but some kind of logic does appear in every piece of fiction that satisfies us. We may ask ourselves in reading a story whether the characters behave with a fitting degree of probability. That is one way of asking whether they are "real."

The logic of the action of a piece of fiction obviously depends on the kind of people involved and the kind of situation in which they are originally placed. The writer asks himself: "How will my character X act in this original situation?" Then he tries to answer the question by using his imagination. But X is not alone in the story, and so the writer has to ask how Y will act as soon as X has performed his first action. And then there is character Z to be considered. But something has been neglected. The instant X has performed his first action, the general situation has changed, and X, Y, and Z are living in a new world to which they have to be adapted and to which they will respond in new ways. The writer's task is to explore these combinations, and the logic of his story is the line he finds that will take him through to a conclusion. It should be quite clear that the story of X, Y, and Z, those characters being given for a start, might result in a marriage in one given set of original circumstances, and in a murder in another set of circumstances. Or if we put the characters A, B, and C in either of these two sets of circumstances, we have two new stories. For instance, if a slightly different young man were put in the place of Porphyria's lover, he might not murder Porphyria because her social position and weakness of will had ruined their love, but would set himself to become rich in order to break into that privileged circle; or would join the Socialist Party to reform the injustices of society; or would become a

great scientist, not because he was ambitious to do so, but because work helped him to forget. Change the conception of the character very slightly and a new story results; a new "logic" has been discovered, a new kind of cause-and-effect, a new relation between the characters, and between the characters and the original situation. There is a new action which appears logical because we know what causes what; a good writer of fiction usually tries to make us feel that with the given circumstances and people things had to come out to his conclusion and that the piece of fiction, therefore, possesses inevitability.

We must not understand the inevitability of fiction (or drama) to be absolute, however. The elements of accident and coincidence are always present to a degree and usually to a very high degree. For all practical purposes, the fact that certain characters are in a certain situation at the beginning of a piece of fiction may generally be taken to be the result of accident or coincidence. The character X goes to Atlantic City for a vacation and meets Y. The story has started with a preliminary coincidence, for there is no "inevitability" in the fact that X and Y are in Atlantic City on May 12, 1923, at ten o'clock in the morning when X meets Y. In the work of some writers the margin of accident or coincidence is very large, but even in such cases we shall find that the writer, if successful, has organized his action so that the end depends upon the beginning. He tries to persuade the reader, and if successful does persuade him, that probability has not been violated and that the thistle has not brought forth figs. Even a very cynical writer who believes that accident governs our lives and whose fiction is based on this idea will still refrain from violating the conception he gives us of his characters; he merely tends to separate the "logic of events" from the "logic of character."

Interpretation

We have been saying that the action of fiction differs from most observed events in real life by unity, completeness, and a more apparent logic in characters and events. It differs in one other important respect: it represents an *interpretation*. A fiction writer, even if he should want to do so, could not give his reader a "slice of life." He can only give his own version, which is colored by a thousand things about his own interests, race, history, and personality. It is a platitude that no two people see a thing exactly alike. Reading the testimony of witnesses in almost any trial will show how differently people see even the simplest facts. But the divergence is multiplied infinitely when we get beyond simple facts into a field where emotions and ideas come into play.

Let us recall the man's striking the woman under the streetlamp, the event seen from the moving train. A moving picture camera might record the scene. In the film the expression on the man's face is one of the utmost savagery. But suppose that, at the same instant, another camera from another angle is recording the incident. From that angle the light from the streetlamp falls differently, and so the man's face wears an expression of horror. Which film are we to believe? The camera does not lie, but what has the camera seen? If such a difference can exist between the two film versions, a difference that really gives two separate interpretations of the event, then consider how different two reports by people on the train might be. Let us suppose, then, that the two spectators determined to write short stories based on the incident. They must create characters; they must give those characters, the man and the woman, a history; they must define a relationship that will be fulfilled, somehow, by that last blow under the streetlamp and must explain the motivation of the characters; they must do all these things and many more to make a story. In short, they must interpret the incident. And so one of them writes a story demonstrating the curse of the Demon Rum, and another writes a story of degradation of a good but simple man by a vain and unfaithful wife whom he, at last in horror at his own ruin, strikes down under the streetlamp on a deserted corner.

In these two hypothetical stories both writers start from the same scene as a stimulus, and the stories are worlds apart. Think, therefore, of the infinite difference possible when our two hypothetical writers do not even start from the same scene, but range over their private observations and experiences, being guided in a choice by all the subtle factors of temperament and training. A writer chooses his material in accordance with these factors, but this is another way of saying that he chooses material that he can, or thinks he can, interpret in a way congenial to his general view of life and his general set of values. For behind every piece of fiction is a special feeling about life, a special view of life, and a special set of values. All of these things constitute the interpretation.

A piece of action in real life does not have a point until we put one into it, until we react emotionally to it and reason about it; but we always feel that the action of fiction must have a point if it is to satisfy us. Usually the writer does not go so far as to state in the course of his narrative what his point is; he is not like a preacher who tells a story merely to make a moral clear. He does not even make his points as explicitly as does the essayist. And usually

the reader does not bother to make a complete statement of the point of the story, that is, the *theme*. He simply absorbs it with the general feeling he has about the story, but it nevertheless affects him.

The theme of a story or novel may be obvious in different degrees. For instance, two stories in the present collection, "The Washerwoman's Day" and "The Gentleman from San Francisco" have the same general theme, the theme of social justice In the first the theme never reaches a statement, whereas in the second it is stated quite fully. The first writer aims at a subtlety of effect; the second, at a force of effect. There are some critics who would discredit the second type of effect in so far as theme is concerned by claiming that the indirect presentation of a fictional theme is more artistic. But we may say that a piece of fiction is artistic when it succeeds in moving us so that we feel the force of the emotion in it and feel that its theme is justified by the circumstances of the situation and the characters. Now, it cannot be stated as an absolute fact that the indirect presentation of theme is *necessarily* superior in an artistic sense to the direct method employed in "The Gentleman from San Francisco," which is probably a very great story. It can only be said that, since there are relatively a small number of general themes and ideas, a writer who constantly employs the direct method will tend to become monotonous. But since circumstances and people available to fiction are infinite in number and since the immediate interest of the reader is always in these factors, the variety in fiction employing the indirect method for presentation of theme is much more easy to achieve. For instance, though "The Washerwoman's Day" and "The Gentleman from San Francisco" both deal with the theme of social justice, it will be interesting to observe how different they are both in method and final effect. The direct method is most successful when the connection between the theme and the action is very simple, obvious, and powerful as in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" and when the whole implication seems so unavoidable that it stirs our emotional response. But the reader objects when the writer seems to be using the art of fiction for a disguise for preaching. In previous pages we have seen that the writer of fiction undertakes to express his characters in action, not in mere description; in the same way, he undertakes to express his theme through the action of these characters—not in some abstract proposition about life. When the writer falls into this error, he usually does so because he tends to make the elements of life as given in his fiction too simple by making them fit his special point of preaching. An adult reader finds it impossible to read the Pollyanna books because too much has been left out and too much has been made simple. We know that cheerfulness doesn't solve all our problems. In the second place, the reader also objects when he feels that the writer is using the art of fiction for the presentation of trivial themes. An adult reader could not be interested in fiction written to prove that the United States should not go off the gold standard, for that would be, for the purposes of fiction, a trivial theme. The problem of the gold standard is extremely important as an economic and political issue, but *as a theme* for fiction it does not involve any essential element of human nature. Fiction that commits the error of oversimplification *or* of triviality of theme is generally called *propaganda fiction* and may be said to be bad fiction. But bad fiction may be effective propaganda, as in the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, just as an immoral action may be effective politics.

It is not to be assumed, however, that good fiction has no theme or idea and is simply "art for art's sake." All fiction involves a certain theme, or idea, and emphasizes certain interpretations and values. In this connection one may read several essays in this collection that treat of fiction writers who are represented here: Michael Gold on Ring Lardner, Henry James on de Maupassant, and Vernon L. Parrington on Nathaniel Hawthorne These essays, all by well-known critics, two of whom are also writers of fiction, will illustrate the great complication of the subject. But for the present we may say that a piece of fiction ceases to be propaganda when the skill of the writer makes us feel the people as real and when he does not sacrifice their reality to prove a point. Furthermore, a writer who wishes to emphasize the idea of his story will do well not to exaggerate his characters and incidents to a point where they lose the effect of typical humanity. The "Hun" in moving pictures and stories produced during the World War now strikes us as ridiculous because it was an exaggerated figure drained of any typical human qualities. If we read one of those stories now, we can scarcely believe that they were ever taken with any degree of seriousness.

Belief

Another question arises in connection with the idea, or theme, or values of a piece of fiction. Suppose that the idea or the values involved in a piece of fiction do not agree with those of the reader. Can he still enjoy the fiction in question? And if so, to what degree? This, again, is a very complicated question, and we cannot attempt a complete statement that will solve it. But we know from experience that the same person can enjoy the novels

of Walter Scott, which are based on a romantic, simple, and chivalric idea of human conduct, and the stories of de Maupassant, which, though they may not be easily defined as Henry James defines them in his essay in this book, are based on an ironical and realistic view of life. Scott's heroes are very heroic and are suitably rewarded. De Maupassant has no heroes in this sense, and in his stories ironical accident plays a more important part than justice. Perhaps we can say that, in so far as the themes and values of fiction are concerned, our reading is often provisional and experimental. If the fiction is good enough—if the characters are real, the action convincing, and the idea serious—we are prepared to experience the world as the writer conceives it to be. We may say to ourselves: "Well, perhaps the world is like this after all, and we shall see." But we do demand that the writer's themes shall not be trivial and absurd.

We have concluded that the action of fiction is different from the random piece of action given us by life in that it (1) is unified and complete, (2) has a certain logic of organization, and (3) embodies an interpretation. Indeed, each of these things implies the others, for there cannot be unity in fiction without a logic of organization, for instance; or a logical organization that is not based, to a degree at least, on some interpretation. Furthermore, we have seen that the discussion of such a thing as the plot or action of a piece of fiction immediately involves the writer's conception of his characters and theme. Earlier in this essay it was said that these things, action, character, and theme, are aspects of a unity which we call the novel or story. The story or the novel gives an effect, an experience; and that experience is what we finally value in fiction.

The Total Experience Which Fiction Gives

We shall not be able to define the exact nature of that experience here. A great body of criticism has been written on that point without results that are finally clear and satisfactory. But we may make several points that may help to an understanding.

In the first place, the experience in question is not merely the effect of the reader's effort to sympathize with a character and go through his experiences. We can easily show that this is true. We frequently hear some one say: "When I read that story I simply lived through everything with the character Jane, who was so nice, and when she died at the end I felt so bad." We may observe two very peculiar things about this statement, which we always take to be praise of a novel or story. First, the speaker has made a distinction, unconsciously perhaps, between living through things with Jane and the feelings after Jane's death. So the experience of the story is not merely the sympathetic experience shared with a character; the reader has an experience of his own which is different. Second, the speaker felt "so bad" when Jane died at the end of the book, but this feeling bad is taken to be praise of the book. The speaker is just as likely to add: "You ought to read it too." We know that the speaker does not enjoy the death of a person like Jane in real life, but we know that the speaker enjoyed feeling bad about the death of the nice Jane in the book. So what was enjoyed was not the fact of Jane's death, but a total effect of the story which involved the death of Jane. We know that people pay money for books with unhappy endings; and we also know that people do not pay money to be tortured. The book gives something which the mere facts of the conclusion do not give.

In the second place, we know that a good book can be read over again with equal or added enjoyment. People have favorite books to which they return again and again. Why? They know the ending and so are not held by the desire to know how things will come out. They know what the characters are like, and so are not curious about them. They know what the descriptive passages present. They know what the writer's main idea is. These things might easily be obtained in one or two careful readings. It is not a desire to satisfy any curiosity, or to gain any information, that leads them back to the story or novel. No, it is a desire to have again the experience the story or novel can give—the complicated effect that belongs to that single story or novel, and to it alone. It makes the reader feel a certain way; it gives him an emotional experience; and he knows that by coming back to this piece of fiction he can regain that experience.

Setting

The previous discussion has omitted mention of one important factor in fiction, but the importance of this factor cannot readily be grasped until one understands something of the relationships of action, character, theme, etc. This factor is the setting or background. A story occurs in a certain place. People are interested in places; they go sightseeing and travel long distances simply to look at a place. Mere description, the presentation of a place, provokes interest; and so the reader of a piece of fiction does bring to the writer a kind of general interest in places. He has a mild curiosity about the appearance of the place—the fields, rooms, streets, alleys, woods—in which a story is laid.

But places provoke feelings in us. If we are not

preoccupied with something else, the sight of a dingy alley affects us very differently from the sight of a green field, a luxurious room, or a tropical jungle. Aside from the mere facts of ugliness or beauty in a scene, we have, in addition, certain associations, usually very complicated ones, built up about various places. We are depressed by the dingy alley, not only because it is ugly, but because with it we associate, perhaps not always consciously, the poverty, misery, viciousness, and struggle of human beings who are forced to live under such conditions. A scene of a tropical jungle, for instance, a scene from one of Joseph Conrad's novels, might involve an even more complicated analysis: the pleasure in the beauty of the colors and forms of vegetation, the discomfort of the humidity, heat, and insects, the fear of danger, etc. We may say, then, that our reaction to a place is not merely based on the way it looks, but on the potentialities of action suggested by it.

Furthermore, even though we may believe that human beings are very much alike from one place to another and that they are motivated by the same basic impulses—hate, love, avarice, pride, etc.—we are also aware of differences in the kind of life that is led from place to place. People have different social values, customs, manners, and occupations. There are some stories, therefore, that belong to certain settings, and not to others. Other pieces of fiction depend for a part of their effect on the relation of people to a place, *The Return of the Native,* by Thomas Hardy, for instance; and in such cases the presentation of setting assumes an unusual importance. But even in the more ordinary cases, the skill of the writer in giving the setting is important, because the reader, if he accepts as credible the setting of a story—if the description is so good that he really sees the things described—is prepared to take the slightly more difficult step of believing in the reality of the characters.

Atmosphere

Some writers of fiction, without actually confusing the two terms, *setting* and *atmosphere,* perhaps make the connection between them more exclusive than can be justified by the analysis of actual pieces of fiction. There is, however, an intimate if not exclusive connection that is of considerable importance in the effect a given story or novel makes on the reader. *Atmosphere* is a very vague term. It is, of course, a metaphor for a feeling or impression which we cannot, perhaps, readily attach to some tangible cause. We say that an old farmhouse set among large maples, on a green lawn, has "an atmosphere of peace." We say that a mountain valley with great boulders covered by lichen, and a cataract shadowed by tall cedars, has a "romantic atmosphere." What we mean is that the house, by reason of the look of quietness and by reason of a number of pleasant associations we have with routine of the kind of life lived there, stirs a certain reaction in us which we do not attach to any single incident or object, but generally to the whole scene. Or we mean that the mountain valley, which we think has a romantic atmosphere, stirs in us a restlessness and expectation which we cannot definitely explain.

In the same way we may say that the setting of a story contributes to defining its atmosphere. For instance, the description at the beginning of "The Fall of the House of Usher," by Poe, contributes to the atmosphere of the story, and the description of Egdon Heath in the early pages of *The Return of the Native,* by Hardy, gives a start to the atmosphere or feeling that surrounds the subsequent story. But it is a mistake to say that atmosphere of fiction depends on the setting alone. The setting is merely one factor that may contribute to the atmosphere. For instance, the rhythm of the sentences helps to establish the general feeling. The movement may be long and swinging, or short and clipped, strongly or weakly marked, simple or complicated, lulling or exciting, etc.; and this factor will always contribute very positively, although the reader may not be conscious of it, to the atmosphere. Or further, the kind of vocabulary and the kind of figures of speech help define the kind of atmosphere, for by these factors the writer endeavors to control the kind of associations that come to the reader's mind; and, as we have said, the atmosphere of a place or a piece of fiction derives very largely from the associations and suggestions connected with it. But atmosphere also depends on character and action. In short, we may say that the atmosphere of fiction is the pervasive, general feeling, generated by a number of factors (setting, character, action, and style) that is characteristic of a given story or novel. Every piece of successful fiction has its own special atmosphere, and it is a mistake to speak as if the term were confined to those stories or novels in which the writer depends heavily on description to maintain this feeling.

II

HOW IS FICTION MADE?

We have been discussing something of the nature of fiction in general and its relation to some of the other literary forms, but we have not discussed what

might be called *the method of fiction.* It will perhaps be more instructive to try to put ourselves in the place of a writer who is setting out to compose a piece of fiction than to think of ourselves as breaking up a piece of fiction already composed. For it must always be remembered that a good piece of fiction—like the poem or drama, in addition—can better be compared to a plant that *grows* than to an object that is *made.* It is true that the actual process that goes on in the head of a good writer as he works at a piece of fiction may be very different from time to time and from writer to writer. One may start from a fragment of a situation in which the characters are very vague, and may gradually develop them from the hints he has in the situation. Another may start from a character which has struck his imagination. Another, like Hawthorne in many of his stories, may get his start from some general idea which means a great deal to him, and the story may develop from his attempt to understand how the idea would work out in human experience. One cannot necessarily tell from the given piece of fiction how the writer got started in its creation. But despite the differences possible in the beginning of the process, it may be said that all successful fiction represents a growth rather than a *mere* construction. There are many bad pieces of fiction—the magazines are full of them—that fulfil all the rules in the textbooks for constructing stories. These pieces are bad because they are nothing more than constructions that the reader can predict. He picks up the magazine and knows what kind of story or novel it will have in it. There is what might be called a *formula* of the action and characters. The writer has concerned himself with the mere construction of his story but has not concerned himself with the emotional effect of the end. In such pieces of fiction there is no effect; when the reading is over, the story is over completely. The story is manufactured, as it were, and is not organic. But all writers have to use their intelligence while creating a piece of fiction; the process of writing is a process of trial and error in the mind of the writer, all of this process being dominated by a constant awareness of the final effect he wishes to produce on the reader. To produce this effect the writer must consider adapting his means to his end. For instance, he may experiment with various ways of getting an essential bit of information over to the reader: shall he use a direct statement of summary; shall he put the information into the mouth of a character; shall he have a letter found under a carpet? In larger aspects of his work he will be concerned with the proportion to be occupied by various parts and characters and by the relation of the various parts and characters to each other and to the main intention. But he cannot make a blue print of his story as a beginning; when he is able to make a blue print, as it were, he has finished the major work on his fiction, for he has felt his way imaginatively to his end. And some writers, of course, do not finish this process until their novel or story is finished. When the work is finished, if it is successful, we can say that it is organic, that its parts all contribute toward the final emotion of the story. The process of its creation was a growth, as we have said, a kind of imaginative growth; but after the story is finished we can speak of its structure, or construction, just as we speak of the structure of a plant, which likewise is the product of growth. And in both cases, that of the story and that of the plant, we feel that we appreciate more fully the mystery of the growth if we understand as well as we can the structure; that is, the function performed by the various parts and their relation to each other and to the whole.

To study some of the problems of structure let us assume that a writer of fiction is in command of the facts of the Porphyria murder, and feels that it is good material for fiction. It might appeal to him for a variety of different reasons, depending on his temperament, training, beliefs, etc. He might, as we have already pointed out previously, be interested first because of the paradox implied by the murderer's statement that he killed the girl because he loved her; or, for instance, he might be interested first because he saw the murder as a result of a bad social system as Theodore Dreiser saw the murder of the girl in his *An American Tragedy.* In any case, many of the problems of method, of getting the material into shape, would remain the same. Furthermore, one writer might see the short story as the proper form, and another might see the novel as the proper form for the work to take. The choice of form would depend on a number of factors, but in either case many of the problems of method would be the same. Our purpose, therefore, shall be to define some of the problems of method that arise in writing or criticizing any piece of fiction, no matter what led the writer to choose either the subject or form.

Selectivity

Let us assume, then, that our hypothetical writer, in command of the facts of the death of Porphyria, sets out to use them as the basis of a piece of fiction. As we have already said, a given piece of fiction, in so far as it is successful, is a unity. It has, as we have also said, a logic, and therefore, a pattern in which each thing is related to the whole intention the writer has. But this unity, this logic, this pattern, does not

appear in the material just as it happens, and it does not appear, usually or necessarily, in what the writer knows about the event or can imagine about it. The writer has to develop this unity and pattern for his fiction. It is easy to realize the infinite amount of material which the writer has at his disposal if he choses to base a story on Porphyria's death. There is the whole life of Porphyria, her home surroundings, her family, how she met her lover who later kills her, what she felt and thought about him at different times, etc. And then, there is the lover, his history, surroundings, education, etc. There is a tremendous background of situation, character, and incident open to the writer. It is not necessary that he have factual information about all these things, for since he is a fiction writer he can draw on his imagination to supply him with all these things, and they are therefore potential for the story. It is probable that, if he is a serious writer, he will think a great deal along these lines and try to reconstruct for himself as completely as possible the lives of the people involved, even though he knows that he will actually use in his fiction a small amount of the material that comes to him. He must select certain things that will serve to convey the story and will also serve the purpose of making the reader imaginatively aware of things that are not told. In reading a book we often feel that we know what kind of childhood a character must have had or know how the character would behave in a situation that is never actually given in the book. We feel those things because the writer has chosen the significant parts of the vast amount of material that was potential for him. His selectivity has been successful.

Focus

But selectivity is successful only if it is in accordance with whatever principle of unity and pattern the writer is using. Therefore we must consider some of the ways in which a writer may arrive at his unity and pattern. He must find as it were, some center of gravity for the large amount of material that is to be organized—some principles that will give it shape. A writer often centers his fiction on some character, though, of course, he may treat a number of other related characters in his story or novel. In the case of Porphyria and her lover a decision must be made: whose story is it? Browning, in his poem, only tells the lover's story. But it would be quite possible to treat the whole matter with Porphyria dominant. Or one might go farther and make the judge, for instance, who finally tries the murderer, the dominant character, basing the interest on some problem the trial raises in the mind of the judge.

But fiction exists in which we can scarcely say that this or that character is dominant and so provides a kind of unity. In such cases,—usually novels to be sure, Tolstoi's *War and Peace* or Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint,* for example—no one character is dominant, though many characters are fully presented and have independent stories of their own. But in this collection there is one short story of this nature, "The Wish Book," by George Milburn, which is treated in some detail in the analysis accompanying it. But we may undertake at present a general statement about the "center of gravity" of such pieces of fiction.

That statement will mean that we must recall to mind the discussion earlier in this section of theme in fiction. All fiction, by reason of the very fact that it is the product of a human mind and not a product of the infinitely complicated and often apparently accidental forces of nature and society, has a theme, even though in many cases, as has been said, the theme is only implied and not stated directly. That is, the theme may appear only in terms of the plot and character. Every story, in other words, is an interpretation of material. But theme is always present and gives any story its underlying point. In some cases, however, the total unity of the story or novel may be dictated by the theme, and in such cases the theme takes on an added importance in the construction of the piece by reason of the burden the writer puts on it. Then, not the presence of a dominant character, and perhaps not even complications of plot, but the reference of the various parts of the story to the theme itself binds those parts together and makes an artistic unit, an organic unit.

A story in this collection, "The Gentleman from San Francisco," illustrates the general point. Even though the story does have a dominant character, we know astonishingly little about this character in the way in which we ordinarily know a character in fiction. For instance, we do not even know his name; he is only the "gentleman from San Francisco," and nothing more. With the exception of one apparently irrelevant piece of information—the information we gain from the short scene when he, dressing for dinner the night of his death, sits on the bed and says, "This is terrible"—everything we know about him is directed toward making him stand in our minds as the representative of a type, or class, the symbol of arrogant, rapacious, self-indulgent, and brutal capitalism. There are many other people in the story; his family, the hired lovers on the ship, the captain, the old women on Capri, the hotel manager, the bell boy and the chambermaids in the hotel, the hack driver who takes the corpse of the gentleman

to the boat, the gypsy dancers, the lobster fisherman, and the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, dead 2000 years. With the possible exception of the wife and daughter, who bear a somewhat more intimate relation to him, no one of these characters has any bearing on the gentleman's fate in the ordinary way that characters affect each other in fiction. In the plot sense, that is, in the relations that develop an action, none of these characters is of any importance. In almost all fiction there are some minor characters who merely give a kind of background for the main interest, but in this story a very large part is filled with such characters. They hold their places in the story, however, not because they are merely part of the furniture of the story, but because they bear a definite relation to the total effect of the story, and consequently to the gentleman. But they are importantly related to him only in so far as he expresses the theme of the story. They are the creatures dominated by the capitalistic system the gentleman represents; and they give to that system hatred or servility as the case may be while they snatch what benefits come their way or bear their miseries. Even the hired lovers on the ship, to whom he never speaks, bear a relation to the gentleman, for their degradation is the result of the system he symbolizes. And the relation of the Emperor Tiberius is pointed out quite definitely. We may say, then, that the parts of this story are unified by the theme.

All of this means that the writer has to determine, as he approaches the unorganized mass of material which real life or his imagination supplies to him, what will enable him to organize that material. He must ask himself, or at least must answer for himself, the question: "Whose story is it?" But perhaps there is no dominant character, no person who can unify the material; perhaps no one character, or even two characters, will emerge as strong enough to carry the weight of interest. Then he must find his answer, if there is to be a story at all, in the central feeling and conviction, the theme, that must therefore become, not one of the unifying forces as in most fiction, but the dominant unifying force, the thing that brings the material to a focus. Therefore, if the writer must ask and answer such questions in the process of composing his work, we, the critics trying to understand his work, can begin our investigation no better than by asking ourselves the same questions about it.

But at this point in the discussion an objection may be raised. A reader might say that there are two other ways in which the materials of fiction may be unified: plot and atmosphere. This is, of course, true within certain limits. We have said previously that plot is an aspect of a unity which we call a piece of fiction. Plot is "what happens." But in the sense of fiction "what happens" achieves its unity by reason of its logic, the principle that connects one thing to another. This logic may be of two kinds, though both kinds always exist to some degree in every piece of fiction. First there is the internal logic of the plot, the logic of cause-and-effect, the fact that one thing that happens causes another to happen. This first type of fictional logic derives from character: people behave in certain ways under certain stimuli. Second, there is the logic that leads us to feel that the parts of a story, though not connected perhaps in the relations of cause-and-effect, yet belong in the same story because of their relation to the total interpretation and to emotional effect. This second type of logic derives from theme: the writer has his point which he reads into the material. Both types of logic which make for unity of plot, therefore, are derivative from something else; the plot then may be taken as the expression of something more fundamental: an idea.

Let us look at the matter in another way. We are accustomed to speak of a "closely knit plot." For instance, in the present collection it is obvious that the plot of "The Two Faces" is more "closely knit" than that of "The Gentleman from San Francisco." But, in judging the stories as a whole, are we entitled to say that "The Two Faces" is more unified than "The Gentleman from San Francisco?" Probably not. As a matter of fact, each of these stories carries with it a very definite and very powerful effect, and in so far as a piece of fiction—novel or short story—can do this it may be said to achieve its proper unity.

But what of atmosphere? For it is sometimes said that atmosphere may unify a piece of fiction. And critics sometimes refer to "atmosphere stories." But every good piece of fiction, as has been pointed out, has its own special atmosphere. Atmosphere is an *effect* of the handling of the total material of a piece of fiction. It may be repeated that atmosphere is the general, pervasive feeling aroused by the working of a number of factors, setting, character, theme, action, but in creating the atmosphere of a given piece of fiction some of these factors may be emphasized more than others. Stories in which the factor of setting has a special prominence, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher," by Poe, are sometimes called atmosphere stories. This use of the term may sometimes be a critical convenience, but it must not be understood as meaning that these stories have atmosphere and others do not. In fact, some stories in which the emphasis is not on the factor of setting, as is the case with "The Killers," by Hemingway, or "The Three Strangers," by Hardy, may possess an atmosphere equally memorable. But it is always a mistake to be-

lieve that the unity of a piece of fiction may be gained by atmosphere, for the atmosphere itself is an effect. The unity has already been achieved by the ordinary methods of construction. If this is not clear, the reader may analyze "The Fall of the House of Usher" or "Araby," both of which might be termed atmosphere stories, and see how the writers have handled the matters of point of view, character dominance, etc.

The writer, approaching his material, asks himself the questions: "Whose story is it? What does the story mean? What kind of logic does the plot have? How does the plot express the nature of character and the meaning of the story? How do all these things bear on the emotional effect I want for the story?" But when he has asked and answered these questions he has not yet solved all the problems that must be solved before he can get the story on paper. He still has the question of the point of view.

Point of View

The question of the point of view, in its simplest terms, is nothing more than this: who tells the story? But it is an extremely important question and one on which hinges the problem of the control and arrangement of the material, and to a large extent the problem of style. Let us regard some of the possibilities that may present themselves to a writer.

First, there is the first person. The writer tells a story with an "I." That seems very simple, but for the purposes of fiction it can immediately be subdivided. The narrator or speaker, the "I" of the story, may be the dominant character, the person who owns, as it were, the story; or he may be a minor character in the action; or he may be merely an observer. The first-person point of view, in general, has certain advantages and disadvantages, which a writer has to weigh against each other for the purpose of dealing with any given body of material. The "I" of a story tends to convince the reader of the truth or the reality of the events and the persons. We tend to believe first-hand reports more quickly than hearsay. The first person in fiction can often give a quality of casualness and intimacy that fits the writer's intention, and it can often allow necessary comment to enter the narrative more easily and naturally than under different circumstances. Then this point of view gives an easy basis for the writer's selectivity, since whatever the "I" has not directly seen cannot logically enter the story as a "scene." Much material can naturally come in as summary, a thing that the reader tends to resent in fiction written from another point of view. In a first-person story he easily accepts such a statement as, "When I saw him three years later he was greatly changed." But such a transition and summary appears very crude in a story told in the third person.

Other special advantages may come from the use of a first-person point of view in individual cases. For instance, in the novels *Barry Lyndon*, by Thackeray, and *Jonathan Wild*, by Fielding, the first person is used because it allows an ironical effect that would not otherwise be possible. In each of these novels a vicious and criminal man tells his own life story and tries to excuse and justify himself; and of course, because of the attempt to explain and justify conduct, the viciousness is all the more apparent. "The Washerwoman's Day," by Harriette Simpson, by employing the first person as observer, gains an effect otherwise impossible. This story deals with the theme of social justice. A washerwoman in a small Kentucky town dies of pneumonia and lye-burns. A church society gives her a funeral, which the washerwoman's daughter attends, bringing her illegitimate child. After the burial some of the women, members of the society, take back most of the roses bought for the funeral and give a few to the daughter, being sure that she knows how much was paid for them. The washerwoman's daughter, left alone in the cemetery, throws the flowers in the mud and goes away, carrying her child. That is the synopsis of the story, but a third-person treatment would lose something gained in the present treatment, which employs as an observer and narrator a little girl, the daughter of the family that had hired the washerwoman. The child knows just enough about the situation and characters to give a good working basis for the writer's selectivity; her conversation at home and school gives the reader the necessary exposition or preliminary information; she is present at the funeral and burial, and impelled by a childish cruelty and curiosity, lingers behind to see the washerwoman's daughter throw the roses away. For the purpose of controlling the facts of the story the child is well chosen as a narrator. That is to say, the use of the child as an observer helps to unify the facts by drawing them into one pattern. Furthermore, the use of the child provides an indirect approach to the climax of the story, the tramping of the roses, that gives an ironical force more impressive than the direct analysis of the mind and motives of the washerwoman's daughter would have been. In this way, the reader feels that he has discovered something for himself. And last, the narrator is just enough the true child of the community to share in its attitudes and at the same time is unspoiled enough to be curious about things and to want to see for herself. And in the child's innocence the cruelty and hypocrisy of the entire community are exposed. The indirect and ironical approach gives an added complication

and interest to material that otherwise might be too simple and perhaps might lend itself too readily to an effect of preaching a moral.

It is usually said that opposed to the point of view of the first person is the omniscient point of view, that is, the point of view of the author who knows everything. But, quite clearly, the author, although he may know everything in his fiction, cannot tell everything; he must practice his principle of selectivity. With this limitation, however, such a writer can enter at will into the thoughts and sensations of his characters, and can present information no single character might have presented—a method impossible to the writer who employs a narrator to whose consciousness the presentation of the fiction is bound. The writer who adopts this method may remain entirely anonymous and withdrawn from his story, as do the authors of "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico," and "The Lottery Ticket." Or he may drop the impersonal attitude and address the reader familiarly, as many of the older fiction writers, such as Fielding, Hawthorne, and Thackeray, were accustomed to do. But in either case, say Chekhov in "The Lottery Ticket" or Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*, the writer, being omniscient, has taken the privilege of entering into the consciousness of characters.

But the omniscient point of view is capable of many complicated differentiations. The writer employing such a point of view, we have said, may enter at will into the being of his characters. But since for the purposes of fiction he obviously cannot dwell in the being of all his characters at all times he must use his power according to some principle. He may work by presenting a situation in an objective way, that is, without going into the consciousness of a character, and then pick and choose critical moments to dip into the consciousness of this character and then of that one to present important fragments of their experience. Or he may work, as does Andrew Lytle in "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico," by entering only into the consciousness of one character and dwelling there for almost the entire period of the story, detaching himself only for the purpose of giving setting and dialogue. The character on whose consciousness the author chooses to exercise his powers of omniscience in such a fashion may be the dominant character, as in "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico," or it may be a character who has been chosen for the same reasons a narrator would be chosen, that is, to provide a kind of mirror for the story or to act as an interpreter, as does Shirley Sutton in "The Two Faces."

But, again, a writer may refrain entirely from entering into the mind of any of his characters and may simply present the setting and dialogue much in the manner of a play. He may also refrain from summary, comment, and analysis, pretending that he is merely recording the scenes. This, of course, is even more like the method of drama. "The Killers," by Ernest Hemingway, illustrates this method better than any other story in this collection, but "The Two Faces," by Henry James, "The Wish Book," by George Milburn, and "Some Like Them Cold," by Ring Lardner, also represent objective adaptations of the omniscient point of view.

These examples do not exhaust the variations possible in fiction. Most short stories, because of the limitation of length, keep one point of view in presenting the material, but many novels shift the method from time to time, not only mixing different types of the omniscient point of view, but also varieties of the omniscient with varieties of the first-person point of view. There is no rule that binds a fiction writer to one practice. Probably the only rule to be observed is that one must not confuse the reader by capricious shifts from one point of view to another. But he must consider very carefully how a given point of view will be related to the general effect of his story or novel. For instance, the use of a narrator or even of an observer into whose mind the omniscient author could penetrate would weaken the effect of "The Gentleman from San Francisco." As it is now, the author adopts the tone of a summary or a history, as if he were writing about a period and a class now gone. He takes what we might call a "distance" from his material. For instance: "The class of people to which he belonged was in the habit of beginning its enjoyment of life by a trip to Europe, India, Egypt." Such an effect, as well as the elaborate descriptions of the ship, for instance, would be impossible with any other point of view. Bunin writes with the care of a historian describing for our instruction a kind of life that has disappeared; this implies, of course, that he considers that kind of life already doomed to extinction because of its rottenness.

Style

As just remarked, the style of "The Gentleman from San Francisco" depends to a degree on the point of view the author assumes. This is, as a matter of fact, a constant consideration for both the writer and the critic of fiction. The truth of this is perfectly clear in fiction which has an actual narrator, for the style depends directly on the education, experience, temperament and skill of the character who is directly telling the story. And the author must decide whether the character is talking or writing. In such cases the author has surrendered his own normal style and must, as it were, let the narrator do the talking or

writing. Sherwood Anderson has beautifully succeeded in doing this in "I'm a Fool" and in many of his other stories. The reader can easily see that the vocabulary and the grammar are those of a boy raised without great opportunity:

> It was a peachey time for me, I'll say that. Sometimes now I think that boys who are raised regular in houses, and never have a fine nigger like Burt for best friend, and go to high schools and college, and never steal anything, or get drunk a little, or learn to swear from fellows who know how, or come walking up in front of a grand stand in their shirt sleeves and with dirty horsey pants on when the races are going on and the grand stand is full of people all dressed up—What's the use of talking about it? Such fellows don't know nothing at all. They've never had no opportunity.

Almost any writer would be able to use the phraseology and grammar appropriate for such a character, but comparatively few would be able to capture the movement and rhythm of the boy's speech. Anderson is able to make the style dramatically appropriate to the narrator in all these respects.

But the same principle is sometimes applied when a character is not a narrator but when the omniscient author is depending on that character to establish the point of view for his fiction. Andrew Lytle in "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico" uses the consciousness of the dying woman to establish the point of view for the story; but this use is indirect, for he does not make her a narrator and very sparingly quotes directly from her thinking. But the style is flavored here and there by phrases, constructions, and comparisons that are appropriate to the woman. For instance, "no-count," or "of a winter's night." Or:

> She could not see but she could feel the heavy cluster of mahogany grapes that tumbled from the center of the head board—out of its vines curling down the sides it tumbled. How much longer would these never-picked grapes hang above her head? How much longer would she, rather, hang to the vine of this world, she who lay beneath as dry as any raisin.

Or:

> She could smell her soul burning and see it. What a fire it would make below, dripping with sin, like a rag soaked in kerosene.

Though this is indirectly referred to the woman's mind and is not quoted but is written, as it were, on the author's own responsibility, the Biblical flavor of "the vine of this world" and the homely comparisons of the raisin and the rag soaked with kerosene arise from the connection of the author's style with the point of view adopted. In all pieces of fiction the relationship between the point of view and the style is not so obvious as in "I'm a Fool" and "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico." Thus, in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" and "The Two Faces" one has to search a little more carefully for the relationship; but the relationship is there. The subject of this relationship, as a matter of fact, is one that the critic should always raise in studying fiction. There is not always a "right" and a "wrong" to this relationship that can be stated on general grounds beforehand, except in cases of a narrator to whose personality a style must always conform; but the reader should attempt to define whatever relationship exists and to see how it bears on the total effect of the given piece of fiction.

Exposition

Even if a writer, or reader, has settled all the questions of selection, focus, point of view, and style, for a special piece of fiction, there still remains an extremely important question. In what order shall the material be placed? It is easy enough to say that one should begin at the beginning, but that is a very difficult piece of advice to carry out in fiction. What is the "beginning?" The characters of a short story and even of a novel always have history that reaches back beyond the actual point of time at which the action starts; even novels that begin with the birth of a hero or heroine are only apparent exceptions, for the history of the parents, for example, has some bearing on the case, and in addition, there are other people than the hero or heroine in the novel. And every situation has roots that run back into past time. In all cases, some selective exposition is necessary, for the writer must give the reader his bearings, the information that is necessary to make the piece of fiction fully comprehensible. It can be done, especially in the short story, as simply and directly as Chekhov does it in the first sentence of "The Lottery Ticket":

> Ivan Dmitritch, a middle-class man who lived with his family on an income of twelve hundred a year and was very well satisfied with his lot, sat down on the sofa after supper and began reading the newspaper.

That is all we need really to know about Ivan for the purpose of beginning the story. A few other bits of exposition are inserted after the story is moving, but they are so incidental that we make use of them without being aware that the author has given them to us. Chekhov is a master of economical exposition;

that is, he has the trick of giving just what is necessary for the effect of the story in hand. We are never even told what Ivan looks like, but we find that we know. He is a nondescript sort of man, nothing very striking about him, not quite shabby in his dress and quite clean in his person, about forty-five years of age, etc. In other words, he is the sort of person a casual observer would find hard to describe because he is so much like a horde of people of his condition and class. He is, further, a somewhat dull, unimaginative, and unambitious man, whose life, we know, has long ago fallen into an unbroken routine with no hope or desire for change or enlargement. The lottery ticket alters all this, and then by disappointing him, converts his whole attitude into one of hatred and bitterness. At first glance it seems as though Chekhov has done no better by his exposition than any ordinary writer could do; but we may realize when we consider the implications of his one sentence that he has given us precisely the information we need for his story, no more, no less, so that the result is an impression of great control and artistry. Chekhov has even made his omissions of information instructive.

Sherwood Anderson employs a very different method of exposition in "I'm a Fool." The first paragraph indicates that the hero has been shaken by an experience which has just occurred and we know that that experience will be the "story." The suspense is heightened because, at this point, the nature of the experience is only hinted at. The second paragraph starts to give some of the facts—the *when* and the *where*—but the narrator immediately turns aside to discuss the events leading up to the *when* and the *where*. This method of heightening the suspense, which might seem mechanical in a story told by the author, here seems natural because of the character of the narrator, who himself is the hero of the story. The next paragraph, in fact, begins to define the hero's character. The narrator's account of himself as he fumbles to get at the "story" gives us the necessary exposition; that is, the exposition is dramatized in terms of the narrator's character, which is being defined also by his way of approaching the story. There is an even more complicated management of exposition in "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico," in which the presentation of the past by flashes of memory in the mind of the dying woman gives meaning to the present; but, as a matter of fact, these flashes of memory work not only as exposition but as part of the forwarding action of the story.

These three cases of exposition by no means include the possible methods open to a writer of fiction. The methods vary in detail almost from story to story and novel to novel. There is no set proportion of exposition that a piece of fiction demands; for instance, observe the difference in this respect between "The Lottery Ticket" and "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico." Nor is there a set place in a piece of fiction where the exposition should be placed. One author may deliberately delay information that another might have given as preliminary exposition, and so may build up a curiosity in the reader that will lead him forward with as much force as any suspense about the outcome of an action. Or another author may blend his exposition, bit by bit, with the general movement of his fiction so that the reader is rarely conscious of the process. Still other authors may select their material so carefully that exposition is reduced to a bare minimum, as in "The Killers," by Ernest Hemingway. In general, it may be said that in the short story, because of the limitation of length, the problem of handling exposition skillfully offers more difficulties than in the novel; but in all fiction it is a problem of the utmost importance for both writer and critic. But it is a problem that cannot be solved by itself; it can only be handled in relation to the other problems that confront the writer or critic and in relation to the final effect of the piece of fiction.

Movement

Another problem for both writer and critic is one that we might call simply the problem of "movement." There is movement in space, and movement in time; there is a series of changes of position and a series of instants of time, and for each character involved each type of series is involved. The writer's task is to relate each series to all the others so that a unit results. We may put the matter in this way. The movement of fiction is not an even, unbroken flow, for the action, naturally, involves positions and moments more important than others. The author selects these moments for his emphasis, the "key" moments, the "focal" moments, of his story or novel. He tends to give these moments his detail work, and tends to present them directly as "scenes" with the fullness of dialogue and gesture that a dramatist would give a scene. Between these directly presented scenes there may be nothing for the reader, just as there is nothing for the spectator when the curtain is down at a play; this is the case in so far as action is concerned in "The Wish Book," for the excerpts from the catalogue that separate the scenes merely serve as a "curtain" except as they are related to the theme of the story. Or between directly presented scenes there may be transitions involving narrative, summary, and comment. Or again the chief business of the fiction may be handled by the narrator: one may observe how much of "The Gentleman from San

Francisco" is occupied by such narrative connecting, building toward, and interpreting the actual scenes. Most of "Araby" is also taken up with a narrative rather than a scenic treatment. "Jerico, Jerico, Jerico" is, however, handled with a scenic rather than a narrative method, and "The Killers," like "The Wish Book," is almost exclusively scenic in treatment.

Climax

But the focal moments of a piece of fiction, whether treated by scene or narrative, are not of equal importance, even though in some instances none of them could be omitted; that is, there is presumably a moment in which the action comes to a head. For instance, in "The Three Strangers" the climax occurs when the condemned man's brother comes to the door; in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" at the moment when the manager of the hotel will not permit the body to be carried back to the room; in "Some Like Them Cold" in the last letter from Charles F. Lewis. The climax of a story need not be the most fully developed scene, for a writer can sometimes emphasize the effect by compression rather than expansion. Indeed, it is not even necessary that the climax, even in a story that does have a certain fullness of scenic treatment, be treated as a scene; it can be given by narrative treatment. But this is comparatively rare, and is generally confined to the short story.

There is no arbitrary way to arrive at the position of the climax in a piece of fiction, though it usually falls toward the end. We can probably define the climax as the point where the forces of the piece of fiction reach their moment of maximum concentration; it is, in other words, the "high point" or the "big moment" of a story or novel. It is the moment toward which action is directed, but it does not have to be the end. It is merely the moment at which the end becomes for the reader most probable or, to use the common critical term, "inevitable." Further developments may, and usually do, proceed from the climax to round out a proper conclusion.

We have said that the climax of a piece of fiction is the point where the forces reach their moment of maximum concentration. It is the moment toward which the given piece of fiction has been built. How is it built toward this point? Usually it is said that the structure of a piece of fiction may be described as follows: A situation and a character, or characters, are presented by either direct or indirect exposition; then a complication, or a series of complications, is developed leading to the climax; the conclusion settles the complication developed in the body of the story. Some pieces of fiction, such as *The Scarlet Letter,* by Hawthorne, and "La Mère Sauvage," by de Maupassant, demonstrate this structure very clearly. The basic exposition of "La Mère Sauvage" is rendered by a narrator who tells a friend the story. In the story proper the situation is fairly simple: a peasant woman grieves for her son who is away at war. The complication begins when enemy soldiers, billeted at her house, appeal to her maternal affection. The second step in the complication occurs when she receives news of her son's death. The climax comes when the soldiers, unaware of her son's death, laughingly bring her the bloody body of a rabbit which they ask her to cook. The conclusion involves the working out of her vengeance, and the little symbolic epilogue concerning the blackened stone.

Conflict

The conflict in any piece of fiction may take an *objective* or a *subjective* form, or both. In "La Mère Sauvage" the conflict is primarily subjective: specifically, between the peasant woman's maternal attachment to the young German soldiers and her desire for vengeance for the death of her son; in general, between the basic humanity which makes her see the soldiers not as enemies, but as ordinary boys like her son, and the mechanical code which makes her see them as objects of vengeance and not as mere, unresponsible victims, like her son.

But on another level there is an objective conflict, that is, a conflict which does not take place within the peasant woman's mind. It is easy to contrast this conflict within a person's mind with the objective conflict in stories which recount the struggle between two persons. But even in "La Mère Sauvage" there is, at another level, an objective conflict. It lies between two sanctions: (1) the "rules of war"—the abstract conventions of society—which permit killing on the battlefield, and (2) the instinctive urge to merely personal vengeance. The mother may be said to be the victim of the conventions of society which she can only translate into the personal terms instinctive to her. The story raises the ironical question: Is not her behavior, after all, more rational than that dictated by the code?

It is more difficult, however, to point out the pattern of conflict in such a story as "The Gentleman from San Francisco." The difference between such a story as this and stories in which the conflict, either subjective or objective, is clear-cut, seems to point to a distinction between two general types of short stories: those which are based obviously on conflict, and those, like "The Gentleman from San Francisco," which seem not to embody a conflict but merely to involve the unfolding of a process.

On the other hand it is often said, that the basis of all fiction is conflict, and that the structure of any given piece of fiction is determined by the way in which the conflict is developed. In a sense, this is true· but we need not give up our useful classification of stories into those which build up to an *obvious conflict* and those which seem to give the *gradual unfolding of a process*, merely because we can show on a more profound level a basic conflict even in stories like "The Gentleman from San Francisco."

We can show such a conflict in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" as follows. There is an opposition of forces in the story and therefore a conflict. In the background of the story there is the idea of a struggle between those who have economic power and those who do not. The gentleman typifies the former class He has conquered everything in what he conceives to be his world, and is prepared to take his reward in pure pleasure. He starts on a trip around the world. Step by step, by a description of the pleasures on board the ship and at Naples—by steps which correspond to what we have termed complications in the structure of more ordinary stories—we are led to the moment when the gentleman, at the very height of his pride in his position and achievements, is killed by a heart attack. Then comes the climax when the manager of the hotel refuses to permit the body to be carried back to the proper room. The body of the proud man is kept in the poorest room in the house, and then is sent back from Capri in a box that had contained bottles of soda water. The conflict lies, then, between the man's pride, which is based on the gentleman's own conception of his place in the world, and the forces—physical decay, avarice, hatred, indifference—that, unknown to him, have been secretly working all the time. The conflict of the story does not rise to the obvious and specific form of the conflict in such a story as "La Mère Sauvage," but is submerged beneath the surface so that we are scarcely aware of it and seem to be merely [illegible] the details of the last months of life of a rather unpleasant and finally unimportant man who died of heart failure while on a vacation in Capri. But the conflict is there after all, and on this fact depends the effect of the story.

Though the conflict is expressed very directly in some pieces of fiction and very indirectly in others, we may say that it is, in all cases, the fundamental way the author dramatizes for us, puts in the form of action, the theme of his story or novel. Therefore, to understand the structure of a piece of fiction means to understand the way by which the author presents and develops the conflict. Exposition, situation, preparation, complication, scene, narrative, transition, surprise, climax, conclusion—all of these terms merely express elements in the process by which the author constructs his fiction. There is no fixed rule for this process. The elements are constantly altered from one piece of fiction to the next, and yet the structure and method of stories as different as "The Gentleman from San Francisco" and "La Mère Sauvage" seem right. The "rightness" consists in managing the materials to bring out a certain individual effect special to that story or novel. The business of a critic is, then, to try to understand what the writer is trying to do and to understand the way he tries to do it.

If that is the business of the critic, and, indeed, we might say the business of every reader who really expects to appreciate fully his reading of fiction, let us summarize the questions that he must put to himself and try to answer. All of these questions, a little reflection will show us, flow from what we may now take as the fundamental elements in a definition of fiction· *a theme so presented by the action and interaction of human character that an emotional response is provoked in the reader.*

1. What is the theme of the story or novel?
2. How can the characters be defined?
3. How are the characters related to the theme?
4. How are the characters related to each other?
5. How does the conflict express the theme?

In order to answer these questions fully the reader may have to ask himself some further questions.

6. At what point does the reader first become aware of the theme?
7. How is the conflict complicated or intensified?
8. Where does the climax occur?
9. Is there a central character?
10. If there is no central character, how is the continuity of interest held?
11. Who tells the story?
12. What is the point of view?
13. How is the point of view indicated in the story?
14. Is it ever shifted in the course of the story?
15. Is it ever inconsistent?
16. How is the exposition handled?
17. What proportions of scene, narrative, and comment are used?
18. Are there transitions of place and time?
19. How are they handled?
20. What is the atmosphere?
21. What means does the writer employ to communicate this atmosphere?

Introduction to the Short Story

THERE are various classifications made of fiction according to the form it may take, but the most common are the short story, the novelette, and the novel. In this section we shall be concerned with the short story primarily, but to get some idea of its nature we must treat it in relation to the other common forms.

The short story is fiction, and it is short, or relatively short, falling generally under 10,000 words. The novelette, as the name implies, is a little novel; and the form generally falls within the limits of 10,000 to 35,000 words. Any piece of fiction over the upper figure is usually termed a novel. This measurement by length is, quite obviously, a fairly crude and arbitrary way of defining these forms. It would naturally leave many vague, debatable cases which lay on the borderline of the word limit of some form. A strict application of such distinctions to define a literary form, the short story or novelette, might create therefore some rather ridiculous instances.

An awareness of this fact has led critics to try to base the distinction between the short story and other forms of fiction on qualities of conception and execution rather than on the merely mechanical fact of length. For instance, it has been said that the short story depends on situation, or even one situation, and the novel on character. Or again, it has been said that the short story differs from the novel (or novelette) in that it gives a "single impression," a "totality of effect," or "one emotion." We can be quite sure that these distinctions given above are instructive to us and give us a basis for reasoning about the short story and thereby coming to a closer comprehension of the writer's intention in any given story.

But let us examine a little these two distinctions. The first, that of character and situation, cannot be forced in any absolute way unless we are willing to exclude certain stories from our definition. For example, some stories quite clearly concern themselves with the presentation of a series of situations that are unified in the same general way as the elements of a novel may be unified, that is, by reference to character and theme. Would, for instance, "The Gentleman from San Francisco" be a short story by this definition? There is a central situation, the death of the gentleman on Capri, but it may be said that in many novels there is a central situation, as in *The Scarlet Letter* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* and that in this story there are in addition to the central situation several situations not deriving from the central situation and having no connection with it except by reference to the theme. For instance, there is the situation of the hired lovers. Of course, it may be denied that "The Gentleman from San Francisco" is a short story. It may be called a "tale" or a "chronicle" by some critics. In that case we should have no quarrel with such a critic so long as he made no claim that because a given story, say "The Gentleman from San Francisco," did not fit his definition of the short story it was necessarily bad fiction.

Further, we may find some stories in which there are true cases of character development. Even in the narrow scope of "The Lottery Ticket" there is, we feel, a change in the character of Ivan. Henceforward Ivan's attitude toward his wife will be altered by the experience given in the story. And "I'm a Fool" definitely is concerned with character development.

It is quite true that the short story, by the very reason of restriction in length, cannot treat the problem of character so fully as a novel; but we must not be led to believe that character is the concern of the novel and situation of the short story. It is equally true that, by reason of restriction in length, the short story is more limited in the number of situations and incidents it can treat than is the novel; but we must remember that the novel, though it may treat a multiplicity of incidents and situations, has at its center a single main idea, issue, or conflict, and that a short story may also possess more than one situation.

This leads to the second distinction, that of the single impression or totality of effect. But by very definition all fiction must have a unity, some principle of organization, some central idea. Every successful novel does leave us with a basic emotional effect that belongs to that novel and with an idea that belongs to that novel. But a novel deals with more material than does a short story and consequently may have more variety, part by part, than does a short story; it therefore may arrive at its totality of effect, the effect left at the end, as a result of a series of previous effects, some of which may have been different and even contradictory.

At this point we may quote Robert Louis Stevenson

who wrote to a friend in regard to changing the end of a story:

> Make another end to it? Ah, yes, but that's not the way I write; the whole tale is implied; I never use an effect when I can help it, unless it prepares the effects that are to follow; that's what a story consists in. To make another end, that is to make the beginning all wrong. The dénouement [the conclusion or unravelling of a story] of a long story is nothing, it is just "a full close," which you may approach and accomplish as you please—it is a coda, not an essential member in the rhythm; but the body and end of a short story is bone of the bone and blood of the blood of the beginning.

Other writers than Stevenson have pointed out that the end of many good novels is not so memorable and emphatic as other parts or as the end of a good short story. But this does not mean that a novel does not have, after all, a central effect. It merely means that this effect is cumulative and not dependent, necessarily, upon one emphatic event. For instance, the end of *Vanity Fair,* a novel that leaves a very powerful effect, is a quiet trailing off of the action; it does not have a big scene to focus the effect of the end; but the central effect, the attitude communicated from the author to us, is the result of the accumulation of all that has been previously presented. And an even more instructive case may be found in the alternative endings of *The Return of the Native* that Hardy provided: one tends to be dramatic and emphatic; the other is more similar to the end of *Vanity Fair.* That is, the first of these endings does not fit Stevenson's idea of the ending of the "long story," or novel; the second does fit Stevenson's idea.

But what is the most profitable view for us to take of the short story and the distinctions that have been made between it and other forms of fiction? It may be this: The short story, after all, may be what its name implies—a short piece of fiction. This means that it has all the qualities which fiction as fiction has, the qualities that have been discussed in the previous section, and that the special qualities which it, as opposed to the novel or novelette, possesses or lacks are to be understood as contingent upon the fact of the brevity of the form. And this view may reduce to a proper perspective the distinctions we have discussed above, and may emphasize the important and constant elements of truth in those distinctions and at the expense of those elements that might force us to make unnecessary exclusions from our definition of the short story.

But to go farther: the best way to study any given short story may be to try to discover the way the writer was forced to regard it. It is fairly certain that no writer is fundamentally concerned whether his piece of fiction is classified as a short story or tale or sketch or novelette. He is not writing to fit a definition but to get an effect in his reader. He has something to say, and he wants to say it as well as possible. In relation to the special form of the short story, then the main questions, in addition to those essential ones that apply to all fiction, that the reader must ask himself are these:

1. Within the limits of the length used, has the writer accomplished his effect?
2. Could this effect have been better achieved by an extension or contraction of the length?
3. What relation does the method of exposition used bear to the fact of the length?

All in all, try to visualize the material of the story, the characters, their past history, the idea, the background, and try to see how the writer has organized and managed to handle his material within the length. In the stories that follow in this collection many different methods are employed, and many special questions may be asked, but in studying all of them one may remember that the basic problem is one of economy in handling the material. For the short story, after all, may be called, for convenience in any case, a piece of fiction that is short.

THE WISH BOOK

GEORGE MILBURN

Six thousand tons of paper . . . whirling through great power presses . . . using seven hundred and fifty pounds of ink an hour. More than a thousand printers . . . working night and day. Machines with great mechanical fingers sorting . . . gathering . . . and binding papers into books . . . Four hundred artists and camera men making thousands of illustrations . . . A great battery of two hundred typewriters clicking out the true story of value . . . And behind these facts other things you cannot see . . .

THE sun was blistering the sanded green paint on the M. K. & T. railway station. A gray farm wagon drawn by two mousy mules turned off the dust-cushioned road and came gritting along the graveled platform. It stopped on the shady east side of the depot. The driver eased his blue hulk to the ground and went into the waiting room for Whites.

He gaped a moment at the empty slat benches. Flies droned against the paint-sealed windows. There was a muffled chatter of telegraph in the room beyond. The ticket window was shut; so he lumbered on through to the sunny side of the station. He went round and stuck his head in at the Negro waiting room, off which the office door opened.

"Hello, Mr. Conklin! Hello!" he bawled.

The station agent, sweltering in a balbriggan undershirt, came to the office door.

"Mr. Conklin, is ary a passel here yit for W. F. Slover?"

"Sure is, Homer; come in on the 4:30 local this evenin'."

"Hot diggety! I shore am proud to hear that. We been lookin' for our ship-mint over a week, and it riles Pap to have me lay out and drive to town so much."

"O. K., Homer. You sign right here on this waybill—if you caint sign, make your mark—and I'll go get your freight."

Homer clamped his tongue in a corner of his mouth and painfully began tracing his name on the wrong line. The station agent rolled back the freight-house door and brought out a small red-labeled box.

"Careful how you handle this, Homer," he said. "It's marked explosives. What's that bulshevik pappy of your'n fixin' to do—start him a bumb factory?"

"No, sir, Mr. Conklin; them is shotgun shells. I been waitin' on them so as I could go huntin'."

"Well, if you was so anxious for a few shotgun shells, looks to me like you'd 'a' bought some here in town. The hardware ain't quit handlin' shotgun shells has it?"

"Shucks, Mr. Conklin, my pappy won't buy nothin' here in town if he can order it. Why I recollect onct the old womern had the neuralgy in her jaw and she had to suffer it six days while Pa was makin' up a order to Sears Sawbuck for some aspireen tablets. Anyhow they charge too much for shells at the hardware And you got to figger, too, nothing like that caint be sent in the mail; so if anybody orders four boxes, why Sears pays the freight. But that's jist on shotgun shells, because they caint come by mail."

"All right, Homer; there's your shotgun shells. Now you can get on back to your cotton pickin' instid of pesterin' the life out of me about whe'r your freight has come."

"I ain't goin' to pick no more cotton this day, Mr. Conklin. I'm goin' huntin' tonight—and maybe take in the dance."

"Where's the dance at? Odd Fellows Hall?"

"No, I didn't mean no round dance. I meant the big square dance out to Gutterman's place. I allowed you'd heard about Gutterman's dance, Mr. Conklin. You know Bessie, that's Gutterman's old womern, she got ketched a-sellin' bootleg here last spring and Judge Throgmorton give her six months in the county calaboose. So Bessie's gettin' out today, and Herman is th'owin' a big square dance to celebrate."

"Well, Homer, if you aim to get home in time to put on your best bib and tucker, you're going to have to h'ist your tail some, ain't you?"

"Aw, I don't know wh'er I'll go to the dance or not, Mr. Conklin. I jist said that. I wanted to go, but you know how set in his notions Pap is. I was jist schemin', though, on the way to town—maybe if I went huntin' tonight I could slip off and look in up at Gutterman's and maybe dance me a few sets. But don't you never name it to Pap, or he'd take the hide off'n me!"

"O. K. Homer. Give them gals an exter swing for me."

"I shore will, Mr. Conklin. You come see us some time."

IF YOU WISH

write in your own language. Wysylajcie wasze listy po polsku jerzeli wam sie podoba. Schrijf uwe brieven in het Hollandsch als het u past. Ecrivez en français si vous préferez. Se Lei pre-

ferisce scribe in italiano. Napište vaši psani v Českém jazyku jestli si tak přejete. Schreiben Sie uns Ihre Auftrage in Deutsch, wenn Sie wünschen. Skrifva dere brefva på Svenskt om detta ar lattere for dere. Escriba en español si lo desea. Skriv paa Norsk eller Dansk hvis det er lettere . . . . .

Only one passenger got off the 5:45 that afternoon—a blond lank man who wore a new straw hat and a wrinkled Palm Beach suit. Spike Callahan, the jitney driver, did not even seek a fare. He raced his motor and swung his Dodge sedan away from the station. The lone passenger yelled and struck up a loose-jointed sprint down the platform. Spike put on his brakes.

R. W. E. Ledbetter, editor of the Conchartee County *Democrat,* panted alongside the car. "You drivin' over to town, Spike?"

The hawk-faced jitney driver grunted, "Yah."

"Care if I ride over with you?"

"Naw. Get in," Spike said, but he did not move to flip open a door as he would have for a paying passenger.

Ledbetter trotted round and climbed into the front seat. He mopped his face as the car sped away. "I could've walked it in ten minutes, but it's so all-fired hot today and I'm anxious to get back to the *Democrat* office and see if Red Currie has got the paper out yet. I was called to Tulsa on business today. I hate to leave Red Currie with so much responsibility, but this was just a case of have-to. Red's a good boy, all right, but he is like ever' sorrel-top ever I saw: little too quick on the trigger."

"He's too damn smart-alecky to suit me!" Spike snarled. His blotched lean face was set and his bitter lips had gone white "Soon as you learnt him to run that linotype he got too big for his britches. I went in there today with a piece for the paper and he got awful smart with me. Said I'd have to *pay* to get it in."

The editor was indignant. "He did! Red Currie said that? What was the piece about, Spike?"

The taxi-driver cleared his throat and kept looking straight ahead. "It was just something the wife wrote about our baby."

Ledbetter's face took on a funereal expression and he reached over and laid his hand on the jitney-driver's shoulder.

"Spike," he said, "I sure was sorry to hear about your baby last week. That sure was tough. I didn't get out to the funeral myself—we was a day late with the *Democrat* last week—but Mrs. Ledbetter went, and she said it was beautiful. This makes the second you've lost, don't it? Well, I always say it's just as tough to lose a child right at the start as it is one ten or fifteen years old."

The hard look flickered out of the jitney-driver's dark eyes for a moment. "Yeah," he murmured, "it's tough."

"Have you got it with you, that what the wife wrote? Red Currie ain't editor of the *Democrat* yet by a long shot."

"I didn't aim to mention it again," Spike said bashfully, "but the wife wrote it herself and she thought maybe you'd appreciate it enough to print it in the paper." He fumbled in his shirt pocket and drew out a blue-lined leaf of pencil paper.

The editor unfolded it and began reading in a rapid mutter:

> We wish to thank our many friends, neighbors, singers and Bro. Batenfield for their kind deeds and sympathy shown during our bereavement of our beloved baby daughter. Also for the beautiful floral offerings.
>
> She was a little angel,
> Sent to us for only a day,
> God wanted another angel,
> So He taken our Baby away.
> Last Tuesday Arlene was born,
> Ere Wednesday she was gone.
> She never knew no worldly harms
> Ere Jesus taken her to his arms.
>
> (Signed)
> Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Callahan
> Chester Junior Callahan

The jitney driver said uneasily, "I told the wife she'd ought to sign it 'Spike Callahan and wife,' so folks'd be sure to reco'nize the name, but she held out that just the initials was more proper. What about that?"

"Either way would be nice," R. W. E. Ledbetter said. "Now, Spike, we can run the missus' poem free of charge, but fact of the matter is, Red was right—we do make a small nominal charge for cards of thanks. Only twenty-five cents."

Spike Callahan's face went hard again. He gave a little sneering sniff. "I guess you was going to pay me two-bits when you got in my taxi to be hauled over to town?"

Editor Ledbetter gulped. "Why, no, Spike; I just thought so long as you was coming over to town anyway and didn't have no load you wouldn't mind me riding with you. But—well, sure, if that's the way you look at it, why I'll waive our customary

charge. That reminds me, though—before I forget I want to jot down another item."

He reached in his coat for a pencil and scrawled hastily on the scrap of paper: "Ye ed. businessed in Tulsa Friday."

HERE'S A SIZZLING STYLE

They're a WOW! No fooling! these pants have "IT"! They're really trousers and semivest combined and are they stylish? Say! they were born in Hollywood and in two weeks had spread like a conflagration all the way to Fifth Avenue! The double-breasted vest effect is what they're all raving about. Vest is a part of the waistband! Fancy buttoned sidepockets, adjustable strap in back, and 22-inch cuff bottoms carry out the stylish scheme. All wool and silk in a rich brown stripe. Sizes 28 to 36 in. waist and 28 to 34 in. inseam. State measurements.

45F8575 . . . $3.65

Red Currie came down the back alley carrying two pleated gray blocks of Conchartee County *Democrats*. The ink was still moist on the newsprint. Fivefinger Earp's mail truck was parked at the back door of the post office and Fivefinger was going back and forth, unloading the 5:45 mail.

As Red walked round the truck to get in the back door with the papers, he noticed Irene Pirtle standing at the front corner of the post office. His large ears turned crimson and the color seeped over his peaked face. She was the prettiest girl in his high school class.

"Oh, Red," Irene called, "are you going in the back way to mail those papers? Would you do me a favor?"

The blush deepened on Red's face, but he answered smartly, "Sure! Any flavor you want—lemon or vanilla?"

Shrill laughter parted her bright doll mouth and she gave her hempen bob a backward toss to show the warm curve of her throat with its little creases of moist powder.

"Cr-r-a-a-zy!" she shrieked.

Red Currie, saffron-faced, walked over to where she was.

"Say, Red," she said in a low, sober voice, "I'm expecting a package on this mail. I want to be sure and get it before Papa comes for the mail. So would you please ask Mr. Shannon if anything come for me and if it did, get it for me while you're in there?"

"Sure I will, Irene. I'm expecting a package myself and I have to ask about that anyhow. So I can get yours easy if it come."

"I cer'nly would appreciate it, Red."

She idled against the alley side of the building while he went into the post office through the back way. A few minutes later he was back with a large brown envelope and a wide cardboard box.

"Yours sure is light," he said, handing her the envelope. "What's it got in it?"

She giggled. "That's for me to know and you to find out! What you got in yours?"

"Tell me what's in yours and I'll tell you what's in mine."

"I'd *show* you what's in mine if you'd show me what's in yours!"

"Aw, naw. You'll see mine on me soon enough. I guess I'll put mine on tonight and take in a square dance out here in the country. Just to give the hicks a treat."

"I'd wear mine to a square dance," she said, wistfully arching her plucked brows, "if I had anybody to take me."

"Heck, what's the matter with *me*? I'll take you!"

"It's funny you never did ask me before."

"I would of ask you before, but I thought you was stuck on Eagle Catoosa."

"Gosh, no, kid! Papa won't let me go with Eagle no more. Besides Eagle is sparkin' the Widow Holcomb now. That big old fat Indian slob ain't nothing in my young life."

"Well, would you go with me to this square dance if I was to come by for you tonight?"

"Maybe. But you got to let me see what's in your package."

"All right—if you'll show me what's in yours."

She tore open the envelope flap and pulled out a garment of flesh-tinted rayon. She brushed it lightly with her finger tips to restore three small silk rosebuds. He bent forward and peered closely at the shimmering cloth.

"I don't see yet what it is," he complained.

She laughed boldly. "Step-ins, you foolish!"

"Aw, do things like that have *rosebuds* sewed on 'em?"

"You wouldn't kid me, would you? Now let's see yours."

Still a little shocked, he broke the paper tape that sealed his cardboard box. He took off the lid and tore the tissue wrapping away from a fold of brown cassimere with gaudy silk stripes interwoven.

"What's that?" she breathed.

"Sizzle pants," he said proudly. "The latest thing out."

"*Sizzle* pants?" she gasped. "I bet they look funny on you."

"Funny! Wha' ya mean, funny?" he asked huffily. "They're a Hollywood sensation. Trouble with this

town is, it don't keep up with the styles. I don't expect these mossbacks around here to appreciate snappy clothes."

"Well, I cer'nly am anxious to see them on you."

"Ain't you got nothing better to do, little missy, than to stand here in the alley talking to a boy?"

They both jumped and looked round at the scrawny man who had slipped up behind them. He had watery pink eyes, and tobacco darkened the sour creases at his mouth.

"Oh, hello, Papa," Irene Pirtle said faintly.

"You march right on up to the filling station, little lady," Ira Pirtle said in a crabbed voice. "I'll attend to you there!"

"Oh, foot!" Irene said, and in a quick whisper to Red added, "Seven-thirty."

IF YOU WISH

to return this merchandise—Write us just a brief note telling us what is wrong and what you want us to do about it. Remember we want the order to be perfectly satisfactory to you. If you want to return the item and have your money refunded, we are ready to do it, but it helps us to know why the order has not pleased you . . . .

The sad banshee whistle of the 5:45 came trailing across the flatlands south of town as Spike Callahan's Dodge rustled over the white chat drive beside his rented bungalow. He got out stiffly and walked around by the sunny back porch. A baby boy in clean gingham rompers was knocking toys about in a play-pen.

"Daddy's home, Junior," Spike called in an oddly gentle voice. "You got a big old fat kiss for Daddy?"

The little boy turned his head toward the voice and gurgled. As he looked up, the setting sun struck him full in the face. The child met the strong light without blinking his milk-blue eyes. He was blind. He stretched out his arms, groping for his father. One of his tiny hands was a stub with five red buttons in place of fingers.

Spike fondled his son and played with him awhile before he went into the house. His wife, a large blonde woman, stood at the gas range, frying steaks. She was dressed in a crisp, green wash-frock, and she looked pale and cool even in the sultry kitchen. A breakfast nook between the kitchen and the parlor was laid for a meal.

"How you feel by now, Kate?" Spike asked as he hung up his hat.

"Pretty good, I guess," she said without looking up. "The heat makes me feel a little faint at times."

"Well, don't go and overdo yourself." He drew water at the sink and began washing his hands. "Say did you get that stuff fixed up to send back to Monkey Wards?"

She was lifting hot biscuits out of the oven. She did not answer at once. He was opening his mouth to speak again when she said quietly, "This is only the second day I've been out of bed."

"Yeah, I know, but if we put off sending that stuff back much longer we're li'ble to have trouble getting our money back. And we sure could use that $4.59 we got tied up there. Business is punk."

"I'll get the box ready tonight," she said.

"Did you save them papers that come with the order?"

"Yes, the papers are stuck in the catalogue."

They sat down at the breakfast nook and ate in silence. After the meal Spike lighted a cigarette. He sat moodily picking his teeth. The gray stalks of smoke trailed from his nostrils. She began taking up the soiled dishes.

"Aren't you going to eat your salad?" she asked.

"Naw," he said, chirping through his teeth, "you know I never do touch that rabbit fodder."

She put the dishes in the sink. Then she reached up and took from the shelf above a nickeled alarm clock. She began winding it.

"What time does your watch say?" she asked. "I've got to set the alarm so I'll be sure to give Junior his medicine tonight."

He took out his watch and glanced at it. "Five after seven. How is Junior, you think?"

"Those sores don't seem to be healing up at all. Don't you reckon we ought to have Dr. Jenkins look at him again?"

Spike twisted his lips and gave a sardonic snort. "Hell of a lot of good Doc Jenkins done me! You wait and see wh'er this dope we got now don't help.—Say, I give Ledbetter that piece you wrote. He bummed a ride over from the 5:45 this afternoon. Then he had the nerve to want to charge for printing what you wrote in his lousy paper. First that Red Currie in there wanted two-bits to put it in the paper. He got awful sassy—if he'd 'a'said much more I'd 'a'slapped me the snot out of that red-headed brat. I got Ledbetter told all right. He said it would be in next week's paper. Person'ly, I don't much care."

Her back was turned, but he could tell from the way her large shoulders were quivering that she had started crying again. She stood at the sink weeping softly. There were tears in his eyes, too, as he got up and started toward her. Then he scowled and crossed over to where his hat was hung. He crammed it on and went out the back way, banging the screen door.

She blew her nose and went to the door. "Spike," she quavered, "why don't you stay home tonight and help me put Junior away."

"Ah, naw," he said, getting into the car. "I better get on up town awhile and see if I caint pick up a few nickels. Look for me back when you see me comin'."

SHINE AS THE STARS DO

in Hollywood autographed Fashions. Authentic up-to-the-minute styles worn by famous film stars. These copies of your favorite stars' very own dresses, coats, neckwear, shoes, hosiery, foundations, and bathing suits are offered only by Sears Roebuck. You'll know them on the pages of this catalogue by the actual photographs of beautiful film stars. You'll know them by their special labels bearing the signature of the popular star who wears it . . .

Pirtle's filling station was the brightest spot on Broadway. It was garish with yellow and red paint by day. It was garlanded with colored electric bulbs by night. The illuminated glass barrels of its three pumps showed for sale red (ethyl), white (untreated), and blue (tractor) gasoline.

Ira Pirtle sat propped in a hickory chair outside the door of this three-cornered office. He held in his lap a new mail-order catalogue. He licked his lips as he leafed slowly through it, drooling over the buxom women pictured on the underwear pages. A car drove into the pool of light and he hurriedly plopped the book down on the concrete floor. He lowered his tilted chair and went over to the gas pumps.

"Give me three gallons of the white, Ira," Spike Callahan said, getting out of the car.

Ira, his moist eyes on the graduated glass, unhooked the hose and began lowering gasoline into Spike's tank.

Spike had his pant-legs pulled up slightly, looking at his shoes under the light. "Ira," he said, "my clutch is leaking oil on me some way. You got an old rag I could wipe off my shoe with?"

Ira hung the gas nozzle back on its hook. "I don't know wh'er I got ary rag here, Spike. Seems like I get so many calls for rags, I just caint keep any on hand.".

He went into his office. A moment later he came to the door and said, "This be all right?" He tossed out a begrimed wisp of cloth.

Spike caught it. "Yeah, this is all right. But what the hell! Say, Ira, you're getting pretty ritzy, ain't you, handin' out women's silk undies for customers to wipe their shoes on. How come that, Ira?"

Ira Pirtle did not smile. "I'll tell you how come that," he said grimly. "That daughter of mine's gettin' to where I caint do nothing with her. She come walking in here tonight and she had a parcel in her hand. I ast her what she had in that parcel and she claims she's got dress goods. I ast her to let me see and she says she ain't a-goin' to do it. So I snatched that parcel away from the little missy and looked for myself. And that's what was in it—that there what you got in your hands. Looky what it's got sewed on it! *Rosebuds.* Yes, sir, rosebuds! Dogged if I'm goin' to have ary a child of mine shamin' me by wearin' a garment like that. So I jist naturally ripped it up and throwed it right down on the floor and scrubbed it in the grease. I swan if I can figger out what the young 'uns of today is comin' to. Course that'n of mine never had had no mother to look after her, but I can tell you, she's not a-goin' to disgrace herse'f while I'm here to he'p it."

"That's right, Ira. You got to watch 'em close these days."

"Put that rag in your car, Spike, if you got any use for it. I'd just as soon not have it layin' around the station here."

"O.K., Ira. Now lend me your pliers and I'll see if I caint tighten this clutch up some way to stop that oil from workin' out."

"Here's some pliers. But pull over there by the greasing-rack so as other customers can drive up to the pumps."

Spike ran his car round to the other side of the station. While he was down on the floorboards, working, an expensive limousine stopped at the curb. A broad swarthy face called low, "Hey, Spike!"

Spike walked over to the other car, peering into the darkness.

"How's-a-boy, Eagle?"

"Sh-h-h!" Eagle Catoosa whispered. "Not so loud. I don't want Old Man Pirtle to know I'm out here. Listen, Spike, this is on the Q.T., see. I got a little job for you."

"How much is they in it?" Spike asked guardedly.

"What you say to five bucks, hunh?"

"Five bucks will be all right. What is it—murder?"

The big Indian chuckled and shoved a five-dollar bill into the jitney-driver's hand. "Naw! Listen, guy, Old Man Pirtle won't let Irene go with me no more because I cut the old man out with Mrs. Holcomb, see. Well, I want to take Irene out tonight anyhow. But she's went out to Gutterman's square dance with the red-headed guy that works in the printing office, see. So all I want you to do is drive out there and get Irene away from the square dance for me. I got reasons for not wanting to show there at Gut-

terman's tonight. All you have to do is just get Irene off to one side and tell her I'll be waitin' down there at that culvert below Gutterman's place with my parkin' lights on. She'll come right on down there. That kid is nuts over me."

"You say she's with Red Currie? I'm goin' to like this."

"Yeah, that bird thinks he's a hot rock. Well, you'll take care of that all right for me, won't you, Spike?"

"Sure, I'll take care of that for you, Eagle."

"Better take a few drinks on old Herman while you're out there. He's started up again and he's got some pretty fair stuff."

"Naw, I'm off of it, Eagle; doctor's orders."

"A few snorts of Herman's whiskey never hurt nobody."

"You might be right at that. Drive on ahead and I'll pass you on the way."

IF IT'S TWINS

Wards will send you an Exact Duplicate Layette Free. Twins are apt to happen . . . even in the best of well-regulated families! Not that they aren't welcome, no indeed! Because if there's anything better news than a brand-new baby—it's TWO brand-new babies!

Twilight deepened in the bungalow. After she had put the baby to sleep she wandered through the hot dark rooms. When she came to the bedroom she went over to the clothes closet and took down from the top shelf a cardboard box. She brought it into the living room and snapped on the silk-shaded table lamp.

She sat down and reached under the mission table for the mail-order catalogue that lay on the footboard. The large book opened at a place where a thin fold of wire-stapled invoice papers had been put away.

Tears wetted her cheeks as she began reading again—

PROVIDES HIS NECESSITIES

2 Bishop dresses, Cotton batiste, Lace trimmed.
3 flannel bands about ¼ wool, balance cotton.
12 birdseye diapers Hemmed 27 by 27 inch size.
1 Dress Hand Smocked Fine Quality Cotton Batiste.
2 Gertrudes, Amoskeag 1101 cotton flannel. Shell stitched edges in pink or blue.
2 pairs hose mercerized cotton. Cream white.
1 baby book "Health and Care" . . . .
31D4512 . . . 39-piece Layette . . . $4.59

She turned with sudden resolution to the pink index pages in the back of the book. Then she opened the catalogue on another page. It was headed in large letters:

ORDER WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT . . . BY MAIL!

She read the page again. Again she puzzled over the curious inklings she found there. Unlike those on any other page of the catalogue, the description of each item here was a little nest of hidden meanings.

She mumbled the bewildering words slowly as she read and her eyes were blank with despair. After a long time she lowered her head and laid her face on the open catalogue. She began to pray.

"Oh, dear God," she prayed, "I'm not sure, but I've got to be sure. You see everything that happens in the world, God, so won't you please help me. . . help me. . ."

IMPORTED CUCKOO CLOCK

Sears Cuckoo Clocks are Imported from the Black Forest of Germany. Stag's head and maple leaf top and front ornaments are hand-carved by families who have been doing carving for generations. Beautiful walnut finish. Ht., 19½ in., Width 13 in., 5 in. dial. Cuckoo appears to call hours and half-hours. One-day weight movement. 5F9314¼ . . . $14.45.

The finest room in Gutterman's three-roomed house was the built-on kitchen. The big brass oil lamp that hung from the ceiling had a mountain scene hand-painted on its white glass shade. The linoleum-covered floor seemed to be tesselated with blocks of red marble and green onyx. Splendid with nickel, huge with hot-water reservoir and overhead warming closets, a six-hole range took up one side of the room. The other side held a varnished oak cabinet with a vast, oval-windowed flour sifter and a polished zinc top.

Over on the wall near the kitchen cabinet a cuckoo clicked out of its ornate little hut and called once for the half-hour.

Spike Callahan put the big jar of whiskey back down on the kitchen table and looked at his watch. He went over to the cuckoo clock and moved the hands forward ten minutes.

He was alone in the kitchen. The door leading to the front room was open and through it came sounds of feet thudding on bare boards, shrill giggles and hoarse guffaws, the squeak and twang of fiddle and guitar being tuned, and glimpses of men and women milling past in their Sunday clothes.

Old Herman Gutterman's hearty voice could be heard calling: "Git yore podners fer a quadrille!"

The hubbub got louder, backs thumped against the wall, and then the noise went down. Old Herman was shouting them into their places: "Four couple right this way. Three more couple right over here. Two more couple this way. One more couple. . . All set now!"

Spike Callahan took another long pull at the whiskey jar, shuddered, and wiped his mouth on the back of his hand. He sat and stared moodily at the open back door.

Homer Slover came sneaking in out of the darkness carrying a double-barrel shotgun. When he saw Spike, a foolish grin spread over his big moon-face and he bobbled his head. "Reckon it'd be all right for me to go in there and dance jist wearin' these here overhalls?"

Spike gave him a drunken nod. "Sure, that's O. K., Homer! You're all right. Go right on in there and pitch!"

Homer propped his shotgun carefully beside the back door and tiptoed through to the other room just as the fiddle and guitar swept into the dance tune.

The furious swirls of "Hell Among the Yearlings" came flooding out into the kitchen. The house quivered as the dance began. Someone began clapping loudly in four-four time. The thunder of footfalls filled the house. Herman Gutterman was bellowing:

First couple out to the couple on the right,
Lady around the lady with the gent behind,
Lady around the gent and the gent cut a shine.
Couple up four in the center of the floor—
Two little ladies dolce do,
One more heel and one more toe,
One more swing and on you go . . .

Red Currie, dressed in his sizzle pants, came out into the kitchen and glanced anxiously about.

"Where'd Irene go?" he asked.

Spike turned his bitter, pocked face up at Red. "Where'd you get them pimp's pants, bright boy?" he asked.

"I seen Irene come out here to the kitchen with you awhile ago," Red said. "Where is she now?"

"Oh, you mean you want to know where your girl went! Why, bright boy, I thought you knew all the answers already! So your girl has stood you up, has she, bright boy? Well, what're you whinnyin' around me for? A bright boy like you ought to be able to see that I haven't got your girl."

Red gnawed his lips. He had his fists doubled up. He hesitated a moment. Then he turned and strode out of the house. Spike picked up the whiskey jar and took another drink. A slight spasm twitched his shoulders. He sat there dozing a little.

All the way to Arkansaw
To eat cornpone and 'possum jaw—
At 'em on the left with the old left hand,
Right and left with the right and left grand.

Spike jerked his head up and saw Red Currie standing in the back door. Red was holding out a grimpy wisp of cloth with three artificial rosebuds on it.

"I found these in the front seat of your car," he said quietly. "I know who they belong to, all right." Then he skinned his lips back over his teeth and screamed, "Now, God damn you, Spike Callahan, you better tell me where my girl is!"

In the room beyond Herman Gutterman was shouting above the wild music and scuffling feet:

Neck yoke down and double trees draggin',
Once and a half and keep on raggin';
Gals swing hard, but gents swing harder,
Swing that gal by her old rag garter.

Spike peered at the clew with bleary-eyed wonder. All of a sudden he began laughing. He banged the table with his hand and whooped. Red stood stark in his accusing pose and glared at Spike a moment longer. Then he put his arm down and shifted his eyes nervously.

Once and a half and the other half too,
Once and a half go all the way through;
Come to your podner and meet her in the shade,
Come to your podner and all promenade.

Spike held his sides and gasped, "Bright boy, if you keep on, dern if you ain't goin' to be a reg'lar Hawkshaw."

Red Currie reached over beside the door and picked up the shotgun. He pointed it at Spike and said calmly, "I guess this'll make you tell me where you taken Irene!"

Spike's face suddenly grew sober. "You put that gun down, you damn smart aleck, you," he snarled, lurching to his feet.

"Not till you tell me where Irene is!"

"I'll slap some of that smartness out of you, you little red-headed simp!" He came staggering across the room with his open hand outstretched. Red's face puckered up and he began to weep.

"Don't you lay hand on me, Spike!" he sobbed, cringing against the wall. "If you lay hand on me, Spike, I'll shoot you, you see if I don't!" Then with tears streaming over his peeled face, he cried, "You

take one more step towards me, Callahan, and I'll blow your guts out!"

He had the shotgun to his shoulder now. Spike halted a few feet from the end of the barrels. "Put that gun down before I grab it and whap it over your head," he said, talking with his teeth clinched.

"You tell me first where Irene is."

"O.K., then. I guess I'll have to take it away from you."

"Stop, Spike, stop!" the boy cried as he pulled the trigger.

After the gun went off there was a deep silence. The music stopped in a long whimper and then no sound at all came from the other room. Spike Callahan stood at the cook stove, against which he had been blown, with a bewildered look on his face. He grunted once and his body folded neatly to the kitchen floor. Red Currie carefully set the gun back where he had got it. He slipped out the back door.

The carved wooden clock over by the kitchen cabinet whirred and the cuckoo popped out at its little door. Its jerky calls fell on the silence ten times.

A woman screamed in the other room. The dancers came swarming out into the blood-spattered kitchen.

LET OUR PERSONAL SERVICE

solve your buying problems. A bit of friendly advice is always helpful on an important purchase. Our Personal Service is free and does not obligate you in any way. It is strictly personal . . . .

The bulky catalogue was sodden with her tears and sweat. She kept her face pressed against its musty pages and went on praying.

"Oh, God," she prayed, "it just can't be right. Blind and crippled and still-born, God. Why must I keep on bringing children like that into the world, God? Oh, God, won't you please let me not ever have another child by him? Please, God, help me . . . help me . . ."

The alarm clock in the kitchen began ringing. She got up quickly and hurried into the kitchen to shut it off. As she turned on the light and walked across to the kitchen shelf she saw that it was just ten o'clock.

This is the story behind this Catalogue . . . the expenditure of time and effort and millions of dollars. These labors have only one aim . . . to illustrate and describe our merchandise with absolute accuracy and truth, and by carrying this conviction to you, to win the privilege of serving you . . . To serve and satisfy you . . .

There is no fixed way in which to analyze a short story, for the simple reason that there is no fixed way in which stories are written. Furthermore, there are many ways, equally good sometimes, in which a single story may be analyzed and studied. But in all instances the analysis of a story should serve to illuminate the effect of the story and the method used to gain that effect. The set of general questions attached to the "Introduction to Fiction" raises some of the basic problems that appear in all forms of fiction; and to answer these questions about a given story is to prepare the materials for a proper analysis of that story. But the analysis itself can only be made when the answers of the various questions are related to each other; that is, when the reader sees what binds the various parts of the story together so that one effect is presented.

This does not mean that a student should necessarily write out answers to each other in a coherent discussion: but such a process, especially in the early stages of the study of fiction, might be valuable. This does mean, however, that the student should answer in his own mind the general questions before he attempts to organize his analysis.

The following discussion of "The Wish Book" is not to be understood as a complete analysis of the story. It is merely one way, and perhaps not the best way, in which a reader may record his impression of the story.

"The Wish Book" is more complicated and indirect in method than most stories For instance, in most stories the reader can readily say that there is a central character, that the action is about this character or that one. In "The Wish Book," however, this is not the case. One cannot say that the story is about Red Currie, or Spike, or Mrs. Callahan, though Spike probably comes nearer to being a central character in the usual sense than any of the others. Almost all of the characters, even Homer Slover, who orders the shells for the fatal shot gun, and Ira Pirtle, who gives the underwear to Spike for a grease rag, are sharply defined and recognizable. Spike is more fully presented, however: we see his contempt for the editor and for Red Currie, whose pretensions he penetrates; his love for his blind and deformed child; his pity for his wife and his sense of guilt that makes him leave home rather than spend the evening with her. One cannot say that an inability to draw effective character prevents the author from having a strong central character; apparently, he has avoided the central emphasis of one character because of some general intention behind his story.

That intention may account for another rather unusual feature of the story. In most stories there is a kind of central movement of action, a natural and clear sequence from part to part and from scene to scene. This is obvious in stories such as "The Two Faces," "The Killers," and "I'm a Fool." The reader picks up a strand of action and pursues it to the end. But in "The Wish Book" the author has given us eight separate scenes, not connected by ordinary transitions and divided by sections of advertising from a mail order catalogue. The structure of the story is a little like a puzzle with the parts falling into place when the key piece is touched. In the end we see that all the characters and scenes in the story have a part in what happens in the Gutterman kitchen, and further, in the new grief that comes to Mrs. Callahan. But this, still, is not the central fact of the story.

The central fact, as the title indicates, is the mail

order catalogue, which in some rural communities is called a "wish book." In the first place, the various pieces of merchandise ordered from the catalogue provide the story with one of its unifying factors; that is, when the various things come together we have the climax of the story. These objects, like a kind of evil mechanism, are set loose in the community and bring about a catastrophe involving several people. Each object had been ordered from the catalogue by some one who expected it to add to his happiness, but the granted wishes of the "wish book," like the wishes in the fairy tale, bring unhappiness instead of happiness. The fulfillment of the wishes is ironical; and irony is the basic effect of the story. We see this in many of the small details; the conversation between Spike and the editor; Ira Pirtle's giving to Spike the grease rag which causes his death; Mrs. Callahan's prayer, just at the moment of Spike's death, that she will have no more children by him.

The quotations from the "wish book" serve to do more than merely divide the parts of the story from each other; they are more than the theatrical curtain that separates scene from scene in a play. These quotations, too, are a device for defining the ironical effect of the story; they are the promises of happiness held out by the "wish book." But their irony is not merely dependent upon the fact that the objects ordered on this particular occasion are contributing elements in a futile piece of violence. The author intends an irony that is more general and far-reaching, though the general irony is emphasized by the working out of the particular story This general irony, as the author apparently intends, involves the relation of the simple people who buy from the mail order catalogue to the advertising experts whose occupation is not only to answer a need of those people, but to play on their weaknesses For instance, the "sizzle pants" appeal to Red Currie by making him contemptuous of his home, and making him connect himself in his own mind with Hollywood and Fifth Avenue. He says he is going to wear them to "give the hicks a treat." Or there is the sentimentality and hypocrisy of the section entitled "If It's Twins." The author has, by implication, brought many of the qualities of general American life to focus in his story; one aspect of his skill is demonstrated by the fact that he does this merely by the arrangement of his material and not by direct statement. He never forgets, in other words, that he is writing a story, and not preaching a sermon or giving a sociological lecture.

This story, we have said, is not strongly centered about a single character and is not constructed in the ordinary way that gives an impression of unity by the clear sequence of part and part. In so far as mechanical structure is concerned, the articles ordered from the catalogue, more than any other factor, bind the story together. But the story is also bound together, and perhaps more fundamentally, by the attitude of the author, by the strong ironical effect he gains in placing the people of the story, very ordinary people who because of their limitations and weaknesses make a claim on our pity, in relation to a whole system of life outside their community.

Questions·

1. Why does the author not end his story with the scene in the Gutterman kitchen? How would that ending change the general meaning of the story?
2. Some readers of this story have said that the irony is artificial and strained. How would you defend or attack the story on this point? Which of the various incidents that give ironical effects seems to you to be the most artificial or made-up? Should any of them be omitted?
3. How would you compare the ironical effects in this story with those of "La Mère Sauvage"?

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

BRET HARTE

THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp—"Cherokee Sal."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen also that the situation was novel.

Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would go through with it"; even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder; but in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them very much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were complete, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men, who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex-officio* complacency—"gentlemen will please pass in the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so unconsciously set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible—criticisms addressed perhaps rather to Stumpy in the character of showman: "Is that him?" "Mighty small specimen"; "Hasn't more'n got the color"; "Ain't bigger nor a derringer." The contributions were as characteristic: a silver tobacco-box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver-mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung-shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair

of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for five pounds; and about two hundred dollars in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d--d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with perhaps more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely, and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the new-comer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Half-way down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene!" replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it—d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprang up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog—a distance of forty miles—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp, as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed on to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got—lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills—that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "The Kid," "Stumpy's Boy," "The Coyote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "The d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was

made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the Church service, with pointed local allusions The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playin' it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't goin' to understand. And ef there's goin' to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me" A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been otherwise uttered than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in an orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle, packed eighty miles by mule, had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how 'The Luck' got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and in self-defence the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding The Luck. It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling, which had gained the camp its infelicitous title, were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillizing quality; and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor from Her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the *Arethusa*, Seventy-Four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-oo-o-ard of the *Arethusa*." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet smelling shrubs, and generally someone would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had

suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for The Luck It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be serenely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral"—a hedge of tassellated pine boughs, which surrounded his bed—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a-talkin' to a jaybird as was a-sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin' at each other just like two cherrybums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send · . '. · . breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gum; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble-bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times," and the luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of The Luck, who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely sceptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and debris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy, nearest the river-bank, was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, The Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying, too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying!" he repeated. "He's a-takin' me with him. Tell the boys I've got The Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

In the analysis of "The Wish Book" it was stated that there is no fixed way to analyze a story, because there is no fixed way in which stories are written But it was found in analyzing "The Wish Book" that it was possible to point out some of the advantages which Milburn gained in treating the story perfectly objectively; that is, in little scenes without interpretive comment by the author. In contrast with Milburn, Bret Harte gives the sense of being constantly at the reader's elbow. For example, in reference to Cherokee Sal, there is the "editorial" comment: "Perhaps the less said of her the better She was a coarse and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman" Or, in reference to Luck· "I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends." In general, this story, in method, lies at another extreme from "The Wish Book," for the movement is essentially *narrative* and not *scenic,* and the interpretation is directly presented by the author, as author, and not merely implied by the ordering of the material.

It is not to be suggested that one method will always result in a good story, the other a bad. It would be easy to point out cases of success and failure in both methods. The real question to be asked in either case is for what purpose the method is used, and what the author is able to do with the particular method chosen.

The theme of this story is, to put it broadly, that within the most violent and degenerate man there remains some element of decency and tenderness, some aspiration toward the kind of life and the set of values which he has, apparently, repudiated. It is a theme similar to an idea expressed in "Pulvis et Umbra," by Robert Louis Stevenson, an essay included in this book (p. 205). Stevenson says that, no matter how degraded man may become, some spark of humanity remains in him. "It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality . . . 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 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 honor 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 health, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honor, the poor jewel of their souls!" Bret Harte's story is concerned with the regeneration of the citizens of Roaring Camp, the awakening of their apparently lost impulses to decency, through the influence of the child of the dead prostitute. Now a reader may hold, with Harte and Stevenson, that to every man, no matter how degraded, some human worth and dignity still attaches. But a story on this theme is not necessarily good because the theme of the story seems to involve a truth about humanity. Many people judge literature merely on the basis of the ideas expressed or implied. If the idea seem "true" or "noble" or "useful"—that is, if the piece of literature flatters their own preconceptions—they are inclined to believe that the piece of literature is therefore good. But in such a case, the readers are not reading the piece of literature. The idea is satisfactory to them, no matter in what form it is cast, or what treatment it receives.

The chief defect of "The Luck of Roaring Camp" is *sentimentality.* We have already said that sentimentality arises from a writer's attempt to claim a greater emotional response on the part of the reader than is actually justified by the materials and treatment of the piece of work ("General Introduction," page 5). That is, such a writer relies on the reader's *stock responses* to gain his effect, and not on his own understanding and presentation of the materials of his story, poem, or novel ("General Introduction," pp. 5–6). This story is sentimental because it over-simplifies the situation; it makes the regeneration of Roaring Camp too easily achieved. The change in the life of the miners is too sudden and too complete. The reader feels that human character is more complex than is indicated by Bret Harte, that habits of conduct and attitudes of mind usually change gradually. For instance, we are told that the miners who brought "clusters of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas" and fragments of quartz and bright pebbles to The Luck, "suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet." The more tough minded reader may ask himself this question· How often have I known a man whose whole life and point of view were so completely changed even by his own child? And Harte has the change affecting a whole camp. He does not allow for differences in character and temperament among the men; the regeneration touches all of them in the same way, and almost at the same time. In other words, there is no presentation of the inevitable conflict of attitudes and feelings among the men. The story would be more convincing if Harte had taken one character, Kentuck, for example, and had indicated, in some degree, at least, the actual psychological process of the change in him; that is, if he had given some presentation of the inner conflict which the change would, necessarily, involve.

There are some details of the story which can be related to the basic sentimentality. For example, in describing the birth of the child, Harte writes: "The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too." Now, we could admit that the pines might have stopped moaning, because of a lull in the breeze; but we know perfectly well that the river did not cease to rush, and that, if the sound of the pines had stopped, the sound of the river would have been more readily heard than before. Harte is deliberately falsifying his scene in order to play on the reader's emotions and to prepare him, thereby, to accept the regeneration of the camp. Or the last paragraph of the story might be analyzed to prove the same point. Harte is straining for his effects, and it has been said that sentimentality always involves just this kind of strain ("General Introduction," p. 5). Moreover, to return to the editorial comments mentioned in the first paragraph of this analysis, is it not probable that Harte has chosen to "editorialize" his narrative in order to cover up deficiencies in presentation?

LA MÈRE SAUVAGE

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

I HAD not been at Virelogne for fifteen years. I went back there in the autumn, to shoot with my friend Serval, who had at last rebuilt his château, which had been destroyed by the Prussians.

I loved that district very much. It is one of those corners of the world which have a sensuous charm for the eyes. You love it with a bodily love. We, whom the country seduces, we keep tender memories for certain springs, for certain woods, for certain pools, for certain hills, seen very often, and which have stirred us like joyful events. Sometimes our thoughts turn back towards a corner in a forest, or the end of a bank, or an orchard powdered with flowers, seen but a single time, on some gay day; yet remaining in our hearts like the images of certain women met in the street on a spring morning, with bright transparent dresses; and leaving in soul and body an unappeased desire which is not to be forgotten, a feeling that you have just rubbed elbows with happiness.

At Virelogne I loved the whole countryside, dotted with little woods, and crossed by brooks which flashed in the sun and looked like veins, carrying blood to the earth. You fished in them for crawfish, trout, and eels! Divine happiness! You could bathe in places, and you often found snipe among the high grass which grew along the borders of these slender watercourses.

I was walking, lightly as a goat, watching my two dogs ranging before me. Serval, a hundred metres to my right, was beating a field of lucern. I turned the thicket which forms the boundary of the wood of Sandres, and I saw a cottage in ruins.

All of a sudden, I remembered it as I had seen it the last time, in 1869, neat, covered with vines, with chickens before the door. What is sadder than a dead house, with its skeleton standing upright, bare and sinister?

I also remembered that in it, one very tiring day, the good woman had given me a glass of wine to drink, and that Serval had then told me the history of its inhabitants. The father, an old poacher, had been killed by the gendarmes. The son, whom I had once seen, was a tall, dry fellow who also passed for a ferocious destroyer of game. People called them *"les Sauvage."*

Was that a name or a nickname?

I hailed Serval. He came up with his long strides like a crane.

I asked him:

"What's become of those people?"

And he told me this story:

When war was declared, the son Sauvage, who was then thirty-three years old, enlisted, leaving his mother alone in the house. People did not pity the old woman very much because she had money; they knew it.

But she remained quite alone in that isolated dwelling so far from the village, on the edge of the wood. She was not afraid, however, being of the same strain as her menfolk; a hardy old woman, tall and thin, who laughed seldom, and with whom one never jested. The women of the fields laugh but little in any case; that is men's business, that! But they themselves have sad and narrowed hearts, leading a melancholy, gloomy life. The peasants learn a little boisterous merriment at the tavern, but their helpmates remain grave, with countenances which are always severe. The muscles of their faces have never learned the movements of the laugh.

La Mère Sauvage continued her ordinary existence in her cottage, which was soon covered by the snows. She came to the village once a week, to get bread and a little meat; then she returned into her house. As there was talk of wolves, she went out with a gun upon her back—her son's gun, rusty, and with the butt worn by the rubbing of the hand; and she was strange to see, the tall "Sauvage," a little bent, going with slow strides over the snow, the muzzle of the piece extending beyond the black headdress, which pressed close to her head and imprisoned her white hair, which no one had ever seen.

One day a Prussian force arrived. It was billeted upon the inhabitants, according to the property and resources of each. Four were allotted to the old woman, who was known to be rich.

They were four great boys with blond skin, with blond beards, with blue eyes, who had remained stout notwithstanding the fatigues which they had endured already, and who also, though in a conquered country, had remained kind and gentle. Alone with this aged woman, they showed themselves full of consideration, sparing her, as much as they could, all expenses and fatigue. They would be seen, all four of them, making their toilet round the well, of a morning, in their shirt-sleeves, splashing with great swishes of water, under the crude daylight of the snowy weather, their pink-white Northman's flesh, while La Mère Sauvage went and came, making

ready the soup. Then they would be seen cleaning the kitchen, rubbing the tiles, splitting wood, peeling potatoes, doing up all the housework, like four good sons about their mother.

But the old woman thought always of her own, so tall and thin, with his hooked nose and his brown eyes and his heavy mustache which made a roll of black hairs upon his lip. She asked each day of each of the soldiers who were installed beside her hearth:

"Do you know where the French Marching Regiment No. 23 was sent? My boy is in it."

They answered, "No, not know, not know at all." And, understanding her pain and her uneasiness (they, who had mothers too, there at home), they rendered her a thousand little services. She loved them well, moreover, her four enemies, since the peasantry feels no patriotic hatred; that belongs to the upper class alone. The humble, those who pay the most, because they are poor, and because every new burden crushes them down; those who are killed in masses, who make the true cannon's-meat, because they are so many; those, in fine, who suffer most cruelly the atrocious miseries of war, because they are the feeblest, and offer least resistance—they hardly understand at all those bellicose ardors, that excitable sense of honor, or those pretended political combinations which in six months exhaust two nations, the conqueror with the conquered.

They said on the countryside in speaking of the Germans of La Mère Sauvage:

"There are four who have found a soft place."

Now, one morning, when the old woman was alone in the house, she perceived far off on the plain a man coming towards her dwelling. Soon she recognized him; it was the postman charged to distribute the letters. He gave her a folded paper, and she drew out of her case the spectacles which she used for sewing; then she read:

"MADAME SAUVAGE,—The present letter is to tell you sad news. Your boy Victor was killed yesterday by a shell which near cut him in two. I was just by, seeing that we stood next each other in the company, and he would talk to me about you to let you know on the same day if anything happened to him.

"I took his watch, which was in his pocket, to bring it back to you when the war is done.

"I salute you very friendly.

"CÉSAIRE RIVOT,

"Soldier of the 2d class, March. Reg. No. 23"

The letter was dated three weeks back.

She did not cry at all. She remained motionless, so seized and stupefied that she did not even suffer as yet. She thought: "V'la Victor who is killed now." Then little by little the tears mounted to her eyes, and the sorrow caught her heart. The ideas came to her, one by one, dreadful, torturing. She would never kiss him again, her child, her big boy, never again! The gendarmes had killed the father, the Prussians had killed the son. He had been cut in two by a cannon-ball. She seemed to see the thing, the horrible thing: the head falling, the eyes open, while he chewed the corner of his big mustache as he always did in moments of anger.

What had they done with his body afterwards? If they had only let her have her boy back as they had given her back her husband—with the bullet in the middle of his forehead!

But she heard a noise of voices. It was the Prussians returning from the village. She hid her letter very quickly in her pocket, and she received them quietly, with her ordinary face, having had time to wipe her eyes.

They were laughing, all four, delighted, since they brought with them a fine rabbit—stolen, doubtless—and they made signs to the old woman that there was to be something good to eat.

She set herself to work at once to prepare breakfast; but when it came to killing the rabbit, her heart failed her. And yet it was not the first. One of the soldiers struck it down with a blow of his fist behind the ears.

The beast once dead, she separated the red body from the skin; but the sight of the blood which she was touching, and which covered her hands, of the warm blood which she felt cooling and coagulating, made her tremble from head to foot; and she kept seeing her big boy cut in two, and quite red also, like this still-palpitating animal.

She set herself at table with the Prussians, but she could not eat, not even a mouthful. They devoured the rabbit without troubling themselves about her. She looked at them askance, without speaking, ripening a thought, and with a face so impassible that they perceived nothing.

All of a sudden she said: "I don't even know your names, and here's a whole month that we've been together." They understood, not without difficulty, what she wanted, and told their names. That was not sufficient; she had them written for her on a paper, with the addresses of their families, and, resting her spectacles on her great nose, she considered that strange handwriting, then folded the sheet and put it in her pocket, on top of the letter which told her of the death of her son.

When the meal was ended, she said to the men:

"I am going to work for you."

And she began to carry up hay into the loft where they slept.

They were astonished at her taking all this trouble; she explained to them that thus they would not be so cold; and they helped her. They heaped the trusses of hay as high as the straw roof; and in that manner they made a sort of great chamber with four walls of fodder, warm and perfumed, where they should sleep splendidly.

At dinner, one of them was worried to see that La Mère Sauvage still ate nothing. She told him that she had the cramps. Then she kindled a good fire to warm herself up, and the four Germans mounted to their lodging place by the ladder which served them every night for this purpose.

As soon as they closed the trap, the old woman removed the ladder, then opened the outside door noiselessly, and went back to look for more bundles of straw, with which she filled her kitchen. She went barefoot in the snow, so softly that no sound was heard. From time to time she listened to the sonorous and unequal snorings of the four soldiers who were fast asleep.

When she judged her preparations to be sufficient, she threw one of the bundles into the fireplace, and when it was alight she scattered it all over the others. Then she went outside again and looked.

In a few seconds the whole interior of the cottage was illumined with a violent brightness and became a dreadful brasier, a gigantic fiery furnace, whose brilliance spouted out of the narrow window and threw a glittering beam upon the snow.

Then a great cry issued from the summit of the house; it was a clamor of human shriekings, heart-rending calls of anguish and of fear. At last, the trap having fallen in, a whirlwind of fire shot up into the loft, pierced the straw roof, rose to the sky like the immense flame of a torch; and all the cottage flared.

Nothing more was heard therein but the crackling of the fire, the crackling sound of the walls, the falling of the rafters. All of a sudden the roof fell in, and the burning carcass of the dwelling hurled a great plume of sparks into the air, amid a cloud of smoke.

The country, all white, lit up by the fire, shone like a cloth of silver tinted with red.

A bell, far off, began to toll.

The old "Sauvage" remained standing before her ruined dwelling, armed with her gun, her son's gun, for fear lest one of those men might escape.

When she saw that it was ended, she threw her weapon into the brasier. A loud report rang back.

People were coming, the peasants, the Prussians.

They found the woman seated on the trunk of a tree, calm and satisfied.

A German officer, who spoke French like a son of France, demanded of her:

"Where are your soldiers?"

She extended her thin arm towards the red heap of fire which was gradually going out, and she answered with a strong voice:

"There!"

They crowded round her. The Prussian asked:

"How did it take fire?"

She said:

"It was I who set it on fire."

They did not believe her, they thought that the sudden disaster had made her crazy. So, while all pressed round and listened, she told the thing from one end to the other, from the arrival of the letter to the last cry of the men who were burned with her house. She did not forget a detail of all which she had felt, nor of all which she had done.

When she had finished, she drew two pieces of paper from her pocket, and, to distinguish them by the last glimmers of the fire, she again adjusted her spectacles; then she said, showing one: "That, that is the death of Victor." Showing the other, she added, indicating the red ruins with a bend of the head: "That, that is their names, so that you can write home." She calmly held the white sheet out to the officer, who held her by the shoulders, and she continued:

"You must write how it happened, and you must say to their mothers that it was I who did that, Victoire Simon, la Sauvage! Do not forget."

The officer shouted some orders in German. They seized her, they threw her against the walls of her house, still hot. Then twelve men drew quickly up before her, at twenty paces. She did not move. She had understood; she waited.

An order rang out, followed instantly by a long report. A belated shot went off by itself, after the others.

The old woman did not fall. She sank as though they had mowed off her legs.

The Prussian officer approached. She was almost cut in two, and in her withered hand she held her letter bathed with blood.

My friend Serval added:

"It was by way of reprisal that the Germans destroyed the château of the district, which belonged to me."

As for me, I thought of the mothers of those four gentle fellows burned in that house; and of the atrocious heroism of that other mother shot against the wall.

And I picked up a little stone, still blackened by the flames.

Questions:

1. This story, like most stories by Guy de Maupassant, has an ironical effect. From what does this irony spring?
2. What does the author gain from giving a framework to the story by presenting the incident of the hunt and the discovery of the ruined house? What is the purpose of the last paragraph? What is the meaning of the small blackened stone in the last sentence?
3. What is the significance of the title of the story?

AN EPISODE OF WAR

STEPHEN CRANE

THE LIEUTENANT'S rubber blanket lay on the ground, and upon it had been poured the company's supply of coffee. Corporals and other representatives of the grimy and hot-throated men who lined the breastwork had come for each squad's portion.

The lieutenant was frowning and serious at this task of division. His lips pursed as he drew with his sword various crevices in the heap until brown squares of coffee, astoundingly equal in size, appeared on the blanket. He was on the verge of a great triumph in mathematics, and the corporals were thronging forward, each to reap a little square, when suddenly the lieutenant cried out and looked quickly at a man near him as if he suspected it was a case of personal assault. The others cried out also when they saw blood upon the lieutenant's sleeve.

He had winced like a man stung, swayed dangerously, and then straightened. The sound of his hoarse breathing was plainly audible. He looked sadly, mystically, over the breastwork at the green face of a wood, where now were many little puffs of white smoke. During this moment the men about him gazed statue-like and silent, astonished and awed by this catastrophe which happened when catastrophes were not expected —when they had leisure to observe it.

As the lieutenant stared at the wood, they too swung their heads, so that for another instant all hands, still silent, contemplated the distant forest as if their minds were fixed upon the mystery of a bullet's journey.

The officer had, of course, been compelled to take his sword into his left hand. He did not hold it by the hilt. He gripped it at the middle of the blade, awkwardly. Turning his eyes from the hostile wood, he looked at the sword as he held it there, and seemed puzzled as to what to do with it, where to put it. In short, this weapon had of a sudden become a strange thing to him. He looked at it in a kind of stupefaction, as if he had been endowed with a trident, a sceptre, or a spade.

Finally he tried to sheath it. To sheath a sword held by the left hand, at the middle of the blade, in a scabbard hung at the left hip, is a feat worthy of a sawdust ring. This wounded officer engaged in a desperate struggle with the sword and the wobbling scabbard, and during the time of it he breathed like a wrestler.

But at this instant the men, the spectators, awoke from their stone-like poses and crowded forward sympathetically. The orderly-sergeant took the sword and tenderly placed it in the scabbard. At the time, he leaned nervously backward, and did not allow even his finger to brush the body of the lieutenant. A wound gives strange dignity to him who bears it. Well men shy from this new and terrible majesty. It is as if the wounded man's hand is upon the curtain which hangs before the revelations of all existence—the meaning of ants, potentates, wars, cities, sunshine, snow, a feather dropped from a bird's wing; and the power of it sheds radiance upon a bloody form, and makes the other men understand sometimes that they are little. His comrades look at him with large eyes thoughtfully. Moreover, they fear vaguely that the weight of a finger upon him might send him headlong, precipitate the tragedy, hurl him at once into the dim, gray unknown. And so the orderly-sergeant, while sh[illegible] the sword, leaned nervously backward.

There were others who proffered assistance. One timidly presented his shoulder and asked the lieutenant if he cared to lean upon it, but the latter waved him away mournfully. He wore the look of one who knows he is the victim of a terrible disease and understands his helplessness. He again stared over the breastwork at the forest, and then turning went slowly rearward. He held his right wrist tenderly in his left hand as if the wounded arm was made of very brittle glass.

And the men in silence stared at the wood, then at the departing lieutenant—then at the wood, then at the lieutenant.

As the wounded officer passed from the line of battle, he was enabled to see many things which as a participant in the fight were unknown to him. He saw a general on a black horse gazing over the lines of blue infantry at the green woods which veiled his problems.

An aide galloped furiously, dragged his horse suddenly to a halt, saluted, and presented a paper. It was, for a wonder, precisely like an historical painting.

To the rear of the general and his staff a group, composed of a bugler, two or three orderlies, and the bearer of the corps standard, all upon maniacal horses, were working like slaves to hold their ground, preserve their respectful interval, while the shells boomed in the air about them, and caused their chargers to make furious quivering leaps.

A battery, a tumultuous and shining mass, was swirling toward the right. The wild thud of hoofs, the cries of the riders shouting blame and praise, menace and encouragement, and, last, the roar of the wheels, the slant of the glistening guns, brought the lieutenant to an intent pause. The battery swept in curves that stirred the heart; it made halts as dramatic as the crash of a wave on the rocks, and when it fled onward, this aggregation of wheels, lever, motors, had a beautiful unity, as if it were a missile. The sound of it was a war-chorus that reached into the depths of man's emotion.

The lieutenant, still holding his arm as if it were of glass, stood watching this battery until all detail of it was lost, save the figures of the riders, which rose and fell and waved lashes over the black mass.

Later, he turned his eyes toward the battle where the shooting sometimes crackled like bush-fires, sometimes sputtered with exasperating irregularity, and sometimes reverberated like the thunder He saw the smoke rolling upward and saw crowds of men who ran and cheered, or stood and blazed away at the inscrutable distance.

He came upon some stragglers, and they told him how to find the field hospital. They described its exact location. In fact, these men, no longer having part in the battle, knew more of it than others. They told the performance of every corps, every division, the opinion of every general. The lieutenant, carrying his wounded arm rearward, looked upon them with wonder.

At the roadside a brigade was making coffee and buzzing with talk like a girls' boarding-school. Several officers came out to him and inquired concerning things of which he knew nothing. One, seeing his arm, began to scold. "Why, man, that's no way to do. You want to fix that thing." He appropriated the lieutenant and the lieutenant's wound. He cut the sleeve and laid bare the arm, every nerve of which softly fluttered under his touch. He bound his handkerchief over the wound, scolding away in the meantime. His tone allowed one to think that he was in the habit of being wounded every day. The lieutenant hung his head, feeling, in this presence, that he did not know how to be correctly wounded.

The low white tents of the hospital were grouped around an old school-house. There was here a singular commotion. In the foreground two ambulances interlocked wheels in the deep mud. The drivers were tossing the blame of it back and forth, gesticulating and berating, while from the ambulances, both crammed with wounded, there came an occasional groan. An interminable crowd of bandaged men were coming and going Great numbers sat under the trees nursing heads or arms or legs. There was a dispute of some kind raging on the steps of the school-house. Sitting with his back against a tree a man with a face as gray as a new army blanket was serenely smoking a corn-cob pipe. The lieutenant wished to rush forward and inform him that he was dying.

A busy surgeon was passing near the lieutenant. "Good morning," he said, with a friendly smile. Then he caught sight of the lieutenant's arm and his face at once changed. "Well, let's have a look at it." He seemed possessed suddenly of a great contempt for the lieutenant. This wound evidently placed the latter on a very low social plane. The doctor cried out impatiently, "What mutton-head had tied it up that way anyhow?" The lieutenant answered, "Oh, a man."

When the wound was disclosed the doctor fingered it disdainfully. "Humph," he said. "You come along with me and I'll tend to you." His voice contained the same scorn as if he were saying, "You will have to go to jail."

The lieutenant had been very meek, but now his face flushed, and he looked into the doctor's eyes. "I guess I won't have it amputated," he said.

"Nonsense, man! Nonsense! Nonsense!" cried the doctor. "Come along, now. I won't amputate it. Come along. Don't be a baby."

"Let go of me," said the lieutenant, holding back wrathfully, his glance fixed upon the door of the old school-house, as sinister to him as the portals of death.

And this is the story of how the lieutenant lost his arm. When he reached home, his sisters, his mother, his wife, sobbed for a long time at the sight of the flat sleeve. "Oh, well," he said, standing shamefaced amid these tears, "I don't suppose it matters so much as all that."

Question:

What makes this more than a mere sketch? What is the theme?

This story may give the impression that it is not a story at all, but a mere sketch. The plot element is slight; there may seem to be no real conflict; we do not even learn the name of the lieutenant who loses his arm. But it is possible to make a case for "An Episode of War" as a short story In examining this possibility it may be well to attempt to answer such questions as the following:

1. What is the function of the relatively large amount of description?
2. The author has taken pains to indicate how the wound

sets the lieutenant apart from his fellows How do his men regard him? How do the officers regard him? How does the surgeon regard him? How do these elements help define the theme?

3. What elements of contrast are employed in the story?
4. What is the function of the last lines of the story?
5. Is there any reason for Crane's refusal to give the lieutenant's name?
6. What are the implications of Crane's comparison of the actual battle to "an historical painting"?

THE KILLERS

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

THE door of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

"What's yours?" George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other end of the counter Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in.

"I'll have a roast pork tenderloin with apple sauce and mashed potatoes," the first man said.

"It isn't ready yet."

"What the hell do you put it on the card for?"

"That's the dinner," George explained. "You can get that at six o'clock."

George looked at the clock on the wall behind the counter.

"It's five o'clock."

"The clock says twenty minutes past five," the second man said.

"It's twenty minutes fast."

"Oh, to hell with the clock," the first man said. "What have you got to eat?"

"I can give you any kind of sandwiches," George said. "You can have ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver and bacon, or a steak."

"Give me chicken croquettes with green peas and cream sauce and mashed potatoes."

"That's the dinner."

"Everything we want's the dinner, eh? That's the way you work it."

"I can give you ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver——"

"I'll take ham and eggs," the man called Al said. He wore a derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across the chest. His face was small and white and he had tight lips. He wore a silk muffler and gloves.

"Give me bacon and eggs," said the other man. He was about the same size as Al. Their faces were different, but they were dressed like twins. Both wore overcoats too tight for them. They sat leaning forward, their elbows on the counter.

"Got anything to drink?" Al asked.

"Silver beer, bevo, ginger-ale," George said.

"I mean you got anything to *drink?*"

"Just those I said."

"This is a hot town," said the other. "What do they call it?"

"Summit."

"Ever hear of it?" Al asked his friend.

"No," said the friend.

"What do you do here nights?" Al asked.

"They eat the dinner," his friend said. "They all come here and eat the big dinner."

"That's right," George said.

"So you think that's right?" Al asked George.

"Sure," said George.

"You're a pretty bright boy, aren't you?"

"Sure," said George.

"Well, you're not," said the other little man. "Is he, Al?"

"He's dumb," said Al. He turned to Nick. "What's your name?"

"Adams."

"Another bright boy," Al said. "Ain't he a bright boy, Max?"

"The town's full of bright boys," Max said.

George put the two platters, one of ham and eggs, the other of bacon and eggs, on the counter. He set down two side-dishes of fried potatoes and closed the wicket into the kitchen.

"Which is yours?" he asked Al.

"Don't you remember?"

"Ham and eggs."

"Just a bright boy," Max said. He leaned forward and took the ham and eggs. Both men ate with their gloves on. George watched them eat.

"What are *you* looking at?" Max looked at George.

"Nothing."

"The hell you were. You were looking at me."

"Maybe the boy meant it for a joke, Max," Al said.

George laughed.

"*You* don't have to laugh," Max said to him. "*You* don't have to laugh at all, see?"

"All right," said George.

"So he thinks it's all right." Max turned to Al. "He thinks it's all right. That's a good one."

"Oh, he's a thinker," Al said. They went on eating.

"What's the bright boy's name down the counter?" Al asked Max.

"Hey, bright boy," Max said to Nick, "You go around on the other side of the counter with your boy friend."

"What's the idea?" Nick asked.

"There isn't any idea."

"You better go around, bright boy," Al said. Nick went around behind the counter.

"What's the idea?" George asked.

"None of your damn business," Al said. "Who's out in the kitchen?"

"The nigger."

"What do you mean the nigger?"

"The nigger that cooks."

"Tell him to come in."

"What's the idea?"

"Tell him to come in."

"Where do you think you are?"

"We know damn well where we are," the man called Max said. "Do we look silly?"

"You talk silly," Al said to him. "What the hell do you argue with this kid for? Listen," he said to George, "tell the nigger to come out here."

"What are you going to do to him?"

"Nothing. Use your head, bright boy. What would we do to a nigger?"

George opened the slit that opened back into the kitchen. "Sam," he called. "Come in here a minute."

The door to the kitchen opened and the nigger came in. "What was it?" he asked. The two men at the counter took a look at him.

"All right, nigger. You stand right there," Al said.

Sam, the nigger, standing in his apron, looked at the two men sitting at the counter. "Yes, sir," he said.

Al got down from his stool.

"I'm going back to the kitchen with the nigger and bright boy," he said. "Go on back to the kitchen, nigger. You go with him, bright boy." The little man walked after Nick and Sam, the cook, back into the kitchen. The door shut after them. The man called Max sat at the counter opposite George. He didn't look at George but looked in the mirror that ran along back of the counter. Henry's had been made over from a saloon into a lunch-counter.

"Well, bright boy," Max said, looking into the mirror, "why don't you say something?"

"What's it all about?"

"Hey, Al," Max called, "bright boy wants to know what it's all about."

"Why don't you tell him?" Al's voice came from the kitchen.

"What do you think it's all about?"

"I don't know."

"What do you think?"

Max looked into the mirror all the time he was talking.

"I wouldn't say."

"Hey, Al, bright boy says he wouldn't say what he thinks it's all about."

"I can hear you, all right," Al said from the kitchen. He had propped open the slit that dishes passed through into the kitchen with a catsup bottle. "Listen, bright boy," he said from the kitchen to George. "Stand a little further along the bar. You move a little to the left, Max." He was like a photographer arranging for a group picture.

"Talk to me, bright boy," Max said. "What do you think's going to happen?"

George did not say anything.

"I'll tell you," Max said. "We're going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Andreson?"

"Yes."

"He comes here to eat every night, don't he?"

"Sometimes he comes here."

"He comes here at six o'clock, don't he?"

"If he comes."

"We know all that, bright boy," Max said. "Talk about something else. Ever go to the movies?"

"Once in a while."

"You ought to go to the movies more. The movies are fine for a bright boy like you."

"What are you going to kill Ole Andreson for? What did he ever do to you?"

"He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us."

"And he's only going to see us once," Al said from the kitchen.

"What are you going to kill him for, then?" George asked.

"We're killing him for a friend. Just to oblige a friend, bright boy."

"Shut up," said Al from the kitchen. "You talk too goddam much."

"Well, I got to keep bright boy amused. Don't I, bright boy?"

"You talk too damn much," Al said. "The nigger and my bright boy are amused by themselves. I got them tied up like a couple of girl friends in the convent."

"I suppose you were in a convent."

"You never know."

"You were in a kosher convent. That's where you were."

George looked up at the clock.

"If anybody comes in you tell them the cook is off, and if they keep after it, you tell them you'll go back and cook yourself. Do you get that, bright boy?"

"All right," George said. "What you going to do with us afterward?"

"That'll depend," Max said. "That's one of those things you never know at the time."

George looked up at the clock. It was a quarter past six. The door from the street opened. A street-car motorman came in.

"Hello, George," he said. "Can I get supper?"

"Sam's gone out," George said. "He'll be back in about half an hour."

"I'd better go up the street," the motorman said. George looked at the clock. It was twenty minutes past six.

"That was nice, bright boy," Max said. "You're a regular little gentleman."

"He knew I'd blow his head off," Al said from the kitchen.

"No," said Max. "It ain't that. Bright boy is nice. He's a nice boy. I like him."

At six-fifty-five George said: "He's not coming."

Two other people had been in the lunch-room. Once George had gone out to the kitchen and made a ham-and-egg sandwich "to go" that a man wanted to take with him. Inside the kitchen he saw Al, his derby hat tipped back, sitting on a stool beside the wicket with the muzzle of a sawed-off shotgun resting on the ledge. Nick and the cook were back to back in the corner, a towel tied in each of their mouths. George had cooked the sandwich, wrapped it up in oiled paper, put it in a bag, brought it in, and the man had paid for it and gone out.

"Bright boy can do everything," Max said. "He can cook and everything. You'd make some girl a nice wife, bright boy."

"Yes?" George said. "Your friend, Ole Andreson, isn't going to come."

"We'll give him ten minutes," Max said.

Max watched the mirror and the clock. The hands of the clock marked seven o'clock, and then five minutes past seven.

"Come on, Al," said Max. "We better go. He's not coming."

"Better give him five minutes," Al said from the kitchen.

In the five minutes a man came in, and George explained that the cook was sick.

"Why the hell don't you get another cook?" the man asked. "Aren't you running a lunch-counter?" He went out.

"Come on, Al," Max said.

"What about the two bright boys and the nigger?"

"They're all right."

"You think so?"

"Sure. We're through with it."

"I don't like it," said Al. "It's sloppy. You talk too much."

"Oh, what the hell," said Max. "We got to keep amused, haven't we?"

"You talk too much, all the same," Al said. He came out from the kitchen. The cut-off barrels of the shotgun made a slight bulge under the waist of his too tight-fitting overcoat. He straightened his coat with his gloved hands.

"So long, bright boy," he said to George. "You got a lot of luck."

"That's the truth," Max said. "You ought to play the races, bright boy."

The two of them went out the door. George watched them, through the window, pass under the arc-light and cross the street. In their tight overcoats and derby hats they looked like a vaudeville team. George went back through the swinging-door into the kitchen and untied Nick and the cook.

"I don't want any more of that," said Sam, the cook. "I don't want any more of that."

Nick stood up. He had never had a towel in his mouth before.

"Say," he said. "What the hell?" He was trying to swagger it off.

"They were going to kill Ole Andreson," George said. "They were going to shoot him when he came in to eat."

"Ole Andreson?"

"Sure."

The cook felt the corners of his mouth with his thumbs.

"They all gone?" he asked.

"Yeah," said George. "They're gone now."

"I don't like it," said the cook. "I don't like any of it at all."

"Listen," George said to Nick. "You better go see Ole Andreson."

"All right."

"You better not have anything to do with it at all," Sam, the cook, said. "You better stay way out of it."

"Don't go if you don't want to," George said.

"Mixing up in this ain't going to get you anywhere," the cook said. "You stay out of it."

"I'll go see him," Nick said to George. "Where does he live?"

The cook turned away.

"Little boys always know what they want to do," he said.

"He lives up at Hirsch's rooming-house," George said to Nick.

"I'll go up there."

Outside the arc-light shone through the bare branches of a tree. Nick walked up the street beside the car-tracks and turned at the next arc-light down a side-street. Three houses up the street was Hirsch's rooming-house. Nick walked up the two steps and pushed the bell. A woman came to the door.

"Is Ole Andreson here?"

"Do you want to see him?"

"Yes, if he's in."

Nick followed the woman up a flight of stairs and back to the end of a corridor. She knocked on the door.

"Who is it?"

"It's somebody to see you, Mr. Andreson," the woman said.

"It's Nick Adams."

"Come in."

Nick opened the door and went into the room Ole Andreson was lying on the bed with all his clothes on. He had been a heavy weight prize-fighter and he was too long for the bed. He lay with his head on two pillows. He did not look at Nick.

"What was it?" he asked.

"I was up at Henry's," Nick said, "and two fellows came in and tied up me and the cook, and they said they were going to kill you."

It sounded silly when he said it. Ole Andreson said nothing.

"They put us out in the kitchen," Nick went on. "They were going to shoot you when you came in to supper."

Ole Andreson looked at the wall and did not say anything.

"George thought I better come and tell you about it."

"There isn't anything I can do about it," Ole Andreson said.

"I'll tell you what they were like."

"I don't want to know what they were like," Ole Andreson said. He looked at the wall. "Thanks for coming to tell me about it."

"That's all right."

Nick looked at the big man lying on the bed.

"Don't you want me to go and see the police?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."

"Isn't there something I could do?"

"No. There ain't anything to do."

"Maybe it was just a bluff."

"No. It ain't just a bluff."

Ole Andreson rolled over toward the wall.

"The only thing is," he said, talking toward the wall, "I just can't make up my mind to go out. I been in here all day."

"Couldn't you get out of town?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "I'm through with all that running around."

He looked at the wall.

"There ain't anything to do now."

"Couldn't you fix it up some way?"

"No. I got in wrong." He talked in the same flat voice. "There ain't anything to do. After a while I'll make up my mind to go out."

"I better go back and see George," Nick said.

"So long," said Ole Andreson. He did not look toward Nick. "Thanks for coming around."

Nick went out. As he shut the door he saw Ole Andreson with all his clothes on, lying on the bed looking at the wall.

"He's been in his room all day," the landlady said downstairs. "I guess he don't feel well. I said to him: 'Mr. Andreson, you ought to go out and take a walk on a nice fall day like this,' but he didn't feel like it."

"He doesn't want to go out."

"I'm sorry he don't feel well," the woman said. "He's an awfully nice man. He was in the ring, you know."

"I know it."

"You'd never know it except from the way his face is," the woman said. They stood talking just inside the street door. "He's just as gentle."

"Well, good-night, Mrs. Hirsch," Nick said.

"I'm not Mrs. Hirsch," the woman said. "She owns the place. I just look after it for her. I'm Mrs. Bell."

"Well, good-night, Mrs. Bell," Nick said.

"Good-night," the woman said.

Nick walked up the dark street to the corner under the arc-light, and then along the car-tracks to Henry's eating-house. George was inside, back of the counter.

"Did you see Ole?"

"Yes," said Nick. "He's in his room and he won't go out."

The cook opened the door from the kitchen when he heard Nick's voice.

"I don't even listen to it," he said and shut the door.

"Did you tell him about it?" George asked.

"Sure. I told him but he knows what it's all about."

"What's he going to do?"

"Nothing."

"They'll kill him."

"I guess they will."

"He must have got mixed up in something in Chicago."

"I guess so," said Nick.

"It's a hell of a thing."

"It's an awful thing," Nick said.

They did not say anything. George reached down for a towel and wiped the counter.

"I wonder what he did?" Nick said.

"Double-crossed somebody. That's what they kill them for."

"I'm going to get out of this town," Nick said.

"Yes," said George. "That's a good thing to do."

"I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful."

"Well," said George, "you better not think about it."

Questions·

1. This story is apparently about the attempt of two gangsters to kill an ex-prizefighter, but the real center of the story lies in the effect of this situation on one of the boys in the lunch wagon. What is that effect?
2. A cartoonist once drew a picture of a hairy fist clutching a small rose and called his picture the "soul of Ernest Hemingway." On the basis of this story, or others as well, would you say that the cartoonist was an intelligent literary critic?
3. How is the necessary exposition given in this story? How does the author avoid breaking the complete dramatic objectivity of his method?
4. Hemingway has been greatly praised for his management of dialogue. Can you describe his use of it? How does he employ devices such as rhythm and repetition to give his dialogue an impression of movement?
5. It has been said that Hemingway's style is based on a calculated naïveté, that is, that he deliberately ignores some of the rules of cultivated writing, such as subordination in sentence structure. Is this true? If you can find examples of this in "The Killers" or in other stories by Hemingway, can you justify it by the general intention of the author?

THE TWO FACES

HENRY JAMES

THE servant, who, in spite of his sealed stamped look, appeared to have his reasons, stood there for instruction in a manner not quite usual after announcing the name. Mrs. Grantham, however, took it up—"Lord Gwyther?"—with a quick surprise that for an instant justified him even to the small scintilla in the glance she gave her companion, which might have had exactly the sense of the butler's hesitation. This companion, a shortish furnish youngish man, clean-shaven and keen-eyed, had, with a promptitude that would have struck an observer—which the butler indeed was—sprung to his feet and moved to the chimney-piece, though his hostess herself meanwhile managed not otherwise to stir. "Well?" she said as for the visitor to advance; which she immediately followed with a sharper "He's not there?"

"Shall I show him up, ma'am?"

"But of course!" The point of his doubt made her at last rise for impatience, and Bates, before leaving the room, might still have caught the achieved irony of her appeal to the gentleman into whose communion with her he had broken. "Why in the world not—? What a way—!" she exclaimed as Sutton felt beside his cheek the passage of her eyes to the glass behind him.

"He wasn't sure you'd see any one."

"I don't see 'any one,' but I see individuals."

"That's just it—and sometimes you don't see them."

"Do you mean ever because of *you?*" she asked as she touched into place a tendril of hair. "That's just his impertinence, as to which I shall speak to him."

"Don't," said Shirley Sutton. "Never notice anything."

"That's nice advice from you," she laughed, "who notice everything!"

"Ah but I speak of nothing."

She looked at him a moment. "You're still more impertinent than Bates. You'll please not budge," she went on.

"Really? I must sit him out?" he continued as, after a minute, she had not again spoken—only glancing about, while she changed her place, partly for another look at the glass and partly to see if she could improve her seat. What she felt was rather more than clever and charming though she was, she could hide. "If you're wondering how you seem I can tell you. Awfully cool and easy."

She gave him another stare. She was beautiful and conscious. "And if you're wondering how *you* seem—"

"Oh I'm not!" he laughed from before the fire. "I always perfectly know."

"How you seem," she retorted, "is as if you didn't!"

Once more for a little he watched her. "You're looking lovely for him—extraordinarily lovely, within the marked limits of your range. But that's enough. Don't be clever."

"Then who *will* be?"

"There you are!" he sighed with amusement.

"Do you know him?" she asked as, through the door left open by Bates, they heard steps on the landing.

Sutton had to think an instant, and produced a "No" just as Lord Gwyther was again announced, which gave an unexpectedness to the greeting offered him a moment later by this personage—a young man, stout and smooth and fresh, but not at all shy, who, after the happiest rapid passage with Mrs. Grantham, put out a hand with a straight free "How d'ye do?"

"Mr. Shirley Sutton," Mrs. Grantham explained.

"Oh yes," said her second visitor quite as if he knew; which, as he couldn't have known, had for her first the interest of confirming a perception that his lordship would be—no, not at all, in general embarrassed, only was now exceptionally and especially agitated. As it is, for that matter, with Sutton's total impression that we are particularly and almost exclusively concerned, it may be further mentioned that he was not less clear as to the really handsome way in which the young man kept himself together and little by little—though with all proper aid indeed—finally found his feet. All sorts of things, for the twenty minutes, occurred to Sutton, though one of them was certainly not that it would, after all, be better he should go. One of them was that their hostess was doing it in perfection—simply, easily, kindly, yet with something the least bit queer in her wonderful eyes; another was that if he had been recognized without the least ground it was through a tension of nerves on the part of his fellow guest that produced inconsequent motions; still another was that, even had departure been indicated, he would positively have felt dissuasion in the rare promise of the scene. This was in especial after Lord Gwyther not only had announced that he was now married, but had mentioned that he wished to bring his wife to Mrs. Grantham for the benefit so certain to be derived. It was the passage immediately produced by that speech that provoked in Sutton the intensity, as it were, of his arrest. He already knew of the marriage as well as Mrs. Grantham herself, and as well also as he knew of some other things; and this gave him doubtless the better measure of what took place before him and the keener consciousness of the quick look that, at a marked moment—though it was not absolutely meant for him any more than his companion—Mrs. Grantham let him catch.

She smiled, but it had a gravity. "I think, you know, you ought to have told me before."

"Do you mean when I first got engaged? Well, it all took place so far away, and we really told, at home, so few people."

Oh there might have been reasons; but it had not been quite right. "You were married at Stuttgart? That wasn't too far for *my* interest, at least, to reach."

"Awfully kind of you—and of course one knew you *would* be kind. But it wasn't at Stuttgart; it was over there, but quite in the country. We should have managed it in England but that her mother naturally wished to be present, yet wasn't in health to come. So it was really, you see, a sort of little hole-and-corner German affair."

This didn't in the least check Mrs. Grantham's claim, but it started a slight anxiety. "Will she be—a—then German?"

Sutton knew her to know perfectly what Lady Gwyther would "be," but he had by this time, while their friend explained, his independent interest. "Oh dear no! My father-in-law has never parted with the proud birthright of a Briton. But his wife, you see, holds an estate in Wurtemberg from *her* mother, Countess Kremnitz, on which, with the awful condition of his English property, you know, they've found it for years a tremendous saving to live. So that though Valda was luckily born at home she has practically spent her life over there.'

"Oh I see." Then, after a slight pause, "Is Valda her pretty name?" Mrs. Grantham asked.

"Well," said the young man, only wishing, in his candor, it was clear, to be drawn out—"well, she has, in the manner of her mother's people, about thirteen; but that's the one we generally use."

Mrs. Grantham waited but an instant. "Then may *I* generally use it?"

"It would be too charming of you; and nothing would give her—as I assure you nothing would give *me*—greater pleasure." Lord Gwyther quite glowed with the thought.

"Then I think that instead of coming alone you might have brought her to see me."

"It's exactly what," he instantly replied, "I came to ask your leave to do." He explained that for the moment Lady Gwyther was not in town, having as soon as she arrived gone down to Torquay to put in a few days with one of her aunts, also her godmother, to whom she was an object of great interest. She had seen no one yet, and no one—not that *that* mattered—had seen her; she knew nothing whatever of Lon

don and was awfully frightened at facing it and at what (however little) might be expected of her. "She wants some one," he said, "some one who knows the whole thing, don't you see? and who's thoroughly kind and clever, as you would be, if I may say so, to take her by the hand." It was at this point and on these words that the eyes of Lord Gwyther's two auditors inevitably and wonderfully met. But there was nothing in the way he kept it up to show he caught the encounter. "She wants, if I may tell you so, a real friend for the great labyrinth; and asking myself what I could do to make things ready for her, and who would be absolutely the best woman in London—"

"You thought naturally of *me?*" Mrs. Grantham had listened with no sign but the faint flash just noted; now, however, she gave him the full light of her expressive face—which immediately brought Shirley Sutton, looking at his watch, once more to his feet.

"She *is* the best woman in London!" He addressed himself with a laugh to the other visitor, but offered his hand in farewell to their hostess.

"You're going?"

"I must," he said without scruple.

"Then we do meet at dinner?"

"I hope so." On which, to take leave, he returned with interest to Lord Gwyther the friendly clutch he had a short time before received.

II

They did meet at dinner, and if they were not, as it happened, side by side, they made that up afterwards in the happiest angle of a drawing-room that offered both shine and shadow and that was positively much appreciated, in the circle in which they moved, for the favorable "corners" created by its shrewd mistress. Mrs. Grantham's face, charged with something produced in it by Lord Gwyther's visit, had been with him so constantly for the previous hours that, when she instantly challenged him on his "treatment" of her in the afternoon, he was on the point of naming it as his reason for not having remained with her. Something new had quickly come into her beauty; he couldn't as yet have said what, nor whether on the whole to its advantage or its loss. Till he should see this clearer, at any rate he would say nothing; so that he found with sufficient presence of mind a better excuse. If in short he had in defiance of her particular request left her alone with Lord Gwyther it was simply because the situation had suddenly turned so exciting that he had fairly feared the contagion of it—the temptation of its making him, most improperly, put in his word.

They could now talk of these things at their ease. Other couples, ensconced and scattered, enjoyed the same privilege, and Sutton had more and more the profit, such as it was, of feeling that his interest in Mrs. Grantham had become—what was the luxury of so high a social code—an acknowledged and protected relation. He knew his London well enough to know that he was on the way to be regarded as her main source of consolation for the trick Lord Gwyther had several months before publicly played her. Many persons had not held that, by the high social code in question, his lordship could have "reserved the right" to turn up that way, from one day to another, engaged to be married. For himself London took, with its short cuts and its cheap psychology, an immense deal for granted. To his own sense he was never—could in the nature of things never be—any man's "successor." Just what had constituted the predecessorship of other men was apparently that they had been able to make up their mind. He, worse luck, was at the mercy of her face, and more than ever at the mercy of it now, which meant moreover not that it made a slave of him, but that it made, disconcertingly, a sceptic. It was the absolute perfection of the handsome, but things had a way of coming into it. "I felt," he said, "that you were there together at a point at which you had a right to the ease the absence of a listener would give. I was sure that when you made me promise to stay you hadn't guessed—"

"That he could possibly have come to me on such an extraordinary errand? No, of course I hadn't guessed. Who *would?* But didn't you see how little I was upset by it?"

Sutton demurred. Then with a smile: "I think *he* saw how little."

"You yourself didn't then?"

He again held back, but not, after all, to answer. "He was wonderful, wasn't he?"

"I think he was," she returned after a moment. To which she added: "Why did he pretend that way he knew you?"

"He didn't pretend. He somehow felt on the spot that I was 'in it.'" Sutton had found this afterwards and found it to represent a reality. "It was an effusion of cheer and hope. He was so glad to see me there and to find you happy."

"Happy?"

"Happy. Aren't you?"

"Because of *you?*"

"Well—according to the impression he received as he came in."

"That was sudden then," she asked, "and unexpected?"

Her companion thought. "Prepared in some degree, but confirmed by the sight of us, there together, so awfully jolly and sociable over your fire."

Mrs. Grantham turned this round. "If he knew I was 'happy' then—which, by the way, is none of his business, nor of yours either—why in the world did he come?"

"Well, for good manners, and for his idea," said Sutton.

She took it in, appearing to have no hardness of rancor that could bar discussion. "Do you mean by his idea his proposal that I should grandmother his wife? And if you do is the proposal your reason for calling him wonderful?"

Sutton laughed. "Pray what's yours?" As this was a question, however, that she took her time to answer or not to answer—only appearing interested for a moment in a combination that had formed itself on the other side of the room—he presently went on. "What's *his*?—that would seem to be the point. His, I mean, for having decided on the extraordinary step of throwing his little wife, bound hands and feet, into your arms. Intelligent as you are, and with these three or four hours to have thought it over, I yet don't see how that can fail still to mystify you."

She continued to watch their opposite neighbors. "'Little,' you call her. Is she so very small?"

"Tiny, tiny—she *must* be; as different as possible in every way—of necessity—from you. They always *are* the opposite pole, you know," said Shirley Sutton.

She glanced at him now. "You strike me as of an impudence—!"

"No, no. I only like to make it out with you."

She looked away again and after a little went on. "I'm sure she's charming, and only hope one isn't to gather he's already tired of her."

"Not a bit! He's tremendously in love, and he'll remain so."

"So much the better. And if it's a question," said Mrs. Grantham, "of one's doing what one can for her, he has only, as I told him when you had gone, to give me the chance."

"Good! So he *is* to commit her to you?"

"You use extraordinary expressions, but it's settled that he brings her."

"And you'll really and truly help her?"

"Really and truly?" said Mrs. Grantham with her eyes again on him. "Why not? For what do you take me?"

"Ah isn't that just what I still have the discomfort, every day I live, of asking myself?"

She had made, as she spoke, a movement to rise, which, as if she was tired of his tone, his last words appeared to determine. But, also getting up, he held her, when they were on their feet, long enough to hear the rest of what he had to say. "If you do help her, you know, you'll show him you've understood."

"Understood what?"

"Why, his idea—the deep acute train of reasoning that has led him to take, as one may say, the bull by the horns; to reflect that as you might, as you probably *would*, in any case, get at her, he plays the wise game, as well as the bold one, by treating your generosity as a real thing and placing himself publicly under an obligation to you."

Mrs. Grantham showed not only that she had listened, but that she had for an instant considered. "What is it you elegantly describe as my getting 'at' her?"

"He takes his risk, but puts you, you see, on your honor."

She thought a moment more. "What profundities indeed then over the simplest of matters! And if your idea is," she went on, "that if I do help her I shall show him I've understood them, so it will be that if I don't—"

"You'll show him"—Sutton took her up—"that you haven't? Precisely. But in spite of not wanting to appear to have understood *too* much—"

"I may still be depended on to do what I can? Quite certainly. You'll see what I may still be depended on to do." And she moved away.

III

It was not, doubtless, that there had been anything in their rather sharp separation at that moment to sustain or prolong the interruption; yet it definitely befell that, circumstances aiding, they practically failed to meet again before the great party at Burbeck. This occasion was to gather in some thirty persons from a certain Friday to the following Monday, and it was on the Friday that Sutton went down. He had known in advance that Mrs. Grantham was to be there, and this perhaps, during the interval of hindrance, had helped him a little to be patient. He had before him the certitude of a real full cup—two days brimming over with the sight of her. He found, however, on his arrival that she was not yet in the field, and presently learned that her place would be in a small [illegible] that was to join the party on the morrow. This knowledge he extracted from Miss Banker, who was always the first to present herself at any gathering that was to enjoy her, and whom moreover—partly on that very account—the wary not less than the speculative were apt to hold themselves well-advised to engage with at as early as possible a stage of the business. She was stout red rich mature universal—a massive much-fingered volume, alphabetical won-

derful indexed, that opened of itself at the right place. She opened for Sutton instinctively at G——, which happened to be remarkably convenient. "What she's really waiting over for is to bring down Lady Gwyther."

"Ah the Gwythers are coming?"

"Yes; caught, through Mrs. Grantham, just in time. *She'll* be the feature—every one wants to see her."

Speculation and warmness met and combined at this moment in Shirley Sutton. "Do you mean—a —Mrs. Grantham?"

"Dear no! Poor little Lady Gwyther, who, but just arrived in England, appears now literally for the first time in her life in any society whatever, and whom (don't you know the extraordinary story? you ought to—*you!*) she, of all people, has so wonderfully taken up. It will be quite—here—as if she were 'presenting' her."

Sutton of course took in more things than even appeared. "I never know what I ought to know; I only know, inveterately, what I oughtn't. So what *is* the extraordinary story?"

"You really haven't heard —?"

"Really," he replied without winking.

"It happened indeed but the other day," said Miss Banker, "yet every one's already wondering. Gwyther has thrown his wife on her mercy—but I won't believe you if you pretend to me you don't know why he shouldn't."

Sutton asked himself then what he *could* pretend. "Do you mean because she's merciless?"

She hesitated. "If you don't know perhaps I oughtn't to tell you."

He liked Miss Banker and found just the right tone to plead. "*Do* tell me."

"Well," she sighed, "it will be your own fault—! They had been such friends that there could have been but one name for the crudity of his original *procédé*. When I was a girl we used to call it throwing over. They call it in French to *lâcher*. But I refer not so much to the act itself as to the manner of it, though you may say indeed of course that there's in such cases after all only one manner. Least said soonest mended."

Sutton seemed to wonder. "Oh he said too much?"

"He said nothing. That was it."

Sutton kept it up. "But was *what?*"

"Why, what she must, like any woman in her shoes, have felt to be his perfidy. He simply went and *did* it—took to himself this child, that is, without the preliminary of a scandal or a rupture—before she could turn round."

"I follow you. But it would appear from what you say that she *has* turned round now."

"Well," Miss Banker laughed, "we shall see for ourselves how far. It will be what every one will try to see."

"Oh then we've work cut out!" And Sutton certainly felt that he himself had—an impression that lost nothing from a further talk with Miss Banker in the course of a short stroll in the grounds with her the next day. He spoke as one who had now considered many things.

"Did I understand from you yesterday that Lady Gwyther's a 'child?'"

"Nobody knows. It's prodigious the way she has managed."

"The way Lady Gwyther has—?"

"No, the way May Grantham has kept her till this hour in her pocket."

He was quick at his watch. "Do you mean by 'this hour' that they're due now?"

"Not till tea. All the others arrive together in time for that." Miss Banker had clearly, since the previous day, filled in gaps and become, as it were, revised and enlarged. "She'll have kept a cat from seeing her, so as to produce her entirely herself."

"Well," Sutton mused, "That will have been a very noble sort of return—"

"For Gwyther's behavior? Very. Yet I feel creepy."

"Creepy?"

"Because so much depends for the girl—in the way of the right start or the wrong start—on the signs and omens of this first appearance. It's a great house and a great occasion, and we're assembled here, it strikes me, very much as the Roman mob at the circus used to be to see the next Christian maiden brought out to the tigers."

"Oh if she *is* a Christian maiden—!" Sutton murmured. But he stopped at what his imagination called up.

It perhaps fed that faculty a little that Miss Banker had the effect of making out that Mrs. Grantham might individually be, in any case, something of a Roman matron. "She has kept her in the dark so that we may only take her from her hand. She'll have formed her for us."

"In so few days?"

"Well, she'll have prepared her—decked her for the sacrifice with ribbons and flowers."

"Ah if you only mean that she'll have taken her to her dressmaker—!" And it came to Sutton, at once as a new light and as a check, almost, to anxiety, that this was all poor Gwyther, mistrustful probably of a taste formed by Stuttgart, might have desired of their friend.

There were usually at Burbeck many things taking place at once; so that wherever else, on such occasions, tea might be served, it went forward with matchless pomp, weather permitting, on a shaded stretch of one of the terraces and in presence of one of the prospects. Shirley Sutton, moving, as the afternoon waned, more restlessly about and mingling in dispersed groups only to find they had nothing to keep him quiet, came upon it as he turned a corner of the house—saw it seated there in all its state. It might be said that at Burbeck it was, like everything else, made the most of. It constituted immediately, with multiplied tables and glittering plate, with rugs and cushions and ices and fruit and wonderful porcelain and beautiful women, a scene of splendor, almost an incident of grand opera. One of the beautiful women might quite have been expected to rise with a gold cup and a celebrated song.

One of them did rise, as happened, while Sutton drew near, and he found himself a moment later seeing nothing and nobody but Mrs. Grantham. They met on the terrace, just away from the others, and the movement in which he had the effect of arresting her might have been that of withdrawal. He quickly saw, however, that if she had been about to pass into the house it was only on some errand—to get something or to call some one—that would immediately have restored her to her public. It somehow struck him on the spot—and more than ever yet, though the impression was not wholly new to him—that she felt herself a figure for the forefront of the stage and indeed would have been recognized by any one at a glance as the *prima donna assoluta.* She caused, in fact, during the few minutes he stood talking to her, an extraordinary series of waves to roll extraordinarily fast over his sense, not the least mark of the matter being that the appearance with which it ended was again the one with which it had begun. "The face—the face," as he kept dumbly repeating; that was at last, as at first, all he could clearly see. She had a perfection resplendent, but what in the world had it done, this perfection, to her beauty? It was her beauty doubtless that looked out at him, but it was into something else that, as their eyes met, he strangely found himself looking.

It was as if something had happened in consequence of which she had changed, and there was that in this swift perception that made him glance eagerly about for Lady Gwyther. But as he took in the recruited group—identities of the hour added to those of the previous twenty-four—he saw, among his recognitions, one of which was the husband of the person missing, that Lady Gwyther was not there. Nothing in the whole business was more singular than his consciousness that, as he came back to his interlocutress after the nods and smiles and hand-waves he had launched, she knew what had been his thought. She knew for whom he had looked without success; but why should this knowledge visibly have hardened and sharpened her, and precisely at a moment when she was unprecedentedly magnificent? The indefinable apprehension that had somewhat sunk after his second talk with Miss Banker and then had perversely risen again—this nameless anxiety now produced on him, with a sudden sharper pinch, the effect of a great suspense. The action of that, in turn, was to show him that he hadn't yet fully known how much he had at stake on a final view. It was revealed to him for the first time that he "really cared" whether Mrs. Grantham were a safe nature. It was too ridiculous by what a thread it hung, but something was certainly in the air that would definitely tell him.

What was in the air descended the next moment to earth. He turned round as he caught the expression with which her eyes attached themselves to something that approached. A little person, very young and very much dressed, had come out of the house, and the expression in Mrs. Grantham's eyes was that of the artist confronted with her work and interested, even to impatience, in the judgment of others. The little person drew nearer, and though Sutton's companion, without looking at him now, gave it a name and met it, he had jumped for himself at certitude. He saw many things—too many, and they appeared to be feathers, frills, excrescences of silk and lace—massed together and conflicting, and after a moment also saw struggling out of them a small face that struck him as either scared or sick. Then, with his eyes again returning to Mrs. Grantham, he saw another.

He had no more talk with Miss Banker till late that evening—an evening during which he had felt himself too noticeably silent; but something had passed between this pair, across dinner-table and drawing-room, without speech, and when they at last found words it was in the needed ease of a quiet end of the long, lighted gallery, where she opened again at the very paragraph.

"You were right—that *was* it. She did the only thing that, at such short notice, she *could* do. She took her to her dressmaker."

Sutton, with his back to the reach of the gallery, had, as if to banish a vision, buried his eyes for a minute in his hands. "And oh the face—the face!"

"Which?" Miss Banker asked.

"Whichever one looks at."

"But May Grantham's glorious. She has turned herself out——"

"With a splendor of taste and a sense of effect, eh? Yes." Sutton showed he saw far.

"She *has* the sense of effect. The sense of effect as exhibited in Lady Gwyther's clothes—!" was something Miss Banker failed of words to express. "Everybody's overwhelmed. Here, you know, that sort of thing's grave. The poor creature's lost."

"Lost?"

"Since on the first impression, as we said, so much depends. The first impression's made—oh made! I defy her now ever to unmake it. Her husband, who's proud, won't like her the better for it. And I don't see," Miss Banker went on, "that her prettiness *was* enough—a mere little feverish frightened freshness; what *did* he see in her?—to be so blasted. It has been done with an atrocity of art——"

"That supposes the dressmaker then also a devil?"

"Oh your London women and their dressmakers!" Miss Banker laughed.

"But the face—the face!" Sutton woefully repeated.

"May's?"

"The little girl's. It's exquisite."

"Exquisite?"

"For unimaginable pathos."

"Oh!" Miss Banker dropped.

"She has at last begun to see." Sutton showed again how far *he* saw. "It glimmers upon her innocence, she makes it dimly out—what has been done with her. She's even worse this evening—the way, my eye, she looked at dinner!—than when she came. Yes"—he was confident—"it has dawned (how couldn't it, out of all of you?) and she knows."

"She ought to have known before!" Miss Banker intelligently sighed.

"No; she wouldn't in that case have been so beautiful."

"Beautiful?" cried Miss Banker; "overloaded like a monkey in a show!"

"The face, yes; which goes to the heart. It's that that makes it," said Shirley Sutton. "And it's that"—he thought it out—"That makes the other."

"I see. Conscious?"

"Horrible!"

"You take it hard," said Miss Banker.

Lord Gwyther, just before she spoke, had come in sight and now was near them. Sutton on this, appearing to wish to avoid him, reached, before answering his companion's observation, a door that opened close at hand. "So hard," he replied from that point, "that I shall be off tomorrow morning."

"And not see the rest?" she called after him.

But he had already gone, and Lord Gwyther, arriving, amiably took up her question. "The rest of what?"

Miss Banker looked him well in the eyes. "Of Mrs. Grantham's clothes."

Questions:

1. This story is ironical. How would you compare the irony of this story with that of "La Mère Sauvage"?
2. The method of presenting the incidents in this story is fundamentally dramatic, that is, the reader has direct scenes with dialogue of the characters rather than character descriptions and summaries by the author. But the method is not as strictly maintained as the dramatic method of "The Killers." Can you indicate the differences? Can you define differences in the nature of the material that made a difference in method desirable? For instance, in "The Killers" the reader is never given a direct glimpse of what a character is thinking, but in "The Two Faces," though the story is handled by scenes dramatically constructed, the reader has access to the thoughts of one character. Does this serve any purpose?
3. How can the style of Henry James be described? Contrast it with Hemingway's style. Is it appropriate to the material and intention in "The Two Faces"?

JERICO, JERICO, JERICO

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE

SHE OPENED her eyes. She must have been asleep for hours or months. She could not reckon; she could only feel the steady silence of time. She had been Joshua and made it swing suspended in her room. Forever she had floated above the counterpane, between the tester and the counterpane she had floated until her hand, long and bony, its speckled-dried skin drawing away from the bulging blue veins, had reached and drawn her body under the covers. And now she was resting, clear-headed and quiet, her thoughts clicking like a new-greased mower. All creation could not make her lift her thumb or cross it over her finger. She looked at the bed, the bed her mother had died in, the bed her children had been born in, her marriage bed, the bed the General had drenched with his blood. Here it stood where it had stood for seventy years, square and firm on the floor, wide enough for three people to

lie comfortable in, if they didn't sleep restless; but not wide enough for her nor long enough when her conscience scorched the cool wrinkles in the sheets. The two foot posts, octagonal-shaped and mounted by carved pieces that looked like absurd flowers, stood up to comfort her when the world began to crumble. Her eyes followed down the posts and along the basket-quilt. She had made it before her marriage to the General, only he wasn't a general then. He was a slight, tall young man with a rolling mustache and perfume in his hair. A many a time she had seen her young love's locks dripping with scented oil, down upon his collar . . . She had cut the squares for the baskets in January, and for stuffing had used the letters of old lovers, fragments of passion cut to warm her of a winter's night. The General would have his fun. *Miss Kate, I didn't sleep well last night. I heard Sam Buchanan make love to you out of that farthest basket. If I hear him again, I mean to toss this piece of quilt in the fire.* Then he would chuckle in his round, soft voice; reach under the covers and pull her over to his side of the bed. On a cold and frosting night he would sleep with his nose against her neck. His nose was so quick to turn cold, he said, and her neck was so warm. Sometimes her hair, the loose, unruly strands at the nape, would tickle his nostrils and he would wake up with a sneeze. This had been so long ago, and there had been so many years of trouble and worry. Her eyes, as apart from her as the mirror on the bureau, rested upon the half-tester, upon the enormous button that caught the rose-colored canopy and shot its folds out like the rays of the morning sun. She could not see but she could feel the heavy cluster of mahogany grapes that tumbled from the center of the head board—out of its vines curling down the sides it tumbled. How much longer would these never-picked grapes hang above her head? How much longer would she, rather, hang to the vine of this world, she who lay beneath as dry as any raisin. Then she remembered. She looked at the blinds. They were closed.

"You, Ants, where's my stick? I'm a great mind to break it over your trifling back."

"Awake? What a nice long nap you've had," said Doctor Ed.

"The boy? Where's my grandson? Has he come?"

"I'll say he's come. What do you mean taking to your bed like this? Do you realize, beautiful lady, that this is the first time I ever saw you in bed in my whole life? I believe you've taken to bed on purpose. I don't believe you want to see me."

"Go long, boy, with your foolishness."

That's all she could say, and she blushed as she said it—she blushing at the words of a snip of a boy, whom she had diapered a hundred times and had washed as he stood before the fire in the round tin tub, his little back swayed and his little belly sticking out in front, rosy from the scrubbing he had gotten. *Mammy, what for I've got a hole in my stummick; what for, Mammy?* Now he was sitting on the edge of the bed calling her beautiful lady, an old hag like her, beautiful lady. A good-looker the girls would call him, with his bold, careless face and his hands with their fine, long fingers. Soft, how soft they were, running over her rough, skinny bones. He looked a little like his grandpa, but somehow there was something missing . . .

"Well, boy, it took you a time to come home to see me die."

"Nonsense. Cousin Edwin, I wouldn't wait on a woman who had so little faith in my healing powers."

"There ain't nothing strange about dying. But I ain't in such an all-fired hurry. I've got a heap to tell you about before I go."

The boy leaned over and touched her gently. "Not even death would dispute you here, on Long Gourd, Mammy."

He was trying to put her at her ease in his carefree way. It was so obvious a [illegible] but she loved him for it. There was something nice in its awkwardness, the charm of the young's blundering and of their efforts to get along in the world. Their pretty arrogance, their patronizing airs, their colossal unknowing of what was to come. It was a quenching drink to a sin-thirsty old woman. Somehow his vitality had got crossed in her blood and made a dry heart leap, her blood that was almost water. Soon now she would be all water, water and dust, lying in the burying ground between the cedar—and fire. She could smell her soul burning and see it. What a fire it would make below, dripping with sin, like a rag soaked in kerosene. But she had known what she was doing. And here was Long Gourd, all its fields intact, ready to be handed on, in better shape than when she took it over. Yes, she had known what she was doing. How long, she wondered, would his spirit hold up under the trials of planting, of cultivating, and of the gathering time, year in and year out—how would he hold up before so many springs and so many autumns. The thought of him giving orders, riding over the place, or rocking on the piazza, and a great pain would pin her heart to her backbone. She had wanted him by her to train—there was so much for him to know: how the south field was cold and must be planted late, and where the orchards would best hold their fruit, and where the frosts crept soonest—that now could never be. She turned her head—who was that woman, that

strange woman standing by the bed as if she owned it, as if . . .

"This is Eva, Mammy."

"Eva?"

"We are going to be married."

"I wanted to come and see—to meet Dick's grandmother . . ."

I wanted to come see her die. That's what she meant. Why didn't she finish and say it out. She had come to lick her chops and see what she would enjoy. That's what she had come for, the lying little slut. The richest acres in Long Gourd valley, so rich hit'd make yer feet greasy to walk over'm, Saul Oberly at the first tollgate had told the peddler once, and the peddler had told it to her, knowing it would please and make her trade. *Before you die.* Well, why didn't you finish it out? You might as well. You've given yourself away.

Her fierce thoughts dried up the water in her eyes, tired and resting far back in their sockets. They burned like a smothered fire stirred up by the wind as they traveled over the woman who would lie in her bed, eat with her silver, and caress her flesh and blood. The woman's body was soft enough to melt and pour about him. She could see that; and her firm, round breasts, too firm and round for any good to come from them. And her lips, full and red, her eyes bright and cunning. The heavy hair crawled about her head to tangle the poor, foolish boy in its ropes. She might have known he would do something foolish like this. He had a foolish mother. There warn't any way to avoid it. But look at her belly, small and no-count. There wasn't a muscle the size of a worm as she could see. And those hips—

And then she heard her voice: "What did you say her name was, son? Eva? Eva Callahan, I'm glad to meet you, Eva. Where'd your folks come from, Eva? I knew some Callahans who lived in the Goosepad settlement. They couldn't be any of your kin, could they?"

"Oh, no, indeed. My people . . ."

"Right clever people they were. And good farmers, too. Worked hard. Honest—that is, most of 'm. As honest as that run of people go. We always gave them a good name."

"My father and mother live in Birmingham. Have always lived there."

"Birmingham," she heard herself say with contempt. They could have lived there all their lives and still come from somewhere. I've got a mule older 'n Birmingham. "What's your pa's name?"

"Her father is Mister E. L. Callahan, Mammy."

"First name not Elijah by any chance? Lige they called him."

"No. Elmore, Mammy."

"Old Mason Callahan had a son they called Lige. Somebody told me he moved to Elyton. So you think you're going to live with the boy here."

"We're to be married . . . that is, if Eva doesn't change her mind."

And she saw his arm slip possessively about the woman's waist. "Well, take care of him, young woman, or I'll come back and han't you. I'll come back and claw your eyes out."

"I'll take very good care of him, Mrs. McCowan."

"I can see that." She could hear the threat in her voice, and Eva heard it.

"Young man," spoke up Doctor Edwin, "you should feel powerful set up, two such women pestering each other about you."

The boy kept an embarrassed silence.

"All of you get out now. I want to talk to him by himself. I've got a lot to say and precious little time to say it in. And he's mighty young and helpless and ignorant."

"Why, Mammy, you forget I'm a man now. Twenty-six. All teeth cut. Long trousers."

"It takes a heap more than pants to make a man. Throw open them blinds, Ants."

"Yes'm."

"You don't have to close the door so all-fired soft. Close it naturally. And you can tip about all you want to—later. I won't be hurried to the burying ground. And keep your head away from that door. What I've got to say to your new master is private."

"Listen at you, Mistiss."

"You listen to me. That's all. No, wait. I had something else on my mind—what is it? Yes. How many hens has Melissy set? You don't know? Find out. A few of the old hens ought to be setting. Tell her to be careful to turn the turkey eggs every day. No, you bring them and set them under my bed. I'll make sure. We got a mighty pore hatch last year. You may go now. I'm plumb worn out, boy, worn out thinking for these people. It's that that worries a body down. But you'll know all about it in good time. Stand out there and let me look at you good. You don't let me see enough of you, and I almost forget how you look. Not really, you understand. Just a little. It's your own fault. I've got so much to trouble me that you, when you're not here, naturally slip back in my mind. But that's all over now. You are here to stay, and I'm here to go. There will always be Long Gourd, and there must always be a McCowan on it. I had hoped to have you by me for several years, but you would have your fling in town

I thought it best to clear your blood of it, but as God is hard, I can't see what you find to do in town. And now you've gone and gotten you a woman. Well, they all have to do it. But do you reckon you've picked the right one—you must forgive the frankness of an old lady who can see the bottom of her grave—I had in mind one of the Carlisle girls. The Carlisle place lies so handy to Long Gourd and would give me a landing on the river. Have you seen Anna Belle since she's grown to be a woman? I'm told there's not a better housekeeper in the valley."

"I'm sure Anna Belle is a fine girl. But, Mammy, I love Eva."

"She'll wrinkle up on you, Son; and the only wrinkles land gets can be smoothed out by the harrow. And she looks sort of puny to me, Son. She's powerful small in the waist and walks about like she had worms."

"Gee, Mammy, you're not jealous are you? That waist is in style."

"You want to look for the right kind of style in a woman. Old Mrs. Penter Matchem had two daughters with just such waists, but 'twarnt natural. She would tie their corset strings to the bed posts and whip'm out with a buggy whip. The poor girls never drew a hearty breath. Just to please that old woman's vanity. She got paid in kind. It did something to Eliza's bowels and she died before she was twenty. The other one never had any children. She used to whip'm out until they cried. I never liked that woman. She thought a whip could do anything."

"Well, anyway, Eva's small waist wasn't made by any corset strings. She doesn't wear any."

"How do you know, sir?"

"Well . . . I . . . What a question for a respectable woman to ask."

"I'm not a respectable woman. No woman can be respectable and run four thousand acres of land. Well, you'll have it your own way. I suppose the safest place for a man to take his folly is to bed."

"Mammy!"

"You must be lenient with your Cousin George. He wanders about night times talking about the War. I put him off in the west wing where he won't keep people awake, but sometimes he gets in the yard and gives orders to his troops. 'I will sweep that hill, General'—and many's the time he's done it when the battle was doubtful—'I'll sweep it with my iron brooms'; then he shouts out his orders, and pretty soon the dogs commence to barking. But he's been a heap of company for me. You must see that your wife humors him. It won't be for long. He's mighty feeble."

"Eva's not my wife yet, Mammy."

"You won't be free much longer—the way she looks at you, like a hungry hound."

"I was just wondering," he said hurriedly. "I hate to talk about anything like this . . ."

"Everybody has a time to die, and I'll have no maudlin nonsense about mine."

"I was wondering about Cousin George . . . if I could get somebody to keep him. You see, it will be difficult in the winters. Eva will want to spend the winters in town . . ."

He paused, startled, before the great bulk of his grandmother rising from her pillows, and in the silence that frightened the air, his unfinished words hung suspended about them.

After a moment he asked if he should call the doctor.

It was some time before she could find words to speak.

"Get out of the room."

"Forgive me, Mammy. You must be tired."

"I'll send for you," sounded the dead voice in the still room, "when I want to see you again. I'll send for you and—the woman."

She watched the door close quietly on his neat square back. Her head whirled and turned like a flying jennet. She lowered and steadied it on the pillows. Four thousand acres of the richest land in the valley he would sell and squander on that slut, and he didn't even know it and there was no way to warn him. This terrifying thought rushed through her mind, and she felt the bed shake with her pain, while before the footboard the spectre of an old sin rose up to mock her. How she had struggled to get this land and keep it together—through the War, the Reconstruction, and the pleasanter after days. For eighty-seven years she had suffered and slept and planned and rested and had pleasure in this valley, seventy of it, almost a turning century, on this place; and now that she must leave it . . .

The things she had done to keep it together. No. The one thing . . . from the dusty stacks the musty odor drifted through the room, met the tobacco smoke over the long table piled high with records, reports. Iva Louise stood at one end, her hat clinging perilously to the heavy auburn hair, the hard blue eyes and the voice:

"You promised Pa to look after me"—she had waited for the voice to break and scream—"and you have stolen my land!"

"Now, Miss Iva Louise," the lawyer dropped his empty eyes along the floor, "you don't mean . . ."

"Yes, I do mean it."

Her own voice had restored calm to the room: "I promised your pa his land would not be squandered."

"My husband won't squander my property. You just want it for yourself."

She cut through the scream with the sharp edge of her scorn: "What about that weakling's farm in Madison? Who pays the taxes now?"

The girl had no answer to that. Desperate, she faced the lawyer: "Is there no way, sir, I can get my land from the clutches of this unnatural woman?"

The man coughed; the red rim of his eyes watered with embarrassment: "I'm afraid," he cleared his throat, "you say you can't raise the money . . . I'm afraid—"

That trapped look as the girl turned away. It had come back to her, now trapped in her bed. As a swoon spreads, she felt the desperate terror of weakness, more desperate where there has been strength. Did the girl see right? Had she stolen the land because she wanted it?

Suddenly, like the popping of a thread in a loom, the struggles of the flesh stopped, and the years backed up and covered her thoughts like the spring freshet she had seen so many times creep over the dark soil. Not in order but, as if they were stragglers trying to catch up, the events of her life passed before her sight that had never been so clear. Sweeping over the mounds of her body rising beneath the quilts came the old familiar odors—the damp, strong, penetrating smell of new-turned ground; the rank, clinging, resistless odor of green picked feathers stuffed in a pillow by Guinea Nell, thirty-odd years ago; tobacco on the mantel, clean and sharp like smelling salts; her father's sweat, sweet like stale oil; the powerful ammonia of manure turned over in a stall; curing hay in the wind; the polecat's stink on the night air, almost pleasant, a sort of commingled scent of all the animals, man and beast; the dry smell of dust under a rug; the over-strong scent of too-sweet fruit trees blooming; the inhospitable wet ashes of a dead fire in a poor white's cabin; black Rebeccah in the kitchen; a wet hound steaming before a fire. There were other odors she could not identify, overwhelming her, making her weak, taking her body and drawing out of it a choking longing to hover over all that she must leave, the animals, the fences, the crops growing in the fields, the houses, the people in them . . .

It was early summer, and she was standing in the garden after dark—she had heard something after the small chickens. Mericy and Yellow Jane passed beyond the paling fence. Dark shadows—gay, full voices. *Where you gwine, gal? I dunno. Jest a-gwine. Where you? To the frolic, do I live. Well, stay off'n yoe back tonight.* Then out of the rich, gushing . . . *All right, you stay off'n yourn. I done caught de stumbles.* More laughter.

The face of Uncle Ike, head man in slavery days, rose up. A tall Senegalese, he was standing in the crib of the barn unmoved before the bushwhackers. *Nigger, whar is that gold hid? You better tell us, nigger. Down in the well; in the far-place. By God, you black son of a bitch, we'll roast ye alive if you air too contrary to tell. Now, listen ole nigger, Miss McCowan ain't nothen to you no more. You been set free. We'll give ye some of it, a whole sack. Come on, now*—out of the dribbling, leering mouth—*whar air it?* Ike's tall form loomed towards the shadows. In the lamp flame his forehead shone like the point, the core of night. He stood there with no word for answer. As she saw the few white beads of sweat on his forehead, she spoke.

She heard her voice reach through the dark—*you turn that black man loose.* A pause and then—*I know your kind. In better days you'd slip around and set people's barns afire. You shirked the War to live off the old and weak. You don't spare me because I'm a woman. You'd shoot a woman quicker because she has the name of being frail. Well, I'm not frail, and my Navy Six an't frail. Ike, take their guns.* Ike moved and one of them raised his pistol arm. He dropped it, and the acrid smoke stung her nostrils. *Now, Ike, get the rest of their weapons. Their knives, too. One of us might turn our backs.*

On top of the shot she heard the soft pat of her servants' feet. White eyeballs shining through the cracks in the barn. Then: *Caesar, Al, Zebedee, step in here and lend a hand to Ike.* By sun the people had gathered in the yard. Uneasy, silent, they watched her on the porch. She gave the word, and the whips cracked. The mules strained, trotted off, skittish and afraid, dragging the white naked bodies beating and cursing over the sod: *Turn us loose. We'll not bother ye no more, lady. You ain't no woman, you're a devil.* She turned and went into the house. It is strange how a woman gets hard when trouble comes a-gobbling after her people.

Worn from memory, she closed her eyes to stop the whirl, but closing her eyes did no good. She released the lids and did not resist. Brother Jack stood before her, handsome and shy, but ruined from his cradle by a cleft palate, until he came to live only in the fire of spirits. And she understood, so clear was life, down to the smallest things. She had often heard tell of this clarity that took a body whose time was spending on the earth. Poor Brother Jack, the gentlest of men, but because of his mark, made the butt and wit of the valley. She saw him leave for school, where he was sent to separate him from his

drinking companions, to a church school where the boys buried their liquor in the ground and sipped it up through straws. His letters: *Dear Ma, quit offering so much advice and send me more money. You send barely enough to keep me from stealing.* His buggy wheels scraping the gravel, driving up as the first roosters crowed. *Katharine, Malcolm, I thought you might want to have a little conversation.* Conversation two hours before sun! And down she would come and let him in, and the General would get up, stir up the fire, and they would sit down and smoke. Jack would drink and sing, *If the Little Brown Jug was mine, I'd be drunk all the time and I'd never be sob-er a-gin*—or, *Hog drovers, hog drovers, hog drovers we air, a-courting your darter so sweet and so fair.* They would sit and smoke and drink until she got up to ring the bell.

He stayed as long as the whiskey held out, growing more violent towards the end. She watered his bottles; begged whiskey to make camphor—*Gre't God, Sis Kate, do you sell camphor? I gave you a pint this morning.* Poor Brother Jack, killed in Breckinridge's charge at Murfreesboro, cut in two by a chain shot from an enemy gun. All night long she had sat up after the message came. His body scattered about a splintered black gum tree. She had seen that night, as if she had been on the field, the parties moving over the dark field hunting the wounded and dead. Clyde Bascom had fallen near Jack with a bad hurt. They were messmates. He had to tell somebody; and somehow she was the one he must talk to. The spectral lanterns, swinging towards the dirge of pain and the monotonous cries of *Water,* caught by the river dew on the before-morning air and held suspended over the field in its acrid quilt. There death dripped to mildew the noisy throats . . . and all the while relief parties, or maybe it was the burial parties, moving, blots of night, sullenly moving in the viscous blackness.

Her eyes widened, and she looked across the foot posts into the room. There was some mistake, some cruel blunder; for there now, tipping about the carpet, hunting in her wardrobe, under the bed, blowing down the fire to the ashes until they glowed in their dryness, stalked the burial parties. They stepped out of the ashes in twos and threes, hunting, hunting and shaking their heads. Whom were they searching for? Jack had long been buried. They moved more rapidly; looked angry. They crowded the room until she gasped for breath. One, gaunt and haggard, jumped on the foot of her bed; rose to the ceiling; gesticulated; argued in animated silence. He leaned forward; pressed his hand upon her leg. She tried to tell him to take it off. Cold and crushing heavy, it pressed her down to the bowels of the earth. Her lips trembled, but no sound came forth. Now the hand moved up to her stomach; and the haggard eyes looked gravely at her, alert, as if they were waiting for something. Her head turned giddy. She called to Dick, to Ants, to Doctor Ed; but the words struck her teeth and fell back in her throat. She concentrated on lifting the words, and the burial parties sadly shook their heads. Always the cries struck her teeth and fell back down. She strained to hear the silence they made. At last from a great distance she thought she heard . . . *too late* . . . *too late.* How exquisite the sound, like a bell swinging without ringing. Suddenly it came to her. She was dying.

How slyly death slipped up on a body, like sleep moving over the vague boundary. How many times she had lain awake to trick the unconscious there. At last she would know . . . But she wasn't ready. She must first do something about Long Gourd. That slut must not eat it up. She would give it to the hands first. He must be brought to understand this. But the spectres shook their heads. Well let them shake. She'd be damned if she would go until she was ready to go. She'd be damned all right, and she smiled at the meaning the word took on now. She gathered together all the particles of her will; the spectres faded; and there about her were the anxious faces of kin and servants. Edwin had his hands under the cover feeling her legs. She made to raise her own hand to the boy. It did not go up. Her eyes wanted to roll upward and look behind her forehead, but she pinched them down and looked at her grandson.

"You want to say something, Mammy?"—she saw his lips move.

She had a plenty to say, but her tongue had somehow got glued to her lips. Truly it was now too late. Her will left her. Life withdrawing gathered like a frosty dew on her skin. The last breath blew gently past her nose. The dusty nostrils tingled. She felt a great sneeze coming. There was a roaring; the wind blew through her head once, and a great cotton field bent before it, growing and spreading, the bolls swelling as big as cotton sacks and bursting white as thunderheads. From a distance, out of the far end of the field, under a sky so blue that it was painful-bright, voices came singing, *Joshua fit the battle of Jerico, Jerico, Jerico—Joshua fit the battle of Jerico, and the walls come a-tumbling down.*

Questions:

1. On what conflict is this story based?
2. What is the significance of the title?
3. How would you describe the method of presentation in this story and compare or contrast it with

the methods in previous stories? Could this story have been handled as well by another method?

4. In the "Introduction to Fiction" there is a short discussion of the basis of the style of this story. Read that discussion again and try to find further instances in the story to support the points of the discussion or to attack them.

SOME LIKE THEM COLD

RING LARDNER

N. Y., Aug. 3.

DEAR MISS GILLESPIE: How about our bet now as you bet me I would forget all about you the minute I hit the big town and would never write you a letter. Well girlie it looks like you lose so pay me. Seriously we will call all bets off as I am not the kind that bet on a sure thing and it sure was a sure thing that I would not forget a girlie like you and all that is worrying me is whether it may not be the other way round and you are wondering who this fresh guy is that is writeing you this letter. I bet you are so will try and refreshen your memory.

Well girlie I am the handsome young man that was wandering round the Lasalle st. station Monday and "happened" to sit down beside of a mighty pretty girlie who was waiting to meet her sister from Toledo and the train was late and I am glad of it because if it had not been that little girlie and I would never of met. So for once I was a lucky guy but still I guess it was time I had some luck as it was certainly tough luck for you and I to both be liveing in Chi all that time and never get together till a half hour before I was leaveing town for good.

Still "better late than never" you know and maybe we can make up for lost time though it looks like we would have to do our makeing up at long distants unless you make good on your threat and come to N. Y. I wish you would do that little thing girlie as it looks like that was the only way we would get a chance to play round together as it looks like they was little or no chance of me comeing back to Chi as my whole future is in the big town. N. Y. is the only spot and specially for a man that expects to make my liveing in the song writeing game as here is the Mecca for that line of work and no matter how good a man may be they don't get no recognition unless they live in N. Y.

Well girlie you asked me to tell you all about my trip. Well I remember you saying that you would give anything to be makeing it yourself but as far as the trip itself was conserned you ought to be thankfull you did not have to make it as you would of sweat your head off. I know I did specially wile going through Ind. Monday P.M. but Monday night was the worst of all trying to sleep and finely I give it up and just layed there with the prespiration rolling off of me though I was laying on top of the covers and nothing on but my underwear.

Yesterday was not so bad as it rained most of the A.M. comeing through N. Y. state and in the P.M. we road along side of the Hudson all P.M. Some river girlie and just looking at it makes a man forget all about the heat and everything else except a certain girlie who I seen for the first time Monday and then only for a half hour but she is the kind of a girlie that a man don't need to see her only once and they would be no danger of forgetting her. There I guess I better lay off that subject or you will think I am a "fresh guy."

Well that is about all to tell you about the trip only they was one amuseing incidence that come off yesterday which I will tell you. Well they was a dame got on the train at Toledo Monday and had the birth opp. mine but I did not see nothing of her that night as I was out smokeing till late and she hit the hay early but yesterday A.M. she come in the dinner and sit at the same table with me and tried to make me and it was so raw that the dinge waiter seen it and give me the wink and of course I paid no tension and I waited till she got through so as they would be no danger of her following me out but she stopped on the way out to get a tooth pick and when I come out she was out on the platform with it so I tried to brush right by but she spoke up and asked me what time it was and I told her and she said she guessed her watch was slow so I said maybe it just seemed slow on acct. of the company it was in.

I don't know if she got what I was driveing at or not but anyway she give up trying to make me and got off at Albany. She was a good looker but I have no time for gals that tries to make strangers on a train.

Well if I don't quit you will think I am writeing a book but will expect a long letter in answer to this letter and we will see if you can keep your promise like I have kept mine. Don't dissapoint me girlie as I am all alone in a large city and hearing

from you will keep me from getting home sick for old Chi though I never thought so much of the old town till I found out you lived there. Don't think that is kidding girlie as I mean it.

You can address me at this hotel as it looks like I will be here right along as it is on 47th st. right off of old Broadway and handy to everything and am only paying $21 per wk. for my rm. and could of got one for $16 but without bath but am glad to pay the differents as am lost without my bath in the A.M. and sometimes at night too.

Tomorrow I expect to commence fighting the "battle of Broadway" and will let you know how I come out that is if you answer this letter. In the mean wile, girlie au reservoir and don't do nothing I would not do.

Your new friend (?)
CHAS. F. LEWIS.

Chicago, Ill., Aug. 6.

MY DEAR MR. LEWIS: Well, that certainly was a "surprise party" getting your letter and you are certainly a "wonder man" to keep your word as I am afraid most men of your sex are gay deceivers but maybe you are "different." Any way it sure was a surprise and will gladly pay the bet if you will just tell me what it was we bet. Hope it was not money as I am a "working girl" but if it was not more than a dollar or two will try to dig it up even if I have to "beg, borrow or steal."

Suppose you will think me a "case" to make a bet and then forget what it was, but you must remember, Mr. Man, that I had just met you and was "dazzled." Joking aside I was rather "fussed" and will tell you why. Well, Mr. Lewis, I suppose you see lots of girls like the one you told me about that you saw on the train who tried to "get acquainted" but I want to assure you that I am not one of those kind and sincerely hope you will believe me when I tell you that you was the first man I ever spoke to meeting them like that and my friends and the people who know me would simply faint if they knew I ever spoke to a man without a "proper introduction."

Believe me, Mr. Lewis, I am not that kind and I don't know now why I did it only that you was so "different" looking if you know what I mean and not at all like the kind of men that usually try to force their attentions on every pretty girl they see. Lots of times I act on impulse and let my feelings run away from me and sometimes I do things on the impulse of the moment which I regret them later on, and that is what I did this time, but hope you won't give me cause to regret it and I know you won't as I know you are not that kind of a man a specially after what you told me about the girl on the train. But any way as I say, I was in a "daze" so can't remember what it was we bet, but will try and pay it if it does not "break" me.

Sis's train got in about ten minutes after yours had gone and when she saw me what do you think was the first thing she said? Well, Mr. Lewis, she said: "Why Mibs (That is a pet name some of my friends have given me) what has happened to you? I never seen you have as much color." So I passed it off with some remark about the heat and changed the subject as I certainly was not going to tell her that I had just been talking to a man who I had never met or she would of dropped dead from the shock. Either that or she would not of believed me as it would be hard for a person who knows me well to imagine me doing a thing like that as I have quite a reputation for "squelching" men who try to act fresh. I don't mean anything personal by that, Mr. Lewis, as am a good judge of character and could tell without you telling me that you are not that kind.

Well, Sis and I have been on the "go" ever since she arrived as I took yesterday and today off so I could show her the "sights" though she says she would be perfectly satisfied to just sit in the apartment and listen to me "rattle on." Am afraid I am a great talker, Mr. Lewis, but Sis says it is as good as a show to hear me talk as I tell things in such a different way as I cannot help from seeing the humorous side of everything and she says she never gets tired of listening to me, but of course she is my sister and thinks the world of me, but she really does laugh like she enjoyed my craziness.

Maybe I told you that I have a tiny little apartment which a girl friend of mine and I have together and it is hardly big enough to turn round in, but still it is "home" and I am a great home girl and hardly ever care to go out evenings except occasionally to the theater or dance. But even if our "nest" is small we are proud of it and Sis complimented us on how cozy it is and how "homey" it looks and she said she did not see how we could afford to have everything so nice and Edith (my girl friend) said: "Mibs deserves all the credit for that. I never knew a girl who could make a little money go a long ways like she can." Well, of course she is my best friend and always saying nice things about me, but I do try and I hope I get results. Have always said that good taste and being careful is a whole lot more important than lots of money though it is nice to have it.

You must write and tell me how you are getting along in the "battle of Broadway" (I laughed when I read that) and whether the publishers like your

songs though I know they will. Am crazy to hear them and hear you play the piano as I love good jazz music even better than classical, though I suppose it is terrible to say such a thing. But I usually say just what I think though sometimes I wish afterwards I had not of. But still I believe it is better for a girl to be her own self and natural instead of always acting. But am afraid I will never have a chance to hear you play unless you come back to Chi and pay us a visit as my "threat" to come to New York was just a "threat" and I don't see any hope of ever getting there unless some rich New Yorker should fall in love with me and take me there to live. Fine chance for poor little me, eh Mr. Lewis?

Well, I guess I have "rattled on" long enough and you will think I am writing a book unless I quit and besides, Sis has asked me as a special favor to make her a pie for dinner. Maybe you don't know it, Mr. Man, but I am quite famous for my pie and pastry, but I don't suppose a "genius" is interested in common things like that.

Well, be sure and write soon and tell me what N. Y. is like and all about it and don't forget the little girlie who was "bad" and spoke to a strange man in the station and have been blushing over it ever since.

Your friend (?)
MABELLE GILLESPIE

N. Y., Aug. 10.

DEAR GIRLIE: I bet you will think I am fresh guy commenceing that way but Miss Gillespie is too cold and a man can not do nothing cold in this kind of weather especially in this man's town which is the hottest place I ever been in and I guess maybe the reason why New Yorkers is so bad is because they think they are all ready in H— and can not go no worse place no matter how they behave themselves. Honest girlie I certainly envy you being where there is a breeze off the old Lake and Chi may be dirty but I never heard of nobody dying because they was dirty but four people died here yesterday on acct. of the heat and I seen two different women flop right on Broadway and had to be taken away in the ambulance and it could not of been because they was dressed too warm because it would be impossible for the women here to leave off any more cloths.

Well have not had much luck yet in the battle of Broadway as all the heads of the big music publishers is out of town on their vacation and the big boys is the only ones I will do business with as it would be silly for a man with the stuff I have got to waste my time on somebody that is just on the staff and have not got the final say. But I did play a couple of my numbers for the people up to Levy's and Goebel's and they went crazy over them in both places. So it looks like all I have to do is wait for the big boys to get back and then play my numbers for them and I will be all set. What I want is to get taken on the staff of one of the big firms as that gives a man the inside and they will plug your numbers more if you are on the staff. In the mean wile have not got nothing to worry me but am just seeing the sights of the big town as have saved up enough money to play round for a wile and any way a man that can play piano like I can don't never have to worry about starveing. Can certainly make the old music box talk girlie and am always good for a $75 or $100 job.

Well have been here a week now and on the go every minute and I thought I would be lonesome down here but no chance of that as I have been treated fine by the people I have met and have sure met a bunch of them. One of the boys liveing in the hotel is a vaudeville actor and he is a member of the Friars club and took me over there to dinner the other night and some way another the bunch got wise that I could play piano so of course I had to sit down and give them some of my numbers and everybody went crazy over them. One of the boys I met there was Paul Sears the song writer but he just writes the lyrics and has wrote a bunch of hits and when he heard some of my melodies he called me over to one side and said he would like to work with me on some numbers. How is that girlie as he is one of the biggest hit writers in N. Y.

N. Y. has got some mighty pretty girlies and I guess it would not be hard to get acquainted with them and in fact several of them has tried to make me since I been here but I always figure that a girl must be something wrong with her if she tries to make a man that she don't know nothing about so I pass them all up. But I did meet a couple of pips that a man here in the hotel went up on Riverside Drive to see them and insisted on me going along and they got on some way that I could make a piano talk so they was nothing but I must play for them so I sit down and played some of my own stuff and they went crazy over it.

One of the girls wanted I should come up and see her again, and I said I might but I think I better keep away as she acted like she wanted to vamp me and I am not the kind that likes to play round with a gal just for their company and dance with them etc. but when I see the right gal that will be a different thing and she won't have to beg me to come and see her as I will camp right on her trail till she says yes. And it won't be none of these N. Y. fly by

nights neither. They are all right to look at but a man would be a sucker to get serious with them as they might take you up and next thing you know you would have a wife on your hands that don't know a dish rag from a waffle iron.

Well girlie will quit and call it a day as it is too hot to write any more and I guess I will turn on the cold water and lay in the tub a wile and then turn in. Don't forget to write to

Your friend,
CHAS. F. LEWIS.

DEAR MR. MAN: Hope you won't think me a "silly Billy" for starting my letter that way but "Mr. Lewis" is so formal and "Charles" is too much the other way and any way I would not dare call a man by their first name after only knowing them only two weeks. Though I may as well confess that Charles is my favorite name for a man and have always been crazy about it as it was my father's name. Poor old dad, he died of cancer three years ago, but left enough insurance so that mother and we girls were well provided for and do not have to do anything to support ourselves though I have been earning my own living for two years to make things easier for mother and also because I simply can't bear to be doing nothing as I feel like a "drone." So I flew away from the "home nest" though mother felt bad about it as I was her favorite and she always said I was such a comfort to her as when I was in the house she never had to worry about how things would go.

But there I go gossiping about my domestic affairs just like you would be interested in them though I don't see how you could be though personly I always like to know all about my friends, but I know men are different so will try and not bore you any longer. Poor Man, I certainly feel sorry for you if New York is as hot as all that. I guess it has been very hot in Chi, too, at least everybody has been complaining about how terrible it is. Suppose you will wonder why I say "I guess" and you will think I ought to know if it is hot. Well sir, the reason I say "I guess" is because I don't feel the heat like others do or at least I don't let myself feel it. That sounds crazy I know, but don't you think there is a good deal in mental suggestion and not letting yourself feel things? I believe that if a person simply won't allow themselves to be affected by disagreeable things, why such things won't bother them near as much. I know it works with me and that is the reason why I am never cross when things go wrong and "keep smiling" no matter what happens and as far as the heat is concerned, why I just don't let myself feel it and my friends say I don't even look hot no matter if the weather is boiling and Edith, my girl friend, often says that I am like a breeze and it cools her off just to have me come in the room. Poor Edie suffers terribly during the hot weather and says it almost makes her mad at me to see how cool and unruffled I look when everybody else is perspiring and have red faces etc.

I laughed when I read what you said about New York being so hot that people thought it was the "other place." I can appreciate a joke, Mr. Man, and that one did not go "over my head." Am still laughing at some of the things you said in the station though they probably struck me funnier than they would most girls as I always see the funny side and sometimes something is said and I laugh and the others wonder what I am laughing at as they cannot see anything in it themselves, but it is just the way I look at things so of course I cannot explain to them why I laughed and they think I am crazy. But I had rather part with almost anything anything rather than my sense of humor as it helps me over a great many rough spots.

Sis has gone back home though I would of liked to of kept her here much longer, but she had to go though she said she would of liked nothing better than to stay with me and just listen to me "rattle on." She always says it is just like a show to hear me talk as I always put things in such a funny way and for weeks after she has been visiting me she thinks of some of the things I said and laughs over them. Since she left Edith and I have been pretty quiet though poor Edie wants to be on the "go" all the time and tries to make me go out with her every evening to the pictures and scolds me when I say I had rather stay home and read and calls me a "book worm." Well, it is true that I had rather stay home with a good book than to go to some crazy old picture and the last two nights I have been reading myself to sleep with Robert W. Service's poems. Don't you love Service or don't you care for "highbrow" writings?

Personly there is nothing I love more than to just sit and read a good book or sit and listen to somebody play the piano, I mean if they can really play and I believe I like popular music better than the classical though I suppose that is a terrible thing to confess, but I love all kinds of music but a specially the piano when it is played by somebody who can really play.

Am glad you have not "fallen" for the "ladies" who have tried to make your acquaintance in New York. You are right in thinking there must be something wrong with girls who try to "pick up" strange men as no girl with self respect would do such a thing and when I say that, Mr. Man, I know you

will think it is a funny thing for me to say on account of the way our friendship started, but I mean it and I assure you that was the first time I ever done such a thing in my life and would never of thought of doing it had I not known you were the right kind of a man as I flatter myself that I am a good judge of character and can tell pretty well what a person is like by just looking at them and I assure you I had made up my mind what kind of a man you were before I allowed myself to answer your opening remark. Otherwise I am the last girl in the world that would allow myself to speak to a person without being introduced to them.

When you write again you must tell me all about the girl on Riverside Drive and what she looks like and if you went to see her again and all about her. Suppose you will think I am a little old "curiosity shop" for asking all those questions and will wonder why I want to know. Well, sir, I won't tell you why, so there, but I insist on you answering all questions and will scold you if you don't. Maybe you will think that the reason why I am so curious is because I am "jealous" of the lady in question. Well, sir, I won't tell you whether I am or not, but will keep you "guessing." Now, don't you wish you knew?

Must close or you will think I am going to "rattle on" forever or maybe you have already become disgusted and torn my letter up. If so all I can say is poor little me—she was a nice little girl and meant well, but the man did not appreciate her.

There! Will stop or you will think I am crazy if you do not all ready.

Yours (?)
MABELLE.

N. Y., Aug. 20.

DEAR GIRLIE: Well girlie I suppose you thought I was never going to answer your letter but have been busier than a one armed paper hanger the last week as have been working on a number with Paul Sears who is one of the best lyric writers in N. Y. and has turned out as many hits as Berlin or Davis or any of them. And believe me girlie he has turned out another hit this time that is he and I have done it together. It is all done now and we are just waiting for the best chance to place it but will not place it nowheres unless we get the right kind of a deal but maybe will publish it ourselves.

The song is bound to go over big as Sears has wrote a great lyric and I have give it a great tune or at least every body that has heard it goes crazy over it and it looks like it would go over bigger than any song since Mammy and would not be surprised to see it come out the hit of the year. If it is handled right we will make a bbl. of money and Sears says it is a cinch we will clean up as much as $25000 apiece which is pretty fair for one song but this one is not like the most of them but has got a great lyric and I have wrote a melody that will knock them out of their seats. I only wish you could hear it girlie and hear it the way I play it. I had to play it over and over about 50 times at the Friars last night.

I will copy down the lyric of the chorus so you can see what it is like and get the idea of the song though of course you can't tell much about it unless you hear it played and sang. The title of the song is When They're Like You and here is the chorus:

Some like them hot, some like them cold.
Some like them when they're not too darn old.
Some like them fat, some like them lean.
Some like them only at sweet sixteen.
Some like them dark, some like them light,
Some like them in the park, late at night.
Some like them fickle, some like them true,
But the time I like them is when they're like you.

How is that for a lyric and I only wish I could play my melody for you as you would go nuts over it but will send you a copy as soon as the song is published and you can get some of your friends to play it over for you and I know you will like it though it is a different melody when I play it or when somebody else plays it.

Well girlie you will see how busy I have been and am libel to keep right on being busy as we are not going to let the grass grow under our feet but as soon as we have got this number placed we will get busy on another one as a couple like that will put me on Easy st. even if they don't go as big as we expect but even 25 grand is a big bunch of money and if a man could only turn out one hit a year and make that much out of it I would be on Easy st. and no more hammering on the old music box in some cabaret.

Who ever we take the song to we will make them come across with one grand for advance royaltys and that will keep me going till I can turn out another one. So the future looks bright and rosey to yours truly and I am certainly glad I come to the big town though sorry I did not do it a whole lot quicker.

This is a great old town girlie and when you have lived here a wile you wonder how you ever stood for a burg like Chi which is just a hick town along side of this besides being dirty etc. and a man is a sucker to stay there all their life specially a man in my line of work as N. Y. is the Mecca for a man that has got the musical gift. I figure that all the time I spent in Chi I was just wasteing my time and

never really started to live till I come down here and I have to laugh when I think of the boys out there that is trying to make a liveing in the song writeing game and most of them starve to death all their life and the first week I am down here I meet a man like Sears and the next thing you know we have turned out a song that will make us a fortune.

Well girlie you asked me to tell you about the girlie up on the Drive that tried to make me and asked me to come and see her again. Well I can assure you you have no reasons to be jealous in that quarter as I have not been back to see her as I figure it is wasteing my time to play around with a dame like she that wants to go out somewheres every night and if you married her she would want a house on 5th ave. with a dozen servants so I have passed her up as that is not my idea of home.

What I want when I get married is a real home where a man can stay home and work and maybe have a few of his friends in once in a wile and entertain them or go to a good musical show once in a wile and have a wife that is in sympathy with you and not nag at you all the wile but be a real help mate. The girlie up on the Drive would run me ragged and have me in the poor house inside of a year even if I was makeing 25 grand out of one song. Besides she wears a make up that you would have to blast to find out what her face looks like. So I have not been back there and don't intend to see her again so what is the use of me telling you about her. And the only other girlie I have met is a sister of Paul Sears who I met up to his house wile we was working on the song but she don't hardly count as she has not got no use for the boys but treats them like dirt and Paul says she is the coldest proposition he ever seen.

Well I don't know no more to write and besides have got a date to go out to Paul's place for dinner and play some of my stuff for him so as he can see if he wants to set words to some more of my melodies. Well don't do nothing I would not do and have as good a time as you can in old Chi and will let you know how we come along with the song.

CHAS. F. LEWIS

Chicago, Ill., Aug. 23.

DEAR MR. MAN: I am thrilled to death over the song and think the words awfully pretty and am crazy to hear the music which I know must be great. It must be wonderful to have the gift of writing songs and then hear people play and sing them and just think of making $25,000 in such a short time. My, how rich you will be and I certainly congratulate you though am afraid when you are rich and famous you will have no time for [illegible] little me or will you be an exception and remember your "old" friends even when you are up in the world? I sincerely hope so.

Will look forward to receiving a copy of the song and will you be sure and put your name on it? I am all ready very conceited just to think that I know a man that writes songs and makes all that money.

Seriously I wish you success with your next song and I laughed when I read your remark about being busier than a one armed paper hanger. I don't see how you think up all those comparisons and crazy things to say. The next time one of the girls asks me to go out with them I am going to tell them I can't because I am busier than a one armed paper hanger and then they will think I made it up and say: "The girl is clever."

Seriously I am glad you did not go back to see the girl on the Drive and am also glad you don't like girls who makes themselves up so much as I think it is disgusting and would rather go round looking like a ghost than put artificial color on my face. Fortunately I have a complexion that does not need "fixing" but even if my coloring was not what it is I would never think of lowering myself to "fix" it. But I must tell you a joke that happened just the other day when Edith and I were out at lunch and there was another girl in the restaurant whom Edie knew and she introduced her to me and I noticed how this girl kept staring at me and finally she begged my pardon and asked if she could ask me a personal question and I said yes and she asked me if my complexion was really "mine." I assured her it was and she said: "Well, I thought so because I did not think anybody could put it on so artistically. I certainly envy you." Edie and I both laughed.

Well, if that girl envies me my complexion, why I envy you living in New York. Chicago is rather dirty though I don't let that part of it bother me as I bathe and change my clothing so often that the dirt does not have time to "settle." Edie often says she cannot see how I always keep so clean looking and says I always look like I had just stepped out of a band box. She also calls me a fish (jokingly) because I spend so much time in the water. But seriously I do love to bathe and never feel so happy as when I have just "cleaned up" and put on fresh clothing.

Edie has just gone out to see a picture and was cross at me because I would not go with her. I told her I was going to write a letter and she wanted to know to whom and I told her and she said: "You write to him so often that a person would almost think you was in love with him." I just laughed and turned it off, but she does say the most embarrassing

things and I would be angry if it was anybody but she that said them.

Seriously I had much rather sit here and write letters or read or just sit and dream than go out to some crazy old picture show except once in awhile I do like to go to the theater and see a good play and a specially a musical play if the music is catchy. But as a rule I am contented to just stay home and feel cozy and lots of evenings Edie and I sit here without saying hardly a word to each other though she would love to talk but she knows I had rather be quiet and she often says it is just like living with a deaf and dumb mute to live with me because I make so little noise round the apartment. I guess I was born to be a home body as I so seldom care to go "gadding."

Though I do love to have company once in awhile, just a few congenial friends whom I can talk to and feel at home with and play cards or have some music. My friends love to drop in here, too, as they say Edie and I always give them such nice things to eat. Though poor Edie has not much to do with it, I am afraid, as she hates anything connected with cooking which is one of the things I love best of anything and I often say that when I begin keeping house in my own home I will insist on doing most of my own work as I would take so much more interest in it than a servant, though I would want somebody to help me a little if I could afford it as I often think a woman that does all her own work is liable to get so tired that she loses interest in the bigger things of life like books and music. Though after all what bigger thing is there than home making a specially for a woman?

I am sitting in the dearest old chair that I bought yesterday at a little store on the North Side. That is my one extravagance, buying furniture and things for the house, but I always say it is economy in the long run as I will always have them and have use for them and when I can pick them up at a bargain I would be silly not to. Though heaven knows I will never be "poor" in regards to furniture and rugs and things like that as mother's house in Toledo is full of lovely things which she says she is going to give to Sis and myself as soon as we have real homes of our own. She is going to give me the first choice as I am her favorite. She has the loveliest old things that you could not buy now for love or money including lovely old rugs and a piano which Sis wanted to have a player attachment put on it but I said it would be an insult to the piano so we did not get one. I am funny about things like that, a specially old furniture and feel towards them like people whom I love.

Poor mother, I am afraid she won't live much longer to enjoy her lovely old things as she has been suffering for years from stomach trouble and the doctor says it has been worse lately instead of better and her heart is weak besides. I am going home to see her a few days this fall as it may be the last time. She is very cheerful and always says she is ready to go now as she has had enough joy out of life and all she would like would be to see her girls settled down in their own homes before she goes.

There I go, talking about my domestic affairs again and I will bet you are bored to death though personly I am never bored when my friends tell me about themselves. But I won't "rattle on" any longer, but will say good night and don't forget to write and tell me how you come out with the song and thanks for sending me the words to it. Will you write a song about me some time? I would be thrilled to death! But I am afraid I am not the kind of girl that inspires men to write songs about them, but am just a quiet "mouse" that loves home and am not giddy enough to be the heroine of a song.

Well, Mr. Man, good night and don't wait so long before writing again to

Yours (?)
MABELLE

N. Y., Sept. 8.

DEAR GIRLIE: Well girlie have not got your last letter with me so cannot answer what was in it as I have forgotten if there was anything I was supposed to answer and besides have only a little time to write as I have a date to go out on a party with the Sears. We are going to the Georgie White show and afterwards somewheres for supper. Sears is the boy who wrote the lyric to my song and it is him and his sister I am going on the party with. The sister is a cold fish that has no use for men but she is show crazy and insists on Paul takeing her to 3 or 4 of them a week.

Paul wants me to give up my room here and come and live with them as they have plenty of room and I am running a little low on money but don't know if I will do it or not as am afraid I would freeze to death in the same house with a girl like the sister as she is ice cold but she don't hang around the house much as she is always takeing trips or going to shows or somewheres.

So far we have not had no luck with the song. All the publishers we have showed it to has went crazy over it but they won't make the right kind of a deal with us and if they don't loosen up and give us a decent royalty rate we are libel to put the song out outselves and show them up. The man up to

Goebel's told us the song was O. K. and he liked it but it was more of a production number than anything else and ought to go in a show like the Follies but they won't be in N. Y. much longer and what we ought to do is hold it till next spring.

Mean wile I am working on some new numbers and also have taken a position with the orchestra at the Wilton and am going to work there starting next week. They pay good money $60 and it will keep me going.

Well girlie that is about all the news. I believe you said your father was sick and hope he is better and also hope you are getting along O. K. and take care of yourself. When you have nothing else to do write to your friend,

CHAS. F. LEWIS.

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 11.

DEAR MR. LEWIS: Your short note reached me yesterday and must say I was puzzled when I read it. It sounded like you was mad at me though I cannot think of any reason why you should be. If there was something I said in my last letter that offended you I wish you would tell me what it was and I will ask your pardon though I cannot remember anything I could of said that you could take offense at. But if there was something, why I assure you, Mr. Lewis, that I did mean anything by it. I certainly did not intend to offend you in any way.

Perhaps it is nothing I wrote you, but you are worried on account of the publishers not treating you fair in regards to your song and that is why your letter sounded so distant. If that is the case I hope that by this time matters have rectified themselves and the future looks brighter. But any way, Mr. Lewis, don't allow yourself to worry over business cares as they will all come right in the end and I always think it is silly for people to worry themselves sick over temporary troubles, but the best way is to "keep smiling" and look for the "silver lining" in the cloud. That is the way I always do no matter what happens, I manage to smile and my girl friend, Edie, calls me Sunny because I always look on the bright side.

Remember also, Mr. Lewis, that $60 is a salary that a great many men would like to be getting and are living on less than that and support—a wife and family on it. I always say that a person can get along on whatever amount they make if they manage things in the right way.

So if it is business troubles, Mr. Lewis, I say don't worry, but look on the bright side. But if it is something I wrote in my last letter that offended you I wish you would tell me what it was so I can apologize as I assure you I meant nothing and would not say anything to hurt you for the world.

Please let me hear from you soon as I will not feel comfortable until I know I am not to blame for the sudden change.

Sincerely,
MABELLE GILLESPIE.

N. Y., Sept. 24.

DEAR MISS GILLESPIE: Just a few lines to tell you the big news or at least it is big news to me. I am engaged to be married to Paul Sears' sister and we are going to be married early next month and live in Atlantic City where the orchestra I have been playing with has got an engagement in one of the big cabarets.

I know this will be a surprise to you as it was even a surprise to me as I did not think I would ever have the nerve to ask the girlie the big question as she was always so cold and acted like I was just in the way. But she said she supposed she would have to marry somebody some time and she did not dislike me as much as most of the other men her brother brought round and she would marry me with the understanding that she would not have to be a slave and work round the house and also I would have to take her to a show or somewheres every night and if I could not take her myself she would "run wild" alone. Atlantic City will be O. K. for that as a lot of new shows opens down there and she will be able to see them before they get to the big town. As for her being a slave, I would hate to think of marrying a girl and then have them spend their lives in druggery round the house. We are going to live in a hotel till we find something better but will be in no hurry to start house keeping as we will have to buy all new furniture.

Betsy is some doll when she is all fixed up and believe me she knows how to fix herself up. I don't know what she uses but it is weather proof as I have been out in a rain storm with her and we both got drowned but her face stayed on. I would almost think it was real only she tells me different.

Well girlie I may write to you again once in a wile as Betsy says she don't give a dam if I write to all the girls in the world just so I don't make her read the answers but that is all I can think of to say now except good bye and good luck and may the right man come along soon and he will be a lucky man getting a girl that is such a good cook and got all that furniture etc.

But just let me give you a word of advice before I close and that is don't never speak to strange men who you don't know nothing about as they may get

you wrong and think you are trying to make them. It just happened that I knew better so you was lucky in my case but the luck might not last.

Your friend,
CHAS. F. LEWIS.

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 27.

MY DEAR MR. LEWIS: Thanks for your advice and also thank your fiance for her generosity in allowing you to continue your correspondence with her "rivals," but personly I have no desire to take advantage of that generosity as I have something better to do than read letters from a man like you, a specially as I have a man friend who is not so generous as Miss Sears and would strongly object to my continuing a correspondence with another man. It is at his request that I am writing this note to tell you not to expect to hear from me again.

Allow me to congratulate you on your engagement to Miss Sears and I am sure she is to be congratulated too, though if I met the lady I would be tempted to ask her to tell me her secret, namely how she's going to "run wild" on $60.

Sincerely,
MABELLE GILLESPIE.

Questions:

1. This story, like "The Killers," is entirely objective and dramatic. Because the characters speak for themselves through their letters, there is no opportunity for the direct setting and description found in "The Killers." How much is this lack felt by the reader? How much is provided indirectly through the letters?
2. Speaking through the letters, both of the characters give evaluations of themselves. Does the reader accept these evaluations? Does the author intend that he should accept these evaluations? If he does not intend this, how can the author, since he gives no comment, expect the reader to accept his own evaluation? What is the author's evaluation?

SPOTTED HORSES

WILLIAM FAULKNER

YES sir. Flem Snopes has filled that whole country full of spotted horses. You can hear folks running them all day and all night, whooping and hollering, and the horses running back and forth across them little wooden bridges ever now and then kind of like thunder. Here I was this morning pretty near half way to town, with the team ambling along and me setting in the buckboard about half asleep, when all of a sudden something come swurging up outen the bushes and jumped the road clean, without touching hoof to it. It flew right over my team big as a billboard and flying through the air like a hawk. It taken me thirty minutes to stop my team and untangle the harness and the buckboard and hitch them up again.

That Flem Snopes. I be dog if he ain't a case, now. One morning about ten years ago the boys was just getting settled down on Varner's porch for a little talk and tobacco, when here come Flem out from behind the counter, with his coat off and his hair all parted, like he might have been clerking for Varner for ten years already. Folks all knowed him; it was a big family of them about five miles down the bottom. That year, at least. Share-cropping. They never stayed on any place over a year. Then they would move on to another place, with the chap or maybe the twins of that year's litter. It was a regular nest of them. But Flem. The rest of them stayed tenant farmers, moving ever year, but here come Flem one day, walking out from behind Jody Varner's counter like he owned it. And he wasn't there but a year or two before folks knowed that if him and Jody was both still in that store in ten years more it would be Jody clerking for Flem Snopes. Why, that fellow could make a nickel where it wasn't but four cents to begin with. He skun me in two trades, myself and the fellow that can do that, I just hope he'll get rich before I do; that's all.

All right. So here Flem was, clerking at Varner's, making a nickel here and there and not telling nobody about it. No, sir. Folks never knowed when Flem got the better of somebody lessen the fellow he beat told it. He'd just set there in the store-chair, chewing his tobacco and keeping his own business to hisself, until about a week later we'd find out it was somebody else's business he was keeping to hisself--provided the fellow he trimmed was mad enough to tell it. That's Flem.

We give him ten years to own ever thing Jody Varner had. But he never waited no ten years. I reckon you-all know that gal of Uncle Billy Varner's, the youngest one; Eula. Jody's sister. Ever Sunday ever yellow-wheeled buggy and curried riding horse in that country would be hitched to Bill Varner's fence, and the young bucks setting on the porch, swarming around Eula like bees around a honey pot. One of these here kind of big, soft-looking gals that could giggle richer than plowed new-ground.

Wouldn't none of them leave before the others, and so they would set there on the porch until time to go home, with some of them with nine and ten miles to ride and then get up tomorrow and go back to the field. So they would all leave together and they would ride in a clump down to the creek ford and hitch them curried horses and yellow-wheeled buggies and get out and fight one another. Then they would get in the buggies again and go on home.

Well, one day about a year ago, one of them yellow-wheeled buggies and one of them curried saddle-horses quit this country. We heard they was heading for Texas. The next day Uncle Billy and Eula and Flem come in to town in Uncle Bill's surrey, and when they come back, Flem and Eula was married. And on the next day we heard that two more of them yellow-wheeled buggies had left the country. They mought have gone to Texas, too. It's a big place.

Anyway, about a month after the wedding, Flem and Eula went to Texas, too. They was gone pretty near a year. Then one day last month, Eula come back, with a baby. We figgered up, and we decided that it was as well-growed a three-months-old baby as we ever see. It can already pull up on a chair. I reckon Texas makes big men quick, being a big place. Anyway, if it keeps on like it started, it'll be chewing tobacco and voting time it's eight years old.

And so last Friday here come Flem himself. He was on a wagon with another fellow. The other fellow had one of these two-gallon hats and a ivory-handled pistol and a box of ginger snaps sticking out of his hind pocket, and tied to the tail-gate of the wagon was about two dozen of them Texas ponies, hitched to one another with barbed wire. They was colored like parrots and they was quiet as doves, and ere a one of them would kill you quick as a rattlesnake. Nere a one of them had two eyes the same color, and nere a one of them had ever see a bridle, I reckon; and when that Texas man got down offen the wagon and walked up to them to show how gentle they was, one of them cut his vest clean offen him, same as with a razor.

Flem had done already disappeared; he had went on to see his wife, I reckon, and to see if that ere baby had done gone on to the field to help Uncle Billy plow, maybe. It was the Texas man that taken the horses on to Mrs. Littlejohn's lot. He had a little trouble at first, when they come to the gate, because they hadn't never see a fence before, and when he finally got them in and taken a pair of wire cutters and unhitched them and got them into the barn and poured some shell corn into the trough, they durn nigh tore down the barn. I reckon they thought that shell corn was bugs, maybe. So he left them in the lot and he announced that the auction would begin at sunup tomorrow.

That night we was setting on Mrs. Littlejohn's porch. You-all mind the moon was nigh full that night, and we could watch them spotted varmints swirling along the fence and back and forth across the lot same as minnows in a pond. And then now and then they would all kind of huddle up against the barn and rest themselves by biting and kicking one another. We would hear a squeal, and then a set of hoofs would go Bam! against the barn, like a pistol. It sounded just like a fellow with a pistol, in a nest of cattymounts, taking his time.

II

It wasn't ere a man knowed yet if Flem owned them things or not. They just knowed one thing: that they wasn't never going to know for sho if Flem did or not, or if maybe he didn't just get on that wagon at the edge of town, for the ride or not. Even Eck Snopes didn't know, Flem's own cousin. But wasn't nobody surprised at that. We knowed that Flem would skin Eck quick as he would ere a one of us.

They was there by sunup next morning, some of them come twelve and sixteen miles, with seed-money tied up in tobacco sacks in their overalls, standing along the fence, when the Texas man come out of Mrs. Littlejohn's after breakfast and clumb onto the gate post with that ere white pistol butt sticking outen his hind pocket. He taken a new box of ginger-snaps outen his pocket and bit the end offen it like a cigar and spit out the paper, and said the auction was open. And still they was coming up in wagons and a horse- and mule-back and hitching the teams across the road and coming to the fence. Flem wasn't nowhere in sight.

But he couldn't get them started. He begun to work on Eck, because Eck holp him last night to get them into the barn and feed them that shell corn. Eck got out just in time. He come outen that barn like a chip on the crest of a busted dam of water, and clumb into the wagon just in time.

He was working on Eck when Henry Armstid come up in his wagon. Eck was saying he was skeered to bid on one of them, because he might get it, and the Texas man says, "Them ponies? Them little horses?" He clumb down offen the gate post and went toward the horses. They broke and run, and him following them, kind of chirping to them, with his hand out like he was fixing to catch a fly, until he got three or four of them cornered. Then he jumped into them, and then we couldn't see nothing for a while because of the dust. It was a big cloud of it, and them blare-

eyed, spotted things swoaring outen it twenty foot to a jump, in forty directions without counting up. Then the dust settled and there they was, that Texas man and the horse. He had its head twisted clean around like a owl's head. Its legs was braced and it was trembling like a new bride and groaning like a saw mill, and him holding its head wrung clean around on its neck so it was snuffing sky. "Look it over," he says, with his heels dug too and that white pistol sticking outen his pocket and his neck swole up like a spreading adder's until you could just tell what he was saying, cussing the horse and talking to us all at once: "Look him over, the fiddle headed son of fourteen fathers. Try him, buy him; you will get the best—" Then it was all dust again, and we couldn't see nothing but spotted hide and mane, and that ere Texas man's boot-heels like a couple of walnuts on two strings, and after a while that two-gallon hat come sailing out like a fat old hen crossing a fence.

When the dust settled again, he was just getting outen the far fence corner, brushing himself off. He come and got his hat and brushed it off and come and climb onto the gate post again. He was breathing hard. The hammer-head horse was still running round and round the lot like a merry-go-round at a fair. That was when Henry Armstid come shoving up to the gate in them patched overalls and one of them dangle-armed shirts of hisn. Hadn't nobody noticed him until then. We was all watching the Texas man and the horses. Even Mrs. Littlejohn; she had done come out and built a fire under the wash-pot in her back yard, and she would stand at the fence a while and then go back into the house and come out again with a arm full of wash and stand at the fence again. Well, here come Henry shoving up, and then we see Mrs. Armstid right behind him, in that ere faded wrapper and sunbonnet and them tennis shoes. "Git on back to that wagon," Henry says.

"Henry," she says.

"Here, boys," the Texas man says; "make room for missus to git up and see. Come on Henry," he says; "here's your chance to buy that saddle-horse missus has been wanting. What about ten dollars, Henry?"

"Henry," Mrs. Armstid says. She put her hand on Henry's arm. Henry knocked her hand down.

"Git on back to that wagon, like I told you," he says.

Mrs. Armstid never moved. She stood behind Henry, with her hands rolled into her dress, not looking at nothing. "He hain't no more despair than to buy one of them things," she says. "And us not five dollars ahead of the pore house, he hain't no more despair." It was the truth, too. They ain't never made more than a bare living offen that place of theirs, and them with four chaps and the very clothes they wears she earns by weaving by the firelight at night while Henry's asleep.

"Shut your mouth and git on back to that wagon," Henry says. "Do you want I taken a wagon stake to you here in the big road?"

Well, that Texas man taken one look at her. Then he begun on Eck again; like Henry wasn't even there. But Eck was skeered. "I can git me a snapping turtle or a water moccasin for nothing. I ain't going to buy none."

So the Texas man said he would give Eck a horse. "To start the auction, and because you holp me last night. If you'll start the bidding on the next horse," he says, "I'll give you that fiddle-head horse."

I wish you could have seen them, standing there with their seed-money in their pockets, watching that Texas man give Eck Snopes a live horse, all fixed to call him a fool if he taken it or not. Finally Eck says he'll take it. "Only I just starts the bidding," he says. "I don't have to buy the next one lessen I ain't overtopped." The Texas man said all right, and Eck bid a dollar on the next one, with Henry Armstid standing there with his mouth already open, watching Eck and the Texas man like a mad-dog or something. "A dollar," Eck says.

The Texas man looked at Eck. His mouth was already open too, like he had started to say something and what he was going to say had up and died on him. "A dollar? You mean, *one* dollar, Eck?"

"Durn it," Eck says; "two dollars, then."

Well, sir, I wish you could a seen that Texas man. He taken out that gingersnap box and held it up and looked into it, careful, like it might have been a diamond ring in it, or a spider. Then he throwed it away and wiped his face with a bandanna. "Well," he says. "Well. Two dollars. Two dollars. Is your pulse all right, Eck?" he says. "Do you have agersweats at night, maybe?" he says. "Well," he says, "I got to take it. But are you boys going to stand there and see Eck get two horses at a dollar a head?"

That done it. I be dog if he wasn't nigh as smart as Flem Snopes. He hadn't no more than got the words outen his mouth before here was Henry Armstid, waving his hand. "Three dollars," Henry says. Mrs. Armstid tried to hold him again. He knocked her hand off, shoving up to the gate post.

"Mister," Mrs. Armstid says, "we got chaps in the house and not corn to feed the stock. We got five dollars I earned my chaps a-weaving after dark, and

him snoring in the bed. And he hain't no more despair."

"Henry bids three dollars," the Texas man says. "Raise him a dollar, Eck, and the horse is yours."

"Henry," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Raise him, Eck," the Texas man says.

"Four dollars," Eck says.

"Five dollars," Henry says, shaking his fist. He shoved up right under the gate post. Mrs. Armstid was looking at the Texas man too.

"Mister," she says, "if you take that five dollars I earned my chaps a-weaving for one of them things, it'll be a curse onto you and yourn during all the time of man."

But it wasn't no stopping Henry. He had shoved up, waving his fist at the Texas man. He opened it; the money was in nickels and quarters, and one dollar bill that looked like a cow's cud. "Five dollars," he says. "And the man that raises it'll have to beat my head off, or I'll beat hisn."

"All right," the Texas man says. "Five dollars is bid. But don't you shake your hand at me."

III

It taken till nigh sundown before the last one was sold. He got them hotted up once and the bidding got up to seven dollars and a quarter, but most of them went around three or four dollars, him setting on the gate post and picking the horses out one at a time by mouth-word, and Mrs. Littlejohn pumping up and down at the tub and stopping and coming to the fence for a while and going back to the tub again. She had done got done too, and the wash was hung on the line in the back yard, and we could smell supper cooking. Finally they was all sold; he swapped the last two and the wagon for a buckboard.

We was all kind of tired, but Henry Armstid looked more like a mad-dog than ever. When he bought, Mrs. Armstid had went back to the wagon, setting in it behind them two rabbit-sized, bone-pore mules, and the wagon itself looking like it would fall all to pieces soon as the mules moved. Henry hadn't even waited to pull it outen the road; it was still in the middle of the road and her setting in it, not looking at nothing, ever since this morning.

Henry was right up against the gate. He went up to the Texas man. "I bought a horse and I paid cash," Henry says. "And yet you expect me to stand around here until they are all sold before I can get my horse. I'm going to take my horse outen that lot."

The Texas man looked at Henry. He talked like he might have been asking for a cup of coffee at the table. "Take your horse," he says.

Then Henry quit looking at the Texas man. He begun to swallow, holding onto the gate. "Ain't you going to help me?" he says.

"It ain't my horse," the Texas man says.

Henry never looked at the Texas man again, he never looked at nobody. "Who'll help me catch my horse?" he says. Never nobody said nothing. "Bring the plowline," Henry says. Mrs. Armstid got outen the wagon and brought the plowline. The Texas man got down offen the post. The woman made to pass him, carrying the rope.

"Don't you go in there, missus," the Texas man says.

Henry opened the gate. He didn't look back. "Come on here," he says.

"Don't you go in there, missus," the Texas man says.

Mrs. Armstid wasn't looking at nobody, neither, with her hands across her middle, holding the rope. "I reckon I better," she says. Her and Henry went into the lot. The horses broke and run. Henry and Mrs. Armstid followed.

"Get him into the corner," Henry says. They got Henry's horse cornered finally, and Henry taken the rope, but Mrs. Armstid let the horse get out. They hemmed it up again, but Mrs. Armstid let it get out again, and Henry turned and hit her with the rope. "Why didn't you head him back?" Henry says. He hit her again. "Why didn't you?" It was about that time I looked around and see Flem Snopes standing there.

It was the Texas man that done something. He moved fast for a big man. He caught the rope before Henry could hit the third time, and Henry whirled and made like he would jump at the Texas man. But he never jumped. The Texas man went and taken Henry's arm and led him outen the lot. Mrs. Armstid come behind them and the Texas man taken some money outen his pocket and he give it into Mrs. Armstid's hand. "Get him into the wagon and take him on home," the Texas man says, like he might have been telling them he enjoyed his supper.

Then here come Flem. "What's that for Buck?" Flem says.

"Thinks he bought one of them ponies," the Texas man says. "Get him on away, missus."

But Henry wouldn't go. "Give him back that money," he says. "I bought that horse and I aim to have him if I have to shoot him."

And there was Flem, standing there with his hands in his pockets, chewing, like he had just happened to be passing.

"You take your money and I take my horse,"

Henry says. "Give it back to him," he says to Mrs. Armstid.

"You don't own no horse of mine," the Texas man says. "Get him on home, missus."

Then Henry seen Flem. "You got something to do with these horses," he says. "I bought one. Here's the money for it." He taken the bill outen Mrs. Armstid's hand. He offered it to Flem. "I bought one. Ask him. Here. Here's the money," he says, giving the bill to Flem.

When Flem taken the money, the Texas man dropped the rope he had snatched outen Henry's hand. He had done sent Eck Snopes's boy up to the store for another box of gingersnaps, and he taken the box outen his pocket and looked into it. It was empty and he dropped it on the ground. "Mr. Snopes will have your money for you tomorrow," he says to Mrs. Armstid. "You can get it from him tomorrow. He don't own no horse. You get him into the wagon and get him on home." Mrs. Armstid went back to the wagon and got in. "Where's that ere buckboard I bought?" the Texas man says. It was after sundown then. And then Mrs. Littlejohn come out on the porch and rung the supper bell.

IV

I come on in and et supper. Mrs. Littlejohn would bring in a pan of bread or something, then she would go out to the porch a minute and come back and tell us. The Texas man had hitched his team to the buckboard he had swapped them last two horses for, and him and Flem had gone, and then she told that the rest of them that never had ropes had went back to the store with I. O. Snopes to get some ropes, and wasn't nobody at the gate but Henry Armstid, and Mrs. Armstid setting in the wagon in the road, and Eck Snopes and that boy of hisn. "I don't care how many of them fool men gets killed by them things," Mrs. Littlejohn says, "but I ain't going to let Eck Snopes take that boy into that lot again." So she went down to the gate, but she come back without the boy or Eck neither.

"It ain't no need to worry about that boy," I says. "He's charmed." He was right behind Eck last night when Eck went to help feed them. The whole drove of them jumped clean over that boy's head and never touched him. It was Eck that touched him. Eck snatched him into the wagon and taken a rope and frailed the tar outen him.

So I had done et and went to my room and was undressing, long as I had a long trip to make next day; I was trying to sell a machine to Mrs. Bundren up past Whiteleaf; when Henry Armstid opened that gate and went in by hisself. They couldn't make him wait for the balance of them to get back with their ropes. Eck Snopes said he tried to make Henry wait, but Henry wouldn't do it. Eck said Henry walked right up to them and that when they broke, they run clean over Henry like a hay-mow breaking down. Eck said he snatched that boy of hisn out of the way just in time and that them things went through that gate like a creek flood and into the wagons and teams hitched side the road, busting wagon tongues and snapping harness like it was fishing-line, with Mrs. Armstid still setting in their wagon in the middle of it like something carved outen wood. Then they scattered, wild horses and tame mules with pieces of harness and single trees dangling offen them, both ways up and down the road.

"There goes ourn, paw!" Eck says his boy said. "There it goes, into Mrs. Littlejohn's house." Eck says it run right up the steps and into the house like a boarder late for supper. I reckon so. Anyway, I was in my room, in my underclothes, with one sock on and one sock in my hand, leaning out the window when the commotion busted out, when I heard something run into the melodeon in the hall; it sounded like a railroad engine. Then the door to my room come sailing in like when you throw a tin bucket top into the wind and I looked over my shoulder and see something that looked like a fourteen-foot pinwheel a-blaring its eyes at me. It had to blare them fast, because I was already done jumped out the window.

I reckon it was anxious, too. I reckon it hadn't never seen barbed wire or shell corn before, but I know it hadn't never seen underclothes before, or maybe it was a sewing-machine agent it hadn't never seen. Anyway, it whirled and turned to run back up the hall and outen the house, when it met Eck Snopes and that boy just coming in, carrying a rope. It swirled again and run down the hall and out the back door just in time to meet Mrs. Littlejohn. She had just gathered up the clothes she had washed, and she was coming onto the back porch with a armful of washing in one hand and a scrubbing-board in the other, when the horse skidded up to her, trying to stop and swirl again. It never taken Mrs. Littlejohn no time a-tall.

"Git outen here, you son," she says. She hit it across the face with the scrubbing-board; that ere scrubbing-board split as neat as ere a axe could have done it, and when the horse swirled to run back up the hall, she hit it again with what was left of the scrubbing-board, not on the head this time. "And stay out," she says.

Eck and that boy was half-way down the hall by this time. I reckon that horse looked like a pinwheel to Eck too. "Git to hell outen here, Ad!" Eck says. Only there wasn't time. Eck dropped flat on his face, but the boy never moved. The boy was about a yard tall maybe, in overalls just like Eck's; that horse swoared over his head without touching a hair. I saw that, because I was just coming back up the front steps, still carrying that ere sock and still in my underclothes, when the horse come onto the porch again. It taken one look at me and swirled again and run to the end of the porch and jumped the banisters and the lot fence like a hen-hawk and lit in the lot running and went out the gate again and jumped eight or ten upside-down wagons and went on down the road. It was a full moon then. Mrs. Armstid was still setting in the wagon like she had done been carved outen wood and left there and forgot.

That horse. It ain't never missed a lick. It was going about forty miles a hour when it come to the bridge over the creek. It would have had a clear road, but it so happened that Vernon Tull was already using the bridge when it got there. He was coming back from town; he hadn't heard about the auction; him and his wife and three daughters and Mrs. Tull's aunt, all setting in chairs in the wagon bed, and all asleep, including the mules. They waked up when the horse hit the bridge one time, but Tull said the first he knew was when the mules tried to turn the wagon around in the middle of the bridge and he seen that spotted varmint run right twixt the mules and run up the wagon tongue like a squirrel. He said he just had time to hit it across the face with his ship-stock, because about that time the mules turned the wagon around on that ere one-way bridge and that horse clumb across onto the bridge again and went on, with Vernon standing up in the wagon and kicking at it.

Tull said the mules turned in the harness and clumb back into the wagon too, with Tull trying to beat them out again, with the reins wrapped around his wrist. After that he says all he seen was overturned chairs and womenfolks' legs and white drawers shining in the moonlight, and his mules and that spotted horse going on up the road like a ghost.

The mules jerked Tull outen the wagon and drug him a spell on the bridge before the reins broke. They thought at first that he was dead, and while they was kneeling around him, picking the bridge splinters outen him, here come Eck and that boy, still carrying the rope. They was running and breathing a little hard. "Where'd he go?" Eck says.

V

I went back and got my pants and shirt and shoes on just in time to go and help get Henry Armstid outen the trash in the lot. I be dog if he didn't look like he was dead, with his head hanging back and his teeth showing in the moonlight, and a little rim of white under his eye-lids. We could still hear them horses, here and there; hadn't none of them got more than four—five miles away yet, not knowing the country, I reckon. So we could hear them and folks yelling now and then: "Whooey. Head him!"

We toted Henry into Mrs. Littlejohn's. She was in the hall; she hadn't put down the armful of clothes. She taken one look at us, and she laid down the busted scrubbing-board and taken up the lamp and opened a empty door. "Bring him in here," she says.

We toted him in and laid him on the bed. Mrs. Littlejohn set the lamp on the dresser, still carrying the clothes. "I'll declare, you men," she says. Our shadows was way up the wall, tiptoeing too; we could hear ourselves breathing. "Better get his wife," Mrs. Littlejohn says. She went out, carrying the clothes.

"I reckon we had," Quick says. "Go get her, somebody."

"Whyn't you go?" Winterbottom says.

"Let Ernest git her," Durley says. "He lives neighbors with them."

Ernest went to fetch her. I be dog if Henry didn't look like he was dead. Mrs. Littlejohn come back, with a kettle and some towels. She went to work on Henry, and then Mrs. Armstid and Ernest come in. Mrs. Armstid come to the foot of the bed and stood there, with her hands rolled into her apron, watching what Mrs. Littlejohn was doing, I reckon.

"You men get outen the way," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Git outside," she says. "See if you can't find something else to play with that will kill some more of you."

"Is he dead?" Winterbottom says.

"It ain't your fault if he ain't," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Go tell Will Varner to come up here. I reckon a man ain't so different from a mule, come long come short. Except maybe a mule's got more sense."

We went to get Uncle Billy. It was a full moon. We could hear them, now and then, four miles away: "Whooey. Head him." The country was full of them, one on ever wooden bridge in the land, running across it like thunder: "Whooey. There he goes. Head him."

We hadn't got far before Henry begun to scream. I reckon Mrs. Littlejohn's water had brung him to; anyway, he wasn't dead. We went on to Uncle

Billy's. The house was dark. We called to him, and after a while the window opened and Uncle Billy put his head out, peart as a peckerwood, listening. "Are they still trying to catch them durn rabbits?" he says.

He come down, with his britches on over his nightshirt and his suspenders dangling, carrying his horse-doctoring grip. "Yes, sir," he says, cocking his head like a woodpecker; "they're still a-trying."

We could hear Henry before we reached Mrs. Littlejohn's. He was going Ah-Ah-Ah. We stopped in the yard. Uncle Billy went on in. We could hear Henry. We stood in the yard, hearing them on the bridges, this-a-way and that: "Whooey. Whooey."

"Eck Snopes ought to caught hisn," Ernest says.

"Looks like he ought," Winterbottom said.

Henry was going Ah-Ah-Ah steady in the house; then he begun to scream. "Uncle Billy's started," Quick says. We looked into the hall. We could see the light where the door was. Then Mrs. Littlejohn come out.

"Will needs some help," she says. "You, Ernest. You'll do." Ernest went into the house.

"Hear them?" Quick said. "That one was on Four Mile bridge." We could hear them; it sounded like thunder a long way off; it didn't last long:

"Whooey."

We could hear Henry: "Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah."

"They are both started now," Winterbottom says. "Ernest too."

That was early in the night. Which was a good thing, because it taken a long night for folks to chase them things right and for Henry to lay there and holler, being as Uncle Billy never had none of this here chloryfoam to set Henry's leg with. So it was considerate in Flem to get them started early. And what do you reckon Flem's com-ment was?

That's right. Nothing. Because he wasn't there. Hadn't nobody see him since that Texas man left.

VI

That was Saturday night. I reckon Mrs. Armstid got home about daylight, to see about the chaps. I don't know where they thought her and Henry was. But lucky the oldest one was a gal, about twelve, big enough to take care of the little ones. Which she did for the next two days. Mrs. Armstid would nurse Henry all night and work in the kitchen for hern and Henry's keep, and in the afternoon she would drive home (it was about four miles) to see to the chaps. She would cook up a pot of victuals and leave it on the stove, and the gal would bar the house and keep the little ones quiet. I would hear Mrs. Littlejohn and Mrs. Armstid talking in the kitchen. "How are the chaps making out?" Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"All right," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Don't they git skeered at night?" Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"Ina May bars the door when I leave," Mrs. Armstid says. "She's got the axe in bed with her. I reckon she can make out."

I reckon they did. And I reckon Mrs. Armstid was waiting for Flem to come back to town; hadn't nobody seen him until this morning; to get her money the Texas man said Flem was keeping for her. Sho. I reckon she was.

Anyway, I heard Mrs. Armstid and Mrs. Littlejohn talking in the kitchen this morning while I was eating breakfast. Mrs. Littlejohn had just told Mrs. Armstid that Flem was in town. "You can ask him for that five dollars," Mrs. Littlejohn says.

"You reckon he'll give it to me?" Mrs. Armstid says.

Mrs. Littlejohn was washing dishes, washing them like a man, like they was made out of iron. "No," she says. "But asking him won't do no hurt. It might shame him. I don't reckon it will, but it might."

"If he wouldn't give it back, it ain't no use to ask," Mrs. Armstid says.

"Suit yourself," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "It's your money."

I could hear the dishes.

"Do you reckon he might give it back to me?" Mrs. Armstid says. "That Texas man said he would. He said I could get it from Mr. Snopes later."

"Then go and ask him for it," Mrs. Littlejohn says.

I could hear the dishes.

"He won't give it back to me," Mrs. Armstid says.

"All right," Mrs. Littlejohn says. "Don't ask him for it, then."

I could hear the dishes; Mrs. Armstid was helping. "You don't reckon he would, do you?" she says. Mrs. Littlejohn never said nothing. It sounded like she was throwing the dishes at one another. "Maybe I better go and talk to Henry about it," Mrs. Armstid says.

"I would," Mrs. Littlejohn says. I be dog if it didn't sound like she had two plates in her hands, beating them together. "Then Henry can buy another five-dollar horse with it. Maybe he'll buy one next time that will out and out kill him. If I thought that, I'd give you back the money, myself."

"I reckon I better talk to him first," Mrs. Armstid said. Then it sounded like Mrs. Littlejohn taken up all the dishes and throwed them at the cook-stove, and I come away.

That was this morning. I had been up to Bundren's and back, and I thought that things would have kind of settled down. So after breakfast, I went up to the store. And there was Flem, setting in the store chair and whittling, like he might not have ever moved since he come to clerk for Jody Varner. I. O. was leaning in the door, in his shirt sleeves and with his hair parted too, same as Flem was before he turned the clerking job over to I. O. It's a funny thing about them Snopes: they all looks alike, yet there ain't ere a two of them that claims brothers. They're always just cousins, like Flem and Eck and Flem and I. O. Eck was there too, sp. ' ' against the wall, him and that boy, eating cheese and crackers outen a sack; they told me that Eck hadn't been home a-tall. And that Lon Quick hadn't got back to town, even. He followed his horse clean down to Samson's Bridge, with a wagon and a camp outfit. Eck finally caught one of hisn. It run into a blind lane at Freeman's and Eck and the boy taken and tied their rope across the end of the lane, about three foot high. The horse come to the end of the lane and whirled and run back without ever stopping. Eck says it never seen the rope a-tall. He says it looked just like one of these here Christmas pinwheels. "Didn't it try to run again?" I says.

"No," Eck says, eating a bite of cheese offen his knife blade. "Just kicked some."

"Kicked some?" I says.

"It broke its neck," Eck says.

Well, they was squatting there, about six of them, talking, talking at Flem; never nobody knowed yet if Flem had ere a interest in them horses or not. So finally I come right out and asked him. "Flem's done skun all of us so much," I says, "that we're proud of him. Come on, Flem," I says, "how much did you and that Texas man make offen them horses? You can tell us. Ain't nobody here but Eck that bought one of them; the others ain't got back to town yet, and Eck's your own cousin; he'll be proud to hear, too. How much did you-all make?"

They was all whittling, not looking at Flem, making like they was studying. But you could a heard a pin drop. And I. O. He had been rubbing his back up and down on the door, but he stopped now, watching Flem like a pointing dog. Flem finished cutting the sliver offen his stick. He spit across the porch, into the road. "Twarn't none of my horses," he says.

I. O. cackled, like a hen, slapping his legs with both hands. "You boys might just as well quit trying to get ahead of Flem," he said.

Well, about that time I see Mrs. Armstid come outen Mrs. Littlejohn's gate, coming up the road. I never said nothing. I says, "Well, if a man can't take care of himself in a trade, he can't blame the man that trims him."

Flem never said nothing, trimming at the stick. He hadn't seen Mrs. Armstid. "Yes, sir," I says. "A fellow like Henry Armstid ain't got nobody but hisself to blame."

"Course he ain't," I. O. says. He ain't seen her, either. "Henry Armstid's a born fool. Always is been. If Flem hadn't a got his money, somebody else would."

We looked at Flem. He never moved. Mrs. Armstid come on up the road.

"That's right," I says. "But come to think of it, Henry never bought no horse." We looked at Flem; you could a heard a match drop. "That Texas man told her to get that five dollars back from Flem next day. I reckon Flem's done already taken that money to Mrs. Littlejohn's and give it to Mrs. Armstid."

We watched Flem. I. O. quit rubbing his back against the door again. After a while Flem raised his head and spit across the porch, into the dust. I. O. cackled, just like a hen. "Ain't he a beating fellow, now?" I. O. says.

Mrs. Armstid was getting closer, so I kept on talking, watching to see if Flem would look up and see her. But he never looked up. I went on talking about Tull, about how he was going to sue Flem, and Flem setting there, whittling his stick, not saying nothing else after he said they wasn't none of his horses.

Then I. O. happened to look around. He seen Mrs. Armstid. "Psssst!" he says. Flem looked up. "Here she comes!" I. O. says. "Go out the back. I'll tell her you done went in to town today."

But Flem never moved. He just set there, whittling, and we watched Mrs. Armstid come up onto the porch, in that ere faded sunbonnet and wrapper and them tennis shoes that made a kind of hissing noise on the porch. She come onto the porch and stopped, her hands rolled into her dress in front, not looking at nothing.

"He said Saturday," she says, "that he wouldn't sell Henry no horse. He said I could get the money from you."

Flem looked up. The knife never stopped. It went on trimming off a sliver same as if he was watching it. "He taken that money off with him when he left," Flem says.

Mrs. Armstid never looked at nothing. We never looked at her, neither, except that boy of Eck's. He had a half-et cracker in his hand, watching her, chewing.

"He said Henry hadn't bought no horse," Mrs.

Armstid says. "He said for me to get the money from you today."

"I reckon he forgot about it," Flem said. "He taken that money off with him Saturday." He whittled again. I. O. kept on rubbing his back, slow. He licked his lips. After a while the woman looked up the road, where it went on up the hill, toward the graveyard. She looked up that way for a while, with that boy of Eck's watching her and I. O. rubbing his back slow against the door. Then she turned back toward the steps.

"I reckon it's time to get dinner started," she says.

"How's Henry this morning, Mrs. Armstid?" Winterbottom says.

She looked at Winterbottom; she almost stopped. "He's resting, I thank you kindly," she says.

Flem got up, outen the chair, putting his knife away. He spit across the porch. "Wait a minute, Mrs. Armstid," he says. She stopped again. She didn't look at him. Flem went on into the store, with I. O. done quit rubbing his back now, with his head craned after Flem, and Mrs. Armstid standing there with her hands rolled into her dress, not looking at nothing. A wagon come up the road and passed; it was Freeman, on the way to town. Then Flem come out again, with I. O. still watching him. Flem had one of these little striped sacks of Jody Varner's candy; I bet he still owes Jody that nickel, too. He put the sack into Mrs. Armstid's hand, like he would have put it into a hollow stump. He spit again across the porch. "A little sweetening for the chaps," he says.

"You're right kind," Mrs. Armstid says. She held the sack of candy in her hand, not looking at nothing. Eck's boy was watching the sack, the half-et cracker in his hand; he wasn't chewing now. He watched Mrs. Armstid roll the sack into her apron. "I reckon I better get on back and help with dinner," she says. She turned and went back across the porch. Flem set down in the chair again and opened his knife. He spit across the porch again, past Mrs. Armstid where she hadn't went down the steps yet. Then she went on, in that ere sunbonnet and wrapper all the same color, back down the road toward Mrs. Littlejohn's. You couldn't see her dress move, like a natural woman walking. She looked like a old snag still standing up and moving along on a high water. We watched her turn in at Mrs. Littlejohn's and go outen sight. Flem was whittling. I. O. begun to rub his back on the door. Then he begun to cackle, just like a durn hen.

"You boys might just as well quit trying," I. O. says. "You can't git ahead of Flem. You can't touch him. Ain't he a sight, now?"

I be dog if he ain't. If I had brung a herd of wild cattymounts into town and sold them to my neighbors and kinfolks, they would have lynched me. Yes, sir.

Questions:

1. What are the advantages in having this story told in the first person? How much of the effect of the story depends upon the style in which it is told? (See "Introduction to Fiction" under "Style.")
2. What is the quality of the humor? Is it mere extravagance? Are there more serious undertones? In the last paragraphs, for instance?
3. What sort of person is Flem Snopes? Is the reader's evaluation of him that of the narrator?

THE GENTLEMAN FROM SAN FRANCISCO

IVAN BUNIN

Translated by A. YARMOLINSKY

"Alas, Alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!"—

—Revelation of St. John.

THE Gentleman from San Francisco—neither at Naples nor on Capri could any one recall his name—with his wife and daughter, was on his way to Europe, where he intended to stay for two whole years, solely for the pleasure of it.

He was firmly convinced that he had a full right to a rest, enjoyment, a long comfortable trip, and what not. This conviction had a two-fold reason: first he was rich, and second, despite his fifty-eight years, he was just about to enter the stream of life's pleasures. Until now he had not really lived, but simply existed, to be sure—fairly well, yet putting off his fondest hopes for the future. He toiled unweariedly—the Chinese, whom he imported by thousands for his works, knew full well what it meant—and finally he saw that he had made much, and that he had nearly come up to the level of those whom he had once taken as a model, and he decided to catch his breath. The class of people to which he belonged was in the habit of beginning its enjoyment of life with a trip to Europe, India, Egypt. He made up his mind to do the same. Of course, it was first of all himself that he desired to reward for the years of toil, but he was also

glad for his wife and daughter's sake. His wife was never distinguished by any extraordinary impressionability, but then, all elderly American women are ardent travelers. As for his daughter, a girl of marriageable age, and somewhat sickly—travel was the very thing she needed. Not to speak of the benefit to her health, do not happy meetings occur during travels? Abroad, one may chance to sit at the same table with a prince, or examine frescoes side by side with a multi-millionaire.

The itinerary the Gentleman from San Francisco planned out was an extensive one. In December and January he expected to relish the sun of southern Italy, monuments of antiquity, the tarantella, serenades of wandering minstrels, and that which at his age is felt most keenly—the love, not entirely disinterested though, of young Neapolitan girls. The Carnival days he planned to spend at Nice and Monte Carlo, which at that time of the year is the meeting-place of the choicest society, the society upon which depend all the blessings of civilization: the cut of dress suits, the stability of thrones, the declaration of wars, the prosperity of hotels. Some of these people passionately give themselves over to automobile and boat races, others to roulette, others, again, busy themselves with what is called flirtation, and others shoot pigeons, which soar so beautifully from the dove-cote, hover awhile over the emerald lawn, on the background of the forget-me-not colored sea, and then suddenly hit the ground, like little white lumps. Early March he wanted to devote to Florence, and at Easter, to hear the Miserere in Paris. His plans also included Venice, Paris, bull-baiting at Seville, bathing on the British Islands, also Athens, Constantinople, Palestine, Egypt, and even Japan, of course, on the way back. . . . And at first things went very well indeed.

It was the end of November, and all the way to Gibraltar the ship sailed across seas which were either clad by icy darkness or swept by storms carrying wet snow. But there were no accidents, and the vessel did not even roll. The passengers—all people of consequence—were numerous, and the steamer, the famous *Atlantis,* resembled the most expensive European hotel with all improvements: a night refreshment-bar, Oriental baths, even a newspaper of its own. The manner of living was a most aristocratic one; passengers rose early, awakened by the shrill voice of a bugle, filling the corridors at the gloomy hour when the day broke slowly and sulkily over the grayish-green watery desert, which rolled heavily in the fog. After putting on their flannel pajamas, they took coffee, chocolate, cocoa; they seated themselves in marble baths, went through their exercises, whetting their appetites and increasing their sense of well being, dressed for the day, and had their breakfast. Till eleven o'clock they were supposed to stroll on the deck, breathing in the chill freshness of the ocean, or they played table-tennis, or other games which arouse the appetite. At eleven o'clock a collation was served consisting of sandwiches and bouillon, after which people read their newspapers, quietly waiting for luncheon, which was more nourishing and varied than the breakfast. The next two hours were given to rest; all the decks were crowded then with steamer chairs, on which the passengers, wrapped in plaids, lay stretched, dozing lazily, or watching the cloudy sky and the foamy-fringed water hillocks flashing beyond the sides of the vessel. At five o'clock, refreshed and gay, they drank strong, fragrant tea; at seven the sound of the bugle announced a dinner of nine courses. . . . Then the Gentleman from San Francisco, rubbing his hands in an onrush of vital energy, hastened to his luxurious stateroom to dress.

In the evening, all the decks of the *Atlantis* yawned in the darkness, shone with their innumerable fiery eyes, and a multitude of servants worked with increased feverishness in the kitchens, dish-washing compartments, and wine-cellars. The ocean, which heaved about the sides of the ship, was dreadful, but no one thought of it. All had faith in the controlling power of the captain, a red-headed giant, heavy and very sleepy, who, clad in a uniform with broad golden stripes, looked like a huge idol, and but rarely emerged, for the benefit of the public, from his mysterious retreat. On the forecastle, the siren gloomily roared or screeched in a fit of mad rage, but few of the diners heard the siren: its hellish voice was covered by the sounds of an excellent string orchestra, which played ceaselessly and exquisitely in a vast hall, decorated with marble and spread with velvety carpets. The hall was flooded with torrents of light, radiated by crystal lustres and gilt chandeliers; it was filled with a throng of bejeweled ladies in low-necked dresses, of men in dinner-coats, graceful waiters, and deferential maîtres-d'hôtel. One of these—who accepted wine orders exclusively—wore a chain on his neck like some lord mayor. The evening dress, and the ideal linen, made the Gentleman from San Francisco look very young. Dry-skinned, of average height, strongly, though irregularly built, glossy with thorough washing and cleaning, and moderately animated, he sat in the golden splendor of this palace. Near him stood a bottle of amber-colored Johannisberg, and goblets of most delicate glass and of varied sizes, surmounted by a frizzled bunch of fresh hyacinths. There was something Mongolian in his yellowish face with its trimmed silvery moustache; his large teeth glimmered

with gold fillings, and his strong, bald head had a dull glow, like old ivory. His wife, a big, broad and placid woman, was dressed richly, but in keeping with her age. Complicated, but light, transparent, and innocently immodest was the dress of his daughter, tall and slender, with magnificent hair gracefully combed; her breath was sweet with violet-scented tablets, and she had a number of tiny and most delicate pink pimples near her lips and between her slightly-powdered shoulder blades. . . .

The dinner lasted two whole hours, and was followed by dances in the dancing hall, while the men—the Gentleman from San Francisco among them—made their way to the refreshment bar, where negroes in red jackets and with eye-balls like shelled hard-boiled eggs, waited on them. There, with their feet on tables, smoking Havana cigars, and drinking themselves purple in the face, they settled the destinies of nations on the basis of the latest political and stock exchange news. Outside, the ocean tossed up black mountains with a thud; and the snowstorm hissed furiously in the rigging grown heavy with slush; the ship trembled in every limb, struggling with the storm and ploughing with difficulty the shifting and seething mountainous masses that threw far and high their foaming tails; the siren groaned in agony, choked by storm and fog; the watchmen in their towers froze and almost went out of their minds under the superhuman stress of attention. Like the gloomy and sultry mass of the inferno, like its last, ninth circle, was the submersed womb of the steamer, where monstrous furnaces yawned with red-hot open jaws, and emitted deep, hooting sounds, and where the stokers, stripped to the waist, and purple with reflected flames, bathed in their own dirty, acid sweat. And here, in the refreshment bar, carefree men, with their feet, encased in dancing shoes, on the table, sipped cognac and liqueurs, swam in waves of spiced smoke, and exchanged subtle remarks, while in the dancing hall everything sparkled and radiated light, warmth and joy. The couples now turned around in a waltz, now swayed in the tango; and the music, sweetly shameless and sad, persisted in its ceaseless entreaties. . . . There were many persons of note in this magnificent crowd: an ambassador, a dry, modest old man; a great millionaire, shaved, tall, of an indefinite age, who, in his old-fashioned dress-coat, looked like a prelate; also a famous Spanish writer, and an international belle, already slightly faded and of dubious morals. There was also among them a loving pair, exquisite and refined, whom everybody watched with curiosity and who did not conceal their bliss; he danced only with her, sang—with great skill—only to her accompaniment, and they were so [illegible], so graceful. The captain alone knew that they had been hired by the company at a good salary to play at love, and that they had been sailing now on one, now on another steamer, for quite a long time.

In Gibraltar everybody was gladdened by the sun, and by the weather which was like early spring. A new passenger appeared aboard the *Atlantis* and aroused everybody's interest. It was the crown-prince of an Asiatic state, who traveled incognito, a small man, very nimble, though looking as if made of wood, broad-faced, narrow-eyed, in gold-rimmed glasses, somewhat disagreeable because of his long black moustache, which was sparse like that of a corpse, but otherwise—charming, plain, modest. In the Mediterranean the breath of winter was again felt. The seas were heavy and motley like a peacock's tail and the waves stirred up by the gay gusts of the tramontane, tossed their white crests under a sparkling and perfectly clear sky. Next morning, the sky grew paler and the skyline misty. Land was near. Then Ischia and Capri came in sight, and one could descry, through an opera-glass, Naples, looking like pieces of sugar strewn at the foot of an indistinct dove-colored mass, and above them, a snow-covered chain of distant mountains. The decks were crowded, many ladies and gentlemen put on light-fur-coats; Chinese servants, bandy-legged youths—with pitch black braids down to the heels and with girlish, thick eyelashes—always quiet and speaking in a whisper, were carrying to the foot of the staircases, plaid wraps, canes, and crocodile-leather valises and hand-bags. The daughter of the Gentleman from San Francisco stood near the prince, who, by a happy chance, had been introduced to her the evening before, and feigned to be looking steadily at something far-off, which he was pointing out to her, while he was, at the same time, explaining something, saying something rapidly and quietly. He was so small that he looked like a boy among other men, and he was not handsome at all. And then there was something strange about him; his glasses, derby and coat were most commonplace, but there was something horse-like in the hair of his sparse moustache, and the thin, tanned skin of his flat face looked as though it were somewhat stretched and varnished. But the girl listened to him, and so great was her excitement that she could hardly grasp the meaning of his words, her heart palpitated with incomprehensible rapture and with pride that he was standing and speaking with her and nobody else. Everything about him was different: his dry hands, his clean skin, under which flowed ancient kingly blood, even his light shoes and his European dress, plain, but singularly tidy—everything hid an inexplicable fascination and engendered thoughts of love. And the Gentleman

from San Francisco, himself, in a silk-hat, gray leggings, patent leather shoes, kept eyeing the famous beauty who was standing near him, a tall, stately blonde, with eyes painted according to the latest Parisian fashion, and a tiny, bent peeled-off pet-dog, to whom she addressed herself. And the daughter, in a kind of vague perplexity, tried not to notice him.

Like all wealthy Americans he was very liberal when traveling, and believed in the complete sincerity and goodwill of those who so painstakingly fed him, served him day and night, anticipating his slightest desire, protected him from dirt and disturbance, hauled things for him, hailed carriers, and delivered his luggage to hotels. So it was everywhere, and it had to be so at Naples. Meanwhile, Naples grew and came nearer. The musicians, with their shining brass instruments had already formed a group on the deck, and all of a sudden deafened everybody with the triumphant sounds of a ragtime march. The giant captain, in his full uniform appeared on the bridge and like a gracious pagan idol, waved his hands to the passengers—and it seemed to the Gentleman from San Francisco, as it did to all the rest, that for him alone thundered the march, so greatly loved by proud America, and that him alone did the captain congratulate on the safe arrival. And when the *Atlantis* had finally entered the port and all its many-decked mass leaned against the quay, and the gang-plank began to rattle heavily,—what a crowd of porters, with their assistants, in caps with golden galloons, what a crowd of various boys and husky ragamuffins with pads of colored postal cards attacked the Gentleman from San Francisco, offering their services! With kindly contempt he grinned at these beggars, and, walking towards the automobile of the hotel where the prince might stop, muttered between his teeth, now in English, now in Italian—"Go away! *Via*. . . ."

Immediately, life at Naples began to follow a set routine. Early in the morning breakfast was served in the gloomy dining-room, swept by a wet draught from the open windows looking upon a stony garden, while outside the sky was cloudy and cheerless, and a crowd of guides swarmed at the door of the vestibule. Then came the first smiles of the warm roseate sun, and from the high suspended balcony, a broad vista unfolded itself: Vesuvius, wrapped to its base in radiant morning vapors; the pearly ripple, touched to silver, of the bay, the delicate outline of Capri on the skyline; tiny asses dragging two-wheeled buggies along the soft, sticky embankment, and detachments of little soldiers marching somewhere to the tune of cheerful and defiant music.

Next on the day's program was a slow automobile ride along crowded, narrow, and damp corridors of streets, between high, many-windowed buildings. It was followed by visits to museums, lifelessly clean and lighted evenly and pleasantly, but as though with the dull light cast by snow; then to churches, cold, smelling of wax, always alike: a majestic entrance, closed by a ponderous, leather curtain, and inside—a vast void, silence, quiet flames of seven-branched candlesticks, sending forth a red glow from where they stood at the farther end, on the bedecked altar—a lonely, old woman lost among the dark wooden benches, slippery gravestones under the feet, and somebody's *Descent from the Cross,* infallibly famous. At one o'clock—luncheon, on the mountain of San-Martius, where at noon the choicest people gathered, and where the daughter of the Gentleman from San Francisco once almost fainted with joy, because it seemed to her that she saw the prince in the hall, although she had learned from the newspapers that he had temporarily left for Rome. At five o'clock it was customary to take tea at the hotel, in a smart salon, where it was far too warm because of the carpets and the blazing fireplaces; and then came dinner-time—and again did the mighty, commanding voice of the gong resound throughout the building, again did silk rustle and the mirrors reflect files of ladies in low-necked dresses ascending the staircases, and again the splendid palatial dining hall opened with broad hospitality, and again the musicians' jackets formed red patches on the estrade, and the black figures of the waiters swarmed around the maître-d'hôtel, who, with extraordinary skill, poured a thick pink soup into plates. . . . As everywhere, the dinner was the crown of the day. People dressed for it as for a wedding, and so abundant was it in food, wines, mineral waters, sweets and fruits, that about eleven o'clock in the evening chambermaids would carry to all the rooms hot-water bags.

That year, however, December did not happen to be a very propitious one. The doormen were abashed when people spoke to them about the weather, and shrugged their shoulders guiltily, mumbling that they could not recollect such a year, although, to tell the truth, that it was not the first year they mumbled those words, usually adding that "things are terrible everywhere"; that unprecedented showers and storms had broken out on the Riviera, that it was snowing in Athens, that Aetna, too, was all blocked up with snow, and glowed brightly at night, and that tourists were fleeing from Palermo to save themselves from the cold spell. . . .

That winter, the morning sun daily deceived Naples; toward noon the sky would invariably grow gray, and a light rain would begin to fall, growing thicker and duller. Then the palms at the hotel porch glistened disagreeably like wet tin, the town appeared

exceptionally dirty and congested, the museums too monotonous, the cigars of the drivers in their rubber raincoats, which flattened in the wind like wings, intolerably stinking, and the energetic flapping of their whips over their thin-necked nags—obviously false. The shoes of the signors, who cleaned the street-car tracks, were in a frightful state; the women who splashed in the mud, with black hair unprotected from the rain, were ugly and short legged; and the humidity mingled with the foul smell of rotting fish, that came from the foaming sea, was simply disheartening. And so, early-morning quarrels began to break out between the Gentleman from San Francisco and his wife; and their daughter now grew pale and suffered from headaches, and now became animated, enthusiastic over everything, and at such times was lovely and beautiful. Beautiful were the tender, complex feelings which her meeting with the ungainly man aroused in her—the man in whose veins flowed unusual blood, for, after all, it does not matter what in particular stirs up a maiden's soul: money, or fame, or nobility of birth. . . . Everybody assured the tourists that it was quite different at Sorrento and on Capri, that lemon-trees were blossoming there, that it was warmer and sunnier there, the morals purer, and the wine less adulterated. And the family from San Francisco decided to set out with all their luggage for Capri. They planned to settle down at Sorrento, but first to visit the island, tread the stones where stood Tiberius's palaces, examine the fabulous wonders of the Blue Grotto, and listen to the bagpipes of Abruzzi, who roam about the island during the whole month preceding Christmas and sing the praises of the Madonna.

On the day of departure—a very memorable day for the family from San Francisco—the sun did not appear even in the morning. A heavy winter fog covered Vesuvius down to its very base and hung like a gray curtain low over the leaden surge of the sea, hiding it completely at a distance of half a mile. Capri was completely out of sight, as though it had never existed on this earth. And the little steamboat which was making for the island tossed and pitched so fiercely that the family lay prostrated on the sofas in the miserable cabin of the little steamer, with their feet wrapped in plaids and their eyes shut because of their nausea. The older lady suffered, as she thought, most; several times she was overcome with sea-sickness, and it seemed to her then she was dying, but the chambermaid, who repeatedly brought her the basin, and who for many years, in heat and in cold, had been tossing on these waves, ever on the alert, ever kindly to all—the chambermaid only laughed. The lady's daughter was frightfully pale and kept a slice of lemon between her teeth. Not even the hope of an unexpected meeting with the prince at Sorrento, where he planned to arrive on Christmas, served to cheer her. The Gentleman from San Francisco, who was lying on his back, dressed in a large overcoat and a big cap, did not loosen his jaws throughout the voyage. His face grew dark, his moustache white, and his head ached heavily; for the last few days, because of the bad weather, he had drunk far too much in the evenings.

And the rain kept on beating against the rattling window panes, and water dripped down from them on the sofas; the howling wind attacked the masts, and sometimes, aided by a heavy sea, it laid the little steamer on its side, and then [illegible] below rolled about with a rattle.

While the steamer was anchored at Castellamare and Sorrento, the situation was more cheerful; but even here the ship rolled terribly, and the coast with all its precipices, gardens and pines, with its pink and white hotels and hazy mountains clad in curling verdure, flew up and down as if it were on swings. The rowboats hit against the sides of the steamer, the sailors and the deck passengers shouted at the top of their voices, and somewhere a baby screamed as if it were being crushed to pieces. A wet wind blew through the door, and from a wavering barge flying the flag of the Hotel Royal, an urchin kept on unwearyingly shouting "Kgoyal-al! Hotel Kgoyal-al! . . ." inviting tourists. And the Gentleman from San Francisco felt like the old man that he was, and it was with weariness and animosity that he thought of all these "Royals," "Splendids," "Excelsiors," and of all those greedy bugs, reeking with garlic, who are called Italians. Once, during a stop, having opened his eyes and half-risen from the sofa, he noticed in the shadow of the rock beach a heap of stone huts, miserable, mildewed through and through, huddled close by the water, near boats, rags, tin-boxes, and brown fishing nets, and as he remembered that this was the very Italy he had come to enjoy, he felt a great despair. . . . Finally, in twilight, the black mass of the island began to grow nearer, as though burrowed through at the base by red fires, the wind grew softer, warmer, more fragrant; from the dock-lanterns huge golden serpents flowed down the tame waves which undulated like black oil. . . . Then, suddenly, the anchor rumbled and fell with a splash into the water, the fierce yells of the boatmen filled the air—and at once everyone's heart grew easy. The electric lights in the cabin grew more brilliant, and there came a desire to eat, drink, smoke, move. . . . Ten minutes later the family from San Francisco found themselves in a large ferry-boat; fifteen minutes later they trod the stones of the quay, and then seated themselves

in a small lighted car, which, with a buzz, started to ascend the slope, while vineyard stakes, half-ruined stone fences, and wet, crooked lemon trees, in spots shielded by straw sheds, with their glimmering orange-colored fruit and thick glossy foliage, were sliding down past the open car windows. . . . After rain, the earth smells sweet in Italy, and each of her islands has a fragrance of its own.

The island of Capri was dark and damp on that evening. But for a while it grew animated and lit up, in spots, as always in the hour of the steamer's arrival. On the top of the hill, at the station of the *funiculaire,* there stood already the crowd of those whose duty it was to receive properly the Gentleman from San Francisco. The rest of the tourists hardly deserved any attention. There were a few Russians, who had settled on Capri, untidy, absent-minded people, absorbed in their bookish thoughts, spectacled, bearded, with the collars of their cloth overcoats raised. There was also a company of long-legged, long-necked, round-headed German youths in Tyrolean costume, and with linen bags on their backs, who need no one's services, are everywhere at home, and are by no means liberal in their expenses. The Gentleman from San Francisco, who kept quietly aloof from both the Russians and the Germans, was noticed at once. He and his ladies were hurriedly helped from the car, a man ran before them to show them the way, and they were again surrounded by boys and those thickset Caprean peasant women, who carry on their heads the trunks and valises of wealthy travelers. Their tiny, wooden, footstools rapped against the pavement of the small square, which looked almost like an opera square. and over which an electric lantern swung in the damp wind; the gang of urchins whistled like birds and turned somersaults, and as the Gentleman from San Francisco passed among them, it all looked like a stage scene; he went first under some kind of medieval archway, beneath houses huddled close together, and then along a steep echoing lane which led to the hotel entrance, flooded with light. At the left, a palm tree raised its tuft above the flat roofs, and higher up, blue stars burned in the black sky. And again things looked as though it was in honor of the guests from San Francisco that the stony damp little town had awakened on its rocky island in the Mediterranean, that it was they who had made the owner of the hotel so happy and beaming, and that the Chinese gong, which had sounded the call to dinner through all the floors as soon as they entered the lobby, had been waiting only for them.

The owner, an elegant young man, who met the guests with a polite and exquisite bow, for a moment startled the Gentleman from San Francisco. Having caught sight of him, the Gentleman from San Francisco suddenly recollected that on the previous night, among other confused images which disturbed his sleep, he had seen this very man. His vision resembled the hotel keeper to a dot, had the same head, the same hair, shining and scrupulously combed, and wore the same frock-coat with rounded skirts. Amazed, he almost stopped for a while. But as there was not a mustard seed of what is called mysticism in his heart, his surprise subsided at once; in passing the corridor of the hotel he jestingly told his wife and daughter about this strange coincidence of dream and reality. His daughter alone glanced at him with alarm; longing suddenly compressed her heart, and such a strong feeling of solitude on this strange, dark island seized her that she almost began to cry. But, as usual, she said nothing about her feelings to her father.

A person of high dignity, Rex XVII, who had spent three entire weeks on Capri, had just left the island, and the guests from San Francisco were given the apartments he had occupied. At their disposal was put the most handsome and skillful chambermaid, a Belgian, with a figure rendered slim and firm by her corset, and with a starched cap, shaped like a small, indented crown; and they had the privilege of being served by the most well-appearing and portly footman, a black, fiery-eyed Sicilian, and by the quickest waiter, the small, stout Luigi, who was a fiend at cracking jokes and had changed many places in his life. Then the maître-d'hôtel, a Frenchman, gently rapped at the door of the American gentleman's room. He came to ask whether the gentleman and the ladies would dine, and in case they would, which he did not doubt, to report that there was to be had that day lobsters, roast beef, asparagus, pheasants, etc., etc.

The floor was still rocking under the Gentleman from San Francisco—so sea-sick had the wretched Italian steamer made him—yet, he slowly, though awkwardly, shut the window which had banged when the maître-d'hôtel entered, and which let in the smell of the distant kitchen and wet flowers in the garden, and answered with slow distinctness, that they would dine, that their table must be placed farther away from the door, in the depth of the hall, that they would have local wine and champagne. moderately dry and but slightly cooled. The maître-d'hôtel approved the words of the guest in various intonations, which all meant, however, only one thing: there is and can be no doubt that the desires of the Gentleman from San Francisco are right, and that everything would be carried out, in exact conformity with his words. At last he inclined his head and asked delicately:

"Is that all, sir?"

And having received in reply a slow "Yes," he added that today they were going to have the tarantella danced in the vestibule by Carmella and Giuseppe, known to all Italy and to "the entire world of tourists."

"I saw her on post card pictures," said the Gentleman from San Francisco in a tone of voice which expressed nothing. "And this Giuseppe, is he her husband?"

"Her cousin, sir," answered the maître-d'hôtel.

The Gentleman from San Francisco tarried a little, evidently musing on something, but said nothing, then dismissed him with a nod of his head.

Then he started making preparations, as though for a wedding: he turned on all the electric lamps, and filled the mirrors with reflections of light and the sheen of furniture, and opened trunks; he began to shave and to wash himself, and the sound of his bell was heard every minute in the corridor, crossing with other impatient calls which came from the rooms of his wife and daughter. Luigi, in his red apron, with the ease characteristic of stout people, made funny faces at the chambermaids, who were dashing by with tile buckets in their hands, making them laugh until the tears came. He rolled head over heels to the door, and, tapping with his knuckles, asked with feigned timidity and with an obsequiousness which he knew how to render idiotic:

"Ha sonata, Signore?" (Did you ring, sir?)

And from behind the door a slow, grating, insultingly polite voice, answered:

"Yes, come in."

What did the Gentleman from San Francisco think and feel on that evening forever memorable to him? It must be said frankly: absolutely nothing exceptional. The trouble is that everything on this earth appears too simple. Even had he felt anything deep in his heart, a premonition that something was going to happen, he would have imagined that it was not going to happen so soon, at least not at once. Besides, as is usually the case just after sea-sickness is over, he was very hungry, and he anticipated with real delight the first spoonful of soup, and the first gulp of wine; therefore, he was performing the habitual process of dressing, in a state of excitement which left no time for reflection.

Having shaved and washed himself, and dexterously put in place a few false teeth, he then, standing before the mirror, moistened and vigorously plastered what was left of his thick pearly-colored hair, close to his tawny-yellow skull. Then he put on, with some effort, a tight-fitting undershirt of cream-colored silk, fitted tight to his strong, aged body with its waist swelling out because of an abundant diet; and he pulled black silk socks and patent leather dancing shoes on his dry feet with their fallen arches. Squatting down, he set right his black trousers, drawn high by means of silk suspenders, adjusted his snow-white shirt with its bulging front, put the buttons into the shining cuffs, and began the painful process of hunting up the front button under the hard collar. The floor was still swaying under him, the tips of his fingers hurt terribly, the button at times painfully pinched the flabby skin in the depression under his Adam's apple, but he persevered, and finally, with his eyes shining from the effort, his face blue because of the narrow collar which squeezed his neck, he triumphed over the difficulties—and all exhausted, he sat down before the pier glass, his reflected image repeating itself in all the mirrors.

"It's terrible!" he muttered, lowering his strong, bald head and making no effort to understand what was terrible; then, with a careful and habitual gesture, he examined his short fingers with gouty callosities in the joints, and their large, convex, almond-colored nails, and repeated with conviction, "It's terrible!"

But here the stentorian voice of the second gong sounded throughout the house, as in a heathen temple. And having risen hurriedly, the Gentleman from San Francisco drew his tie more taut and firm around his collar, and pulled together his abdomen by means of a tight waistcoat, put on a dinner-coat, set to rights the cuffs, and for the last time he examined himself in the mirror. . . . This Carmella, tawny as a mulatto, with fiery eyes, in a dazzling dress in which orange-color predominated, must be an extraordinary dancer—it occurred to him. And cheerfully leaving his room, he walked on the carpet, to his wife's chamber, and asked in a loud tone of voice if they would be long.

"In five minutes, papa!" answered cheerfully and gaily a girlish voice. "I am combing my hair."

"Very well," said the Gentleman from San Francisco.

And thinking of her wonderful hair, streaming on her shoulders, he slowly walked down along corridors and staircases, spread with red velvet carpets, looking for the library. The servants he met hugged the walls, and he walked by as if not noticing them. An old lady, late for dinner, already bowed with years, with milk-white hair, yet bare-necked, in a light-gray silk dress, hurried at top speed, but she walked in a mincing, funny, hen-like manner, and he easily overtook her. At the glass door of the dining hall where the guests had already gathered and started eating, he stopped before the table crowded with boxes of matches and Egyptian cigarettes, took a

great Manila cigar, and threw three liras on the table. On the winter veranda he glanced into the open window; a stream of soft air came to him from the darkness, the top of the old palm loomed up before him afar-off, with its boughs spread among the stars and looking gigantic, and the distant even noise of the sea reached his ear. In the library-room, snug, quiet, a German in round silver-bowed glasses and with crazy, wondering eyes stood turning the rustling pages of a newspaper. Having coldly eyed him, the Gentleman from San Francisco seated himself in a deep leather arm-chair near a lamp under a green hood, put on his pince-nez and twitching his head because of the collar which choked him, hid himself from view behind a newspaper. He glanced at a few headlines, read a few lines about the interminable Balkan war, and turned over the page with an habitual gesture. Suddenly, the lines blazed up with a glassy sheen, the veins of his neck swelled, his eyes bulged out, the pince-nez fell from his nose. . . . He dashed forward, wanted to swallow air—and made a wild, rattling noise; his lower jaw dropped, dropped on his shoulder and began to shake, the shirt-front bulged out—and the whole body, writhing, the heels catching in the carpet, slowly fell to the floor in a desperate struggle with an invisible foe. . . .

Had not the German been in the library, this frightful accident would have been quickly and adroitly hushed up. The body of the Gentleman from San Francisco would have been rushed away to some far corner—and none of the guests would have known of the occurrence. But the German dashed out of the library with outcries and spread the alarm all over the house. And many rose from their meal, upsetting chairs, others growing pale, ran along the corridors to the library, and the question, asked in many languages, was heard; "What is it? What has happened?" And no one was able to answer it clearly, no one understood anything, for until this very day men still wonder most at death and most absolutely refuse to believe in it. The owner rushed from one guest to another, trying to keep back those who were running and sooth them with hasty assurances, that this was nothing, a mere trifle, a little fainting-spell by which a Gentleman from San Francisco, had been overcome. But no one listened to him, many saw how the footmen and waiters tore from the gentleman his tie, collar, waistcoat, the rumpled evening coat, and even —for no visible reason—the dancing shoes from his black silk-covered feet. And he kept on writhing. He obstinately struggled with death, he did not want to yield to the foe that attacked him so unexpectedly and grossly. He shook his head, emitted rattling sounds like one throttled, and turned up his eye-balls like one drunk with wine. When he was hastily brought into Number Forty-three,—the smallest, worst, dampest, and coldest room at the end of the lower corridor—and stretched on the bed—his daughter came running, her hair falling over her shoulders, the skirts of her dressing-gown thrown open, with bare breasts raised by the corset. Then came his wife, big, heavy, almost completely dressed for dinner, her mouth round with terror.

In a quarter of an hour all was again in good trim at the hotel. But the evening was irreparably spoiled. Some tourists returned to the dining hall and finished their dinner, but they kept silent, and it was obvious that they took the accident as a personal insult, while the owner went from one guest to another, shrugging his shoulders in impotent and appropriate irritation, feeling like one innocently victimized, assuring everyone that he understood perfectly well "how disagreeable this is," and giving his word that he would take all "the measures that are within his power" to do away with the trouble. Yet it was found necessary to cancel the tarantella. The unnecessary electric lamps were put out, most of the guests left for the beer hall, and it grew so quiet in the hotel that one could distinctly hear the tick-tock of the clock in the lobby, where a lonely parrot babbled something in its expressionless manner, stirring in its cage, and trying to fall asleep with its paw clutching the upper perch in a most absurd manner. The Gentleman from San Francisco lay stretched in a cheap iron bed, under coarse woolen blankets, dimly lighted by a single gas-burner fastened in the ceiling. An ice bag slid down on his wet, cold forehead. His blue, already lifeless face grew gradually cold; the hoarse, rattling noise which came from his mouth, lighted by the glimmer of the golden fillings, gradually weakened. It was not the Gentleman from San Francisco that was emitting those weird sounds; he was no more—someone else did it. His wife and daughter, the doctor, the servants were standing and watching him apathetically. Suddenly, that which they expected and feared happened. The rattling sound ceased. And slowly, slowly, in everybody's sight a pallor stole over the face of the dead man, and his features began to grow thinner and more luminous, beautiful with the beauty that he had long shunned and that became him well. . . .

The proprietor entered. "Gia e morto," whispered the doctor to him. The proprietor shrugged his shoulders indifferently. The older lady, with tears slowly running down her cheeks, approached him and said timidly that now the deceased must be taken to his room.

"O no, madam," answered the proprietor politely, but without any amiability and not in English, but

in French. He was no longer interested in the trifle which the guests from San Francisco could now leave at his cash-office. "This is absolutely impossible," he said, and added in the form of an explanation that he valued this apartment highly, and if he satisfied her desire, this would become known over Capri and the tourists would begin to avoid it.

The girl, who had looked at him strangely, sat down, and with her handkerchief to her mouth, began to cry. Her mother's tears dried up at once, and her face flared up. She raised her tone, began to demand, using her own language and still unable to realize that the respect for her was absolutely gone. The proprietor, with polite dignity, cut her short: "If madam does not like the ways of this hotel, he dare not detain her." And he firmly announced that the corpse must leave the hotel that very day, at dawn, that the police had been informed, that an agent would call immediately and attend to all the necessary formalities. . . . "Is it possible to get on Capri at least a plain coffin?" madam asks. . . . Unfortunately not; by no means, and as for making one, there will be no time. It will be necessary to arrange things some other way. . . . For instance, he gets English soda-water in big, oblong boxes. . . . The partitions could be taken out from such a box. . . .

By night, the whole hotel was asleep. A waiter opened the window in Number 43—it faced a corner of the garden where a consumptive banana-tree grew in the shadow of a high stone wall set with broken glass on the top—turned out the electric light, locked the door, and went away. The deceased remained alone in the darkness. Blue stars looked down at him from the black sky, the cricket in the wall started his melancholy, care-free song. In the dimly lighted corridor two chambermaids were sitting on the window-sill, mending something. Then Luigi came in, in slippered feet, with a heap of clothes on his arm.

"Pronto?"—he asked in a stage whisper, as if greatly concerned, directing his eyes toward the terrible door, at the end of the corridor. And waving his free hand in that direction, *"Partenza!"* he cried out in a whisper, as if seeing off a train—and the chambermaids, choking with noiseless laughter, put their heads on each other's shoulders.

Then, stepping softly, he ran to the door, slightly rapped at it, and inclining his ear, asked most obsequiously in a subdued tone of voice:

"Ha sonata, Signore?"

And, squeezing his throat and thrusting his lower jaw forward, he answered himself in a drawling, grating, sad voice, as if from behind the door:

"Yes, come in. . . ."

At dawn, when the window panes in Number Forty-three grew white, and a damp wind rustled in the leaves of the banana tree, when the pale-blue morning sky rose and stretched over Capri, and the sun, rising from behind the distant mountains of Italy, touched into gold the pure, clearly outlined summit of Monte Solaro, when the masons, who mended the paths for the tourists on the island, went out to their work—an oblong box was brought to room number forty-three. Soon it grew very heavy and painfully pressed against the knees of the assistant doorman who was conveying it in a one-horse carriage along the white highroad which winded on the slopes, among stone fences and vineyards, all the way down to the seacoast. The driver, a sickly man, with red eyes, in an old short-sleeved coat and in worn-out shoes, had a drunken headache; all night long he had played dice at the eatinghouse—and he kept on flogging his vigorous little horse. According to Sicilian custom, the animal was heavily burdened with decorations: all sorts of bells tinkled on the bridle, which was ornamented with colored woolen fringes; there were bells also on the edges of the high saddle; and a bird's feather, two feet long, stuck in the trimmed crest of the horse, nodded up and down. The driver kept silence: he was depressed by his wrongheadedness and vices, by the fact that last night he had lost in gambling all the copper coins with which his pockets had been full—neither more nor less than four liras and forty centesimi. But on such a morning, when the air is so fresh, and the sea stretches near by, and the sky is serene with a morning serenity, a headache passes rapidly and one becomes carefree again. Besides, the driver was also somewhat cheered by the unexpected earnings which the Gentleman from San Francisco, who bumped his dead head against the walls of the box behind his back, had brought him. The little steamer, shaped like a great bug, which lay far down, on the tender and brilliant blue filling to the brim the Neapolitan bay, was blowing the signal of departure, and the sounds swiftly resounded all over Capri. Every bend of the island, every ridge and stone was seen as distinctly as if there were no air between heaven and earth. Near the quay the driver was overtaken by the head doorman who conducted in an auto the wife and daughter of the Gentleman from San Francisco. Their faces were pale and their eyes sunken with tears and a sleepless night. And in ten minutes the little steamer was again stirring up the water and picking its way toward Sorrento and Castellamare, carrying the American family away from Capri forever. . . . Meanwhile, peace and rest were restored on the island.

Two thousand years ago there had lived on that

island a man who became utterly entangled in his own brutal and filthy actions. For some unknown reason he usurped the rule over millions of men and found himself bewildered by the absurdity of this power, while the fear that someone might kill him unawares, made him commit deeds inhuman beyond all measure. And mankind has forever retained his memory, and those who, taken together, now rule the world, as incomprehensibly and, essentially, as cruelly as he did—come from all the corners of the earth to look at the remnants of the stone house he inhabited, which stands on one of the steepest cliffs of the island. On that wonderful morning the tourists, who had come to Capri for precisely that purpose, were still asleep in the various hotels, but tiny long-eared asses under red saddles were already being led to the hotel entrances. Americans and Germans, men and women, old and young, after having arisen and breakfasted heartily, were to scramble on them, and the old beggar-women of Capri, with sticks in their sinewy hands, were again to run after them along stony, mountainous paths, all the way up to the summit of Monte Tiberia. The dead old man from San Francisco, who had planned to keep the tourists company but who had, instead, only scared them by reminding them of death, was already shipped to Naples, and soothed by this, the travelers slept soundly, and silence reigned over the island. The stores in the little town were still closed, with the exception of the fish and greens market on the tiny square. Among the plain people who filled it, going about their business, stood idly by, as usual, Lorenzo, a tall old boatman, a carefree reveller and once a handsome man, famous all over Italy, who had many times served as a model for painters. He had brought and already sold—for a song—two big sea-crawfish, which he had caught at night and which were rustling in the apron of Don Cataldo, the cook of the hotel where the family from San Francisco had been lodged, and now Lorenzo could stand calmly until nightfall, wearing princely airs, showing off his rags, his clay pipe with its long reed mouth-piece, and his red woolen cap, tilted on one ear. Meanwhile, among the precipices of Monte Solare, down the ancient Phoenician road, cut in the rocks in the form of a gigantic staircase, two Abruzzi mountaineers were coming from Anacapri. One carried under his leather mantle a bagpipe, a large goat's skin with two pipes; the other, something in the nature of a wooden flute. They walked, and the entire country, joyous, beautiful, sunny, stretched below them; the rocky shoulders of the island, which lay at their feet, the fabulous blue in which it swam, the shining morning vapors over the sea westward, beneath the dazzling sun, and the wavering masses of Italy's mountains, both near and distant, whose beauty human word is powerless to render. . . . Midway they slowed up. Overshadowing the road stood, in a grotto of the rock wall of Monte Solare, the Holy Virgin, all radiant, bathed in the warmth and the splendor of the sun. The rust of her snow-white plaster-of-Paris vestures and queenly crown was touched into gold, and there were meekness and mercy in her eyes raised toward the heavens, toward the eternal and beatific abode of her thrice-blessed Son. They bared their heads, applied the pipes to their lips, and praises flowed on, candid and humbly-joyous, praises to the sun and the morning, to Her, the Immaculate Intercessor for all who suffer in this evil and beautiful world, and to Him who had been born of her womb in the cavern of Bethlehem, in a hut of lowly shepherds in distant Judea.

As for the body of the dead Gentleman from San Francisco, it was on its way home, to the shores of the New World, where a grave awaited it. Having undergone many humiliations and suffered much human neglect, having wandered about a week from one port warehouse to another, it finally got on that same famous ship which had brought the family, such a short while ago and with such a pomp, to the Old World. But now he was concealed from the living: in a tar-coated coffin he was lowered deep into the black hold of the steamer. And again did the ship set out on its far sea journey. At night it sailed by the island of Capri, and, for those who watched it from the island, its lights slowly disappearing in the dark sea, it seemed infinitely sad. But there, on the vast steamer, in its lighted halls shining with brilliance and marble, a noisy dancing party was going on, as usual.

On the second and the third night there was again a ball—this time in mid-ocean, during the furious storm sweeping over the ocean, which roared like a funeral mass and rolled up mountainous seas fringed with mourning silvery foam. The Devil, who from the rocks of Gibraltar, the stony gateway of two worlds, watched the ship vanish into night and storm, could hardly distinguish from behind the snow the innumerable fiery eyes of the ship. The Devil was as huge as a cliff, but the ship was even bigger, a many-storied, many-stacked giant, created by the arrogance of the New Man with the old heart. The blizzard battered the ship's rigging and its broad-necked stacks, whitened with snow, but it remained firm, majestic—and terrible. On its uppermost deck, amidst a snowy whirlwind there loomed up in a loneliness the cozy, dimly lighted cabin, where, only half awake, the vessel's ponderous pilot reigned over its entire mass, bearing the semblance of a pagan idol.

He heard the wailing moans and the furious screeching of the siren, choked by the storm, but the nearness of that which was behind the wall and which in the last account was incomprehensible to him, removed his fears. He was reassured by the thought of the large, armored cabin, which now and then was filled with mysterious rumbling sounds and with the dry creaking of blue fires, flaring up and exploding around a man with a metallic headpiece, who was eagerly catching the indistinct voices of the vessels that hailed him, hundreds of miles away. At the very bottom, in the under-water womb of the *Atlantis,* the huge masses of tanks and various other machines, their steel parts shining dully, wheezed with steam and oozed hot water and oil; here was the gigantic kitchen, heated by hellish furnaces, where the motion of the vessel was being generated; here seethed those forces terrible in their concentration which were transmitted to the keel of the vessel, and into that endless round tunnel, which was lighted by electricity, and looked like a gigantic cannon barrel, where slowly, with a punctuality and certainty that crushes the human soul, a colossal shaft was revolving in its oily nest, like a living monster stretching in its lair. As for the middle part of the *Atlantis,* its warm, luxurious cabins, dining-rooms, and halls, they radiated light and joy, were astir with a chattering smartly-dressed crowd, were filled with the fragrance of fresh flowers, and resounded with a string orchestra. And again did the slender supple pair of hired lovers painfully turn and twist and at times clash convulsively amid the splendor of lights, silks, diamonds, and bare feminine shoulders: she—a sinfully modest pretty girl, with lowered eyelashes and an innocent hair dressing, he—a tall, young man, with black hair, looking as if they were pasted, pale with powder, in most exquisite patent leather shoes, in a narrow, long-skirted dresscoat,—a beautiful man resembling a leech. And no one knew that this couple had long since been weary of torturing themselves with a feigned beatific torture under the sounds of shamefully-melancholy music; nor did any one know what lay deep, deep, beneath them, on the very bottom of the hold, in the neighborhood of the gloomy and sultry maw of the ship, that heavily struggled with the ocean, the darkness, and the storm.

Questions:

1. This story has been rather fully discussed in various sections of the "Introduction to Fiction." After reading again the pertinent sections of the "Introduction to Fiction," restate in your own terms the answers to the regular questions of theme, character, point of view, style, etc. Then write a consecutive analysis of the story.
2. Why is the comparison, in the last part of the story, of the male dancer on shipboard to an enormous leech appropriate?
3. What part does the drunkenness and gambling of the cabman who takes the corpse to the dock have in the story?
4. Why does the author make the gentleman say, for no apparent reason, "This is terrible?"

THE THREE STRANGERS

THOMAS HARDY

AMONG THE few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But, in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. Hence the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were

not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighboring valley.

The night of March 28, 182– was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eaves-droppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cozy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly polished sheep-crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half-a-dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and John Pitcher, a neighboring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a life-companionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favorite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamored of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her

guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had traveled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveler's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten beehives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilized by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dishwaters that are absolutely necessitated in upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had lapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden-path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of move-

ment and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, stranger," said the shepherd. "And faith, you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy, either by too many or too few of such episodes, and being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney-corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney-corner, stretched out his legs and his arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighborhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said quickly. "My time would be long before yours, ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy," continued the new-comer. "And that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoke, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

"I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion. "Give it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney-corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his existence; and a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!" In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven door-mat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neighborhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-gray shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only

personal ornament. Shaking the water-drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of [illegible] in his composition, but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-colored gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney-corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbor the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTILL I CUM

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.' But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

"Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

"O, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-gray, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney-corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humor.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-gray at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

"Well, well, as I say," he resumed, "I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I'm not sorry for it."

"You don't live in Casterbridge?" said the shepherd.

"Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there."

"Going to set up in trade, perhaps?"

"No, no," said the shepherd's wife. "It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything."

The cinder-gray stranger paused, as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, "Rich is not quite the word for me, dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight tomorrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work tomorrow must be done."

"Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we?" replied the shepherd's wife.

"'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town." However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, "There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry."

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger disdainfully. "I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again."

He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

"Why should you do this?" she said reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. "He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-gray was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney-corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-gray.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. "My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pincushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney-corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the arm-hole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporizing gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:

O my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all—
My trade is a sight to see,
For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney-corner, who, at the singer's word, "Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish:

And waft 'em to a far countree!

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney-corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inwards, and went on with the next stanza as requested:

My tools are but common ones,
Simple shepherds all—
My tools are no sight to see:
A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted half-way, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"O, he's the—!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail tomorrow—the man for [illegible]—the poor clock-maker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to do—Timothy Summers, whose family were a-starving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the high-road, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded towards the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own county-

town, and he's got the place here now our own county man's dead; he's going to live in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-gray took no notice of this whispered string of observations, but again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in the chimney-corner was the only one who reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held out his cup towards that appreciative comrade, who also held out his own. They clinked together, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips for the third verse; but at that moment another knock was audible upon the door. This time the knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared; the shepherd looked with consternation towards the entrance, and it was with some effort that he resisted his alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered for the third time the welcoming words, "Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another man stood upon the mat. He, like those who had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it was a short, small personage, of fair complexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to ——?" he began: when, gazing round the room to observe the nature of the company amongst whom he had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in cinder-gray. It was just at the instant when the latter, who had thrown his mind into his song with such a will that he scarcely heeded the interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries by bursting into his third verse.

Tomorrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—
Tomorrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

The stranger in the chimney-corner, waving cups with the singer so heartily that his mead splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his bass voice as before:

And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

All this time the third stranger had been standing in the doorway. Finding now that he did not come forward or go on speaking, the guests particularly regarded him. They noticed to their surprise that he stood before them the picture of abject terror—his knees trembling, his hand shaking so violently that the door-latch by which he supported himself rattled audibly: his white lips were parted, and his eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the middle of the room. A moment more and he had turned, closed the door, and fled.

"What a man can it be?" said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late discovery and the odd conduct of this third visitor, looked as if they knew not what to think, and said nothing. Instinctively they withdrew further and further from the grim gentleman in their midst, whom some of them seemed to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till they formed a remote circle, an empty space of floor being left between them and him:

. . . circulus, cujus centrum diabolus.

The room was so silent—though there were more than twenty people in it—that nothing could be heard but the patter of the rain against the window-shutters, accompanied by the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell down the chimney into the fire, and the steady puffing of the man in the corner, who had now resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The distant sound of a gun reverberated through the air—apparently from the direction of the county-town.

"Be jiggered!" cried the stranger who had sung the song, jumping up

"What does that mean?" asked several.

"A prisoner escaped from the jail—that's what it means."

All listened. The sound was repeated, and none of them spoke but the man in the chimney-corner, who said quietly, "I've often been told that in this county they fire a gun at such times; but I never heard it till now."

"I wonder if it is *my* man?" murmured the personage in cinder-gray.

"Surely it is!" said the shepherd involuntarily. "And surely we've zeed him! That little man who looked in at the door by now, and quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!"

"His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body," said the dairyman.

"And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone," said Oliver Giles.

"And he bolted as if he'd been shot at," said the hedge-carpenter.

"True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he'd been shot at," slowly summed up the man in the chimney-corner.

"I didn't notice it," remarked the hangman.

"We were all a-wondering what made him run off in such a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-gray roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

"I will, sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown a painted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up me!"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in gray. "Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied—"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks—"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney-corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-gray.

"O—you here?" said the latter, smiling. "I thought you had gone to help in the capture." And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

"And I thought you had gone," said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

"Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me," said the first confidentially, "and such a night as it is, too. Besides, 'tis the business o' the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine."

"True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me."

"I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country."

"Nor I neither, between you and me."

"These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They'll have him ready for me before morning, and no trouble to me at all."

"They'll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labor in the matter."

"True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?"

"No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there" (he nodded indefinitely to the right), "and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime."

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan

now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight ramblers over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downwards, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished, due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself, appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender, in the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly towards them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travelers," he said, "did I hear ye speak to me?"

"You did: you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge of not biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung tomorrow morning. Neighbors, do your duty, and seize the culpet!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back towards the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living room to be invaded by two officers from the Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest county-seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid, considering their ignorance of Crown work. Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light.

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable.

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight o' the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behavior of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song.

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived."

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the [illegible] coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?"

"Well, sir," said the constable, "he's the man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, sir, if you understand my every-day way; for 'twas the man in the chimney-corner!"

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time. The mention of the man in the chimney-corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as

well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney-corner; and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I knew he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

"I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, sir."

"'A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt," said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand; but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvelous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and outhouses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads; but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney-corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-gray never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honor they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

If the plot element in "The Three Strangers" is separated from the total story it may seem to be a rather poor and mechanical contrivance. The coincidences may seem strained and the whole action, finally, rather pointless. Does Hardy's method of presentation mitigate these criticisms, and does it give point to the story?

In the first place, Hardy does give a fairly full picture of a way of life which in itself holds some interest for the reader. The careful description of the countryside and of the cottage, the presentation of the customs and manners of the isolated community, and such details appeal to the interest which many readers have in "local color" for itself. The main persons, the hangman and the condemned man, are rather fully rendered, at least in terms of actual appearance and in hints of character. The handling of the suspense is effective, built up, as it is, in the conversation between these two persons, and the sudden flight of the third stranger. But granting the competence of much of this treatment, the reader still may have the feeling that many of the details which Hardy gives do not bear directly on the action, and that the story is filled with much irrelevant descriptive material and that the general organization is very loose. In the course of the story, we may come to see that some of this material is relevant. For instance, the fact that the shepherd's cottage is located at the crossing of the paths helps to make more plausible the accident of the several men's all happening upon the cottage at the same time; or the fact that one of the strangers is without a pipe and tobacco and borrows from the shepherd comes to have a real significance when we learn that

he is a fugitive. But there are other details which seem to have no direct bearing on the story. Shepherd Fennel's wife, for example, is proud of the quality of her mead, yet is anxious to husband it. The function of such details in the story, if they have a function, must be accounted for on some grounds other than their direct relevance to the actual plot.

As a matter of fact, this type of detail is relevant to the story. We shall miss much of the point of the story if we consider that Hardy is merely taking the occasion to present some of the quaint customs of Wessex or a picture of pleasant rural simplicity. Actually, the total effect of background and atmosphere of the story is not to emphasize the quaint peculiarities of the people, but to affirm the elemental humanity of these people, the qualities which they share with, let us say, a Russian peasant or a Tennessee mountaineer. Their world is a simple world. They cannot move very far from the basic considerations of life Their life is constantly related to the necessity for getting food and shelter, and is tied to the natural routine of the seasons. The occasion for the celebration described in the story is one of the universal human occasions for rejoicing, but even in the midst of the celebration the shepherd's wife can count the cups of mead. This emphasis on the nature of the life of these people will be seen to be integral in the story. At the very end of the story Hardy writes: "But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected therewith, is a story as well known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs." In other words, Hardy has defined the little world where the tale, which in itself may seem so bare and mechanical, came to have meaning and was perpetuated in a legend. For such people as Hardy describes at the shepherd's house, the story had a meaning which made it worthy of preservation.

To these people, who are gathered to celebrate a birth and a christening, there enter the condemned man and the hangman, who participate in the celebration; and this accidental juxtaposition between birth and death provides the basic ironical situation of the story. But it is not merely natural death, but death decreed by society, legalistically and mechanically, for the infraction of a code which had been broken for the most "natural" of reasons—to secure food for a hungry family. In other words, the situation is a little two-fold parable of the essential circumstance of the human being's condition in this world. First, the parable involves the natural unpredictability of fate, the natural association—here so accidentally and ironically arrived at—of death with life, sorrow with joy. The neighbors who have turned out to celebrate a birth find themselves, before the evening is over, hunting for the condemned man who is to be punished by death; and this fact suggests an ironical commentary concerning the kind of world into which the human being is born. Second, the parable involves a contrast between the warm, spontaneous quality of the average person when he is allowed to approach another without the restrictions and considerations which society would impose upon him, and the cold, mechanical, dehumanized quality of the codes and conventions by which society necessarily operates: even the hangman's humanity triumphs over his dehumanized and dehumanizing profession so that he can join in the spirit of the occasion and can hobnob. Hardy expresses a similar contrast in one of his poems, "The Man He Killed," the last stanza of which is quoted here:

> Yes: quaint and curious war is!
> You shoot a fellow down
> You'd treat if met where any bar is,
> Or help to half-a-crown.

Hardy never actually states the point in the story as he states it in the poem; none of the characters moralizes the situation as does the soldier in the poem. And undoubtedly the oddity of the coincidence itself, and the coolness of the condemned man, which makes possible his escape, help make the incident immediately memorable, but these matters alone do not account for the incident's becoming a legend. Another consideration operated whether the shepherd folk realized it or not, the incident became a legend because it dramatized a fundamental insight into human circumstance.

If this account of the theme of the story is correct, then it will be seen that Hardy has *not been building toward* a coincidence—has not been depending upon a coincidence to solve a problem of plot and structure—but *has worked from* the coincidence as an essential part of the situation which he undertook to interpret as a story But this does not completely answer the possible charge of implausibility which may be brought against the coincidence as such. Why is the coincidence here relatively easy to accept? The answer may lie in the particular approach which Hardy has taken to the material. He sets the situation up as a legend, an event which, presumably, really happened, and which found its way, because of its striking quality, into the consciousness of the simple world of the shepherds. His strategy is to imply that he takes no responsibility for the plotting of the story but only for the imaginative reconstruction of the incident, for the presentation of the world which preserved its memory, for the interpretation which made memorable the event.

We have seen the utility of Hardy's assuming the legend as a starting point for his story; but there are further aspects of the story to be explored.

Questions.

1. Hardy rather consciously accepts the rôle of story-teller and interpreter, the same sort of rôle which Bret Harte adopts in "The Luck of Roaring Camp." Why is it that Hardy's method does not offend the reader?
2. We have seen the utility of Hardy's rather elaborate background for the story in the legend itself and in giving it plausibility. But some of the details have other, or additional, functions. For example, the incident of the girl's decision not to faint because her betrothed was, apparently, not prepared to catch her. The incident has a humorous quality, although it comes at the very moment when the profession of the hangman is revealed. The element of humor helps to prevent the "life-death" contrast from appearing oversolemn, stagey, and mechanical. What are the functions of various other details in the story?

THE WASHERWOMAN'S DAY

HARRIETTE L. SIMPSON

IT WAS pneumonia all right, but the lye maybe had something to do with it," Granma said.

Mama shifted Joie to her other breast. "Ollie Rankin ought to have had more sense," she said.

"She didn't know the old fool would take off her shoes and scrub the kitchen barefooted."

"Can I go to the funeral," I said.

"Be quiet," Mama said. "Her shoes were new, and she maybe thought to save them. The poor fool, her legs were swollen purple to her waist, Molly Hardwick said."

"If that Laurie Mae were fit to go into a decent house. They say that baby is exactly like Perce . . ."

Mama looked at me. Granma hushed. "Can I go to the funeral?" I said.

"No," Mama said. "It does make it unhandy. I guess we'll have to get a nigger from Canetown, but I don't like niggers about."

"I always said I'd rather have black trash than white trash any day . . ."

"Did she walk home without her shoes? Susie Chrisman said she did, and there was snow and . . ."

"Hush, Jane," Mama said. "You'll be late to school."

"Spell *vegetation,*" Granma said.

"V-e-g-e-t-a-t-i-o-n," I spelled.

"Wear your overshoes," Mama said.

"Don't go about the funeral," Granma said.

"The Ladies Aid are burying her. Susie Chrisman said her father . . ."

"Don't argue," Mama said, and Granma tapped her cane.

I ran all the way to school. I thought all morning, and at noon I said, "Miss Rankin, my little brother Joie was croupy this morning and Mama forgot."

"What?"

"To write a note of excuse for me to go to the funeral. Susie Chrisman is going."

"Are you sure your mother wanted you to go?"

"Yes, mam. Clarie Bolin has always done our washing. Mama said I should go out of respect for the dead and the Ladies Aid . . . if she was poor white trash. I know my spelling."

"You may go at one-thirty," she said.

Susie and I held hands and ran fast down the sidewalk from the school. We laughed as we ran, for it was good to be out of school and there was a snow promise in the air and Christmas was only two weeks away. At the foot of the hill we stopped. "It's not proper to run all the way to a funeral," Susie said.

"No," I said. "Did they undertake her?"

"No. My father said it was a waste of good money to undertake poor people in cold weather. He sold the Ladies Aid the coffin, though."

"Is it true about the roses?"

Susie skipped twice before she remembered and was proper again. "Yes. The Ladies Aid sent all the way to Lexington. Two dozen white roses, and it the dead of winter. They cost three dollars . . . and her the washerwoman, Papa said."

Inside the church Mrs. Hyden was singing a solo. Her mouth was very wide open, and while we tiptoed to the second row from the back she held the word *dew* until it seemed she would not let it go until we sat down. I was embarrassed and in my haste stumbled over Susie. Susie tittered. When we were seated, Mrs. Hyden sang on about the dew on the roses and the voice she heard.

Susie nudged me. "Laurie Mae don't look so nice. That coat Mrs. Harvey gave her don't fit so good."

I craned my head down the aisle to see. Laurie Mae sat alone in the front row before her mother's coffin. Beside her was a long bundle wrapped in a piece of dirty brown blanket. "Mama said, 'She'll have her nerve to bring that baby.' The Ladies Aid'll be mad," Susie whispered.

"Mama said the baby looked like Mr. Perce Burton," I said.

"On account of Laurie Mae was a hired girl there last year."

Something jerked my pigtail. I looked around. Mrs. John Crabtree set her lips tight together and looked hard at me. She was president of the Ladies Aid, and Mrs. Ollie Rankin sat with her. I nudged Susie, and we were still. Reverend Lipscomb read The Beatitudes and prayed. While he prayed Susie and I raised our heads and looked at all the people. Susie pinched me. Laurie Mae didn't have her head bowed at her own mother's funeral. "Isn't she awful," Susie whispered.

Then the choir sang "Lord, I'm coming home." Then Reverend Lipscomb preached the funeral. I was glad he made it so short. He talked about what the Bible meant when it said things like the poor and the meek shall inherit the earth. He explained that the poor must be hard working and patient and righteous. He said that righteousness had this day been shown by the ladies of the church in their beautiful putting away of the dead. I thought his

words were so wonderful that I would remember them.

He said that man was made to err, and that the dead woman had been no different from the world of men, but he hoped that God in His divine mercy and goodness and infinite wisdom would look down on her and forgive her sins and take her to His bosom. He hoped that the one of the living nearest and dearest to the dead would profit by the affliction that God in His almighty wisdom had seen fit to lay upon her, and change the path of her ways and walk henceforth with uprightness and decency. "He means Laurie Mae," Susie whispered.

"She's not even crying," I said.

He finished and the choir sang. Then Miss Virginia played the piano, and we all walked around and looked at Clarie Bolin and the white roses and Laurie Mae. "Didn't she look ugly," Susie whispered when we were back in our seats.

"She looked mad," I said, and didn't want to whisper any more. It was no longer fun. I wondered why the dead woman looked the way she did with her teeth clamped tight together and her thin blue lips drawn back a little ways. She looked, I thought, as if she had just come back from a long fight, and had lost in the fight. I wished in a dim sort of way that she could know the Ladies Aid had spent three dollars for white roses. I thought it would have made her feel better.

Susie's father wheeled the coffin down the aisle. The rollers made a little squeaking as they rolled over the carpet, and the white roses quivered until one pale petal slipped loose and fell behind the coffin. Laurie Mae sat and looked straight in front of her until the coffin was going through the door into the vestibule. She got up then, and took the ragged bundle from the seat and laid it carefully on her arm, and walked slowly down the aisle. All the ladies looked at her and the bundle, but she did not look at anything.

When the coffin was in the vestibule Mrs. Crabtree and Mrs. Rankin started whispering. We turned around to listen. "Not so much as a thank-you for all we've done," Mrs. Crabtree said.

"As soon as I heard that she was dead I went right up there into that hut," Mrs. Rankin said.

Mrs. Hyden and some other ladies left their places in the choir and joined them. Mrs. Hyden leaned over me to talk to Mrs. Crabtree and I could feel her fat breasts on my shoulder. "What about the roses?" she said. "You're not going to send them to the cemetery?"

"No," Mrs. Crabtree said. "I had thought we might give Laurie Mae some and keep the others for the sewing circle tomorrow afternoon."

"What would Laurie Mae do with roses?" Susie's mother said.

"We could give her just a few . . . I think maybe we ought to."

"I'll go see to it," Mrs. Crabtree said, and got up.

We followed her to the church door, where men were carrying the coffin down the high steps. Susie's father had taken away the roses and stood holding them all bundled in his hands. Mrs. Crabtree took them. She looked at the flowers and arranged them in a neat bouquet. When she had finished arranging them, she turned the bouquet round and round and looked at it. She saw the rose with the petal missing and took it out. Then she took out five others.

Laurie Mae stood on the top step watching the men carry down the coffin. For a moment it looked as if they were going to drop it and Susie and I held our breaths. Mrs. Crabtree tapped Laurie Mae on the shoulder. "Here are some roses," she said, and handed her the six roses. "Reverend Lipscomb will drive you to the cemetery in his buggy."

Laurie Mae took the roses and did not say anything. She waited until the coffin was down and in the hearse, and then went to the buggy. Susie and I watched to see how she would manage. Reverend Lipscomb hadn't come out of the church, and no one offered to help her into the buggy. She tried first to step in it with the roses and the baby and almost fell over into the muddy road. Then she laid the baby and the roses on the seat and climbed in.

Susie and I followed the hearse and buggy. The grave was on the far side of the cemetery away from the road where there were no fine big tombstones, and the weeds and grass from the summer stood high and brown. We walked up to the edge of the grave and stood while the coffin was lowered, and Reverend Lipscomb said a short prayer.

The others went away then, and left us to watch the men throw the yellow dirt in. Laurie Mae stood behind us a few feet away and watched the men, too. "She means to put the roses on the grave," Susie whispered.

Laurie Mae didn't do that. When the men were finished she turned and started home. "Let's go after her and ask to see the baby," Susie said.

"Mama wouldn't want me to be seen talking with her," I said, and hung back until Susie ran past me calling, "We want to see the baby, Laurie Mae."

The girl stopped and laid the roses on the ground and with her free hand unwrapped the bundle. We stood without saying anything and looked at the baby. I didn't think it was a pretty baby. Its head

was too big with the veins showing in its face. "Doesn't it ever cry?" Susie asked.

"No," Laurie Mae said. "He hardly ever cries." Her voice sounded hoarse and rusty as if she had not used it in a long time. She wrapped the baby up again, and picked up the roses.

"Don't you think they're pretty roses," I said.

"They cost three dollars," Susie said.

"Three dollars," Laurie Mae said, and stopped and looked at the flowers.

We thought she would be pleased to know the Ladies Aid had spent so much. Her voice sounded full of something else. We didn't know what it was. "Three dollars is a lot of money," Susie said.

"I know," Laurie Mae said. "It's a lot of money."

We left her then, for she could walk but slowly with the baby and the roses. Susie left me at the cemetery gate for she went one way and I another. I slipped behind the concrete pillars of the gate and waited. I wanted to see Laurie Mae. I thought that now she was alone she might cry. I wanted to see her cry.

She came out of the gate and looked all around; up and down the road, and at the nearest houses, and up into the snowy sky. When she saw no one she laid the baby on the ground, and took the white roses one by one and threw them in the yellow mud of the road. She pushed them out of sight with her foot and raked the mud over them, and then she picked up the baby.

Questions:

1. What part do the roses play in this story? Compare them to the blackened stone in "La Mère Sauvage."
2. What advantages does the use of the first person give here?

THE LOTTERY TICKET

ANTON CHEKHOV

IVAN DMITRITCH, a middle-class man who lived with his family on an income of twelve hundred a year and was very well satisfied with his lot, sat down on the sofa after supper and began reading the newspaper.

"I forgot to look at the newspaper today," his wife said to him as she cleared the table. "Look and see whether the list of drawings is there."

"Yes, it is," said Ivan Dmitritch; "but hasn't your ticket lapsed?"

"No; I took the interest on Tuesday."

"What is the number?"

"Series 9,499, number 26."

"All right . . . we will look . . . 9,499 and 26."

Ivan Dmitritch had no faith in lottery luck, and would not, as a rule, have consented to look at the lists of winning numbers, but now, as he had nothing else to do and as the newspaper was before his eyes, he passed his finger downwards along the column of numbers. And immediately, as though in mockery of his scepticism, no further than the second line from the top, his eye was caught by the figure 9,499! Unable to believe his eyes, he hurriedly dropped the paper on his knees without looking to see the number of the ticket, and, just as though some one had given him a douche of cold water, he felt an agreeable chill in the pit of the stomach; tingling and terrible and sweet!

"Masha, 9,499 is there!" he said in a hollow voice.

His wife looked at his astonished and panic-stricken face, and realized that he was not joking.

"9,499?" she asked, turning pale and dropping the folded tablecloth on the table.

"Yes, yes . . . it really is there!"

"And the number of the ticket?"

"Oh, yes! There's the number of the ticket too. But stay . . . wait! No, I say! Anyway, the number of our series is there! Anyway, you understand. . . ."

Looking at his wife, Ivan Dmitritch gave a broad, senseless smile, like a baby when a bright object is shown it. His wife smiled too; it was as pleasant to her as to him that he only mentioned the series, and did not try to find out the number of the winning ticket. To torment and tantalize oneself with hopes of possible fortune is so sweet, so thrilling!

"It is our series," said Ivan Dmitritch, after a long silence. "So there is a probability that we have won. It's only a probability, but there it is!"

"Well, now look!"

"Wait a little. We have plenty of time to be disappointed. It's on the second line from the top, so the prize is seventy-five thousand. That's not money, but power, capital! And in a minute I shall look at the list, and there—26! Eh? I say, what if we really have won?"

The husband and wife began laughing and staring at one another in silence. The possibility of winning bewildered them; they could not have said, could

not have dreamed, what they both needed that seventy-five thousand for, what they would buy, where they would go. They thought only of the figures 9,499 and 75,000 and pictured them in their imagination, while somehow they could not think of the happiness itself which was so possible.

Ivan Dmitritch, holding the paper in his hand, walked several times from corner to corner, and only when he had recovered from the first impression began dreaming a little.

"And if we have won," he said—"why, it will be a new life, it will be a transformation! The ticket is yours, but if it were mine I should, first of all, of course, spend twenty-five thousand on real property in the shape of an estate; ten thousand on immediate expenses, new furnishing . . . travelling . . . paying debts, and so on. . . . The other forty thousand I would put in the bank and get interest on it."

"Yes, an estate that would be nice," said his wife, sitting down and dropping her hands in her lap.

"Somewhere in the Tula or Oryol provinces. . . . In the first place we shouldn't need a summer villa, and besides, it would always bring in an income."

And pictures came crowding on his imagination, each more gracious and poetical than the last. And in all these pictures he saw himself well-fed, serene, healthy, felt warm, even hot! Here, after eating a summer soup, cold as ice, he lay on his back on the burning sand close to a stream or in the garden under a lime-tree. . . . It is hot. . . . His little boy and girl are crawling about near him, digging in the sand or catching ladybirds in the grass. He dozes sweetly, thinking of nothing, and feeling all over that he need not go to the office today, tomorrow, or the day after. Or, tired of lying still, he goes to the hayfield, or to the forest for mushrooms, or watches the peasants catching fish with a net. When the sun sets he takes a towel and soap and saunters to the bathing-shed, where he undresses at his leisure, slowly rubs his bare chest with his hands, and goes into the water. And in the water, near the opaque soapy circles, little fish flit to and fro and green water-weeds nod their heads. After bathing there is tea with cream and milk rolls. . . . In the evening a walk or *vint* with the neighbors.

"Yes, it would be nice to buy an estate," said his wife, also dreaming, and from her face it was evident that she was enchanted by her thoughts.

Ivan Dmitritch pictured to himself autumn with its rains, its cold evenings, and its St. Martin's summer. At that season he would have to take longer walks about the garden and beside the river, so as to get thoroughly chilled, and then drink a big glass of vodka and eat a salted mushroom or a soused cucumber, and then—drink another. . . . The children would come running from the kitchen-garden, bringing a carrot and a radish smelling of fresh earth. . . . And then, he would lie stretched full length on the sofa, and in leisurely fashion turn over the pages of some illustrated magazine, or, covering his face with it and unbuttoning his waistcoat, give himself up to slumber.

The St. Martin's summer is followed by cloudy, gloomy weather. It rains day and night, the bare trees weep, the wind is damp and cold. The dogs, the horses, the fowls—all are wet, depressed, downcast. There is nowhere to walk; one can't go out for days together; one has to pace up and down the room, looking despondently at the grey window. It is dreary!

Ivan Dmitritch stopped and looked at his wife.

"I should go abroad, you know, Masha," he said.

And he began thinking how nice it would be in late autumn to go abroad somewhere to the South of France . . . to Italy . . . to India!

"I should certainly go abroad too," his wife said. "But look at the number of the ticket!"

"Wait, wait! . . . "

He walked about the room and went on thinking. It occurred to him: what if his wife really did go abroad? It is pleasant to travel alone, or in the society of light, careless women who live in the present, and not such as think and talk all the journey about nothing but their children, sigh, and tremble with dismay over every farthing. Ivan Dmitritch imagined his wife in the train with a multitude of parcels, baskets, and bags; she would be sighing over something, complaining that the train made her head ache, that she had spent so much money. . . . At the stations he would continually be having to run for boiling water, bread and butter. . . . She wouldn't have dinner because of its being too dear. . . .

"She would begrudge me every farthing," he thought, with a glance at his wife. "The lottery ticket is hers, not mine! Besides, what is the use of her going abroad? What does she want there? She would shut herself up in the hotel, and not let me out of her sight. . . . I know!"

And for the first time in his life his mind dwelt on the fact that his wife had grown elderly and plain, and that she was saturated through and through with the smell of cooking, while he was still young, fresh, and healthy, and might well have got married again.

"Of course, all that is silly nonsense," he thought; "but . . . why should she go abroad? What would she make of it? And yet she would go, of course. . . . I can fancy. . . . In reality it is all one to her,

whether it is Naples or Klin. She would only be in my way. I should be dependent upon her. I can fancy how, like a regular woman, she will lock the money up as soon as she gets it. . . . She will look after her relations and grudge me every farthing."

Ivan Dmitritch thought of her relations. All those wretched brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles would come crawling about as soon as they heard of the winning ticket, would begin whining like beggars, and fawning upon them with oily, hypocritical smiles. Wretched, detestable people! If they were given anything, they would ask for more; while if they were refused, they would swear at them, slander them, and wish them every kind of misfortune.

Ivan Dmitritch remembered his own relations, and their faces, at which he had looked impartially in the past, struck him now as repulsive and hateful.

"They are such reptiles!" he thought.

And his wife's face, too, struck him as repulsive and hateful. Anger surged up in his heart against her, and he thought malignantly:

"She knows nothing about money, and so she is stingy. If she won it she would give me a hundred roubles, and put the rest away under lock and key."

And he looked at his wife, not with a smile now, but with hatred. She glanced at him too, and also with hatred and anger. She had her own daydreams, her own plans, her own reflections; she understood perfectly well what her husband's dreams were. She knew who would be the first to try to grab her winnings.

"It's very nice making daydreams at other people's expense!" is what her eyes expressed. "No, don't you dare!"

Her husband understood her look; hatred began stirring again in his breast, and in order to annoy his wife he glanced quickly, to spite her at the fourth page on the newspaper and read out triumphantly:

"Series 9,499, number 46! Not 26!"

Hatred and hope both disappeared at once, and it began immediately to seem to Ivan Dmitritch and his wife that their rooms were dark and small and low-pitched, that the supper they had been eating was not doing them good, but lying heavy on their stomachs, that the evenings were long and wearisome. . . .

"What the devil's the meaning of it?" said Ivan Dmitritch, beginning to be ill-humored. "Wherever one steps there are bits of paper under one's feet, crumbs, husks. The rooms are never swept! One is simply forced to go out. Damnation take my soul entirely! I shall go and hang myself on the first aspen-tree!"

Questions:

1. In the "Introduction to Fiction" it was said that Chekhov is a master of economical exposition. Does his economy reveal itself in other aspects of this story? What aspects?
2. In this story Ivan Dmitritch's whole life apparently is changed by a trivial event. He hates his wife now; one judges he had not hated her before. Does Chekhov make this drastic change credible to the reader?

I'M A FOOL

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

IT WAS a hard jolt for me, one of the most bitterest I ever had to face. And it all came about through my own foolishness, too. Even yet sometimes, when I think of it, I want to cry or swear or kick myself. Perhaps, even now, after all this time, there will be a kind of satisfaction in making myself look cheap by telling of it.

It began at three o'clock one October afternoon as I sat in the grand stand at the fall trotting and pacing meet at Sandusky, Ohio.

To tell the truth, I felt a little foolish that I should be sitting in the grand stand at all. During the summer before I had left my home town with Harry Whitehead and, with a nigger named Burt, had taken a job as swipe with one of the two horses Harry was campaigning through the fall race meets that year. Mother cried and my sister Mildred, who wanted to get a job as a school teacher in our town that fall, stormed and scolded about the house all during the week before I left. They both thought it was something disgraceful that one of our family should take a place as a swipe with race horses. I've an idea Mildred thought my taking the place would stand in the way of her getting the job she'd been working so long for.

But after all I had to work, and there was no other work to be got. A big lumbering fellow of nineteen couldn't just hang around the house and I had got too big to mow people's lawns and sell newspapers. Little chaps who could get next to people's sympathies by their sizes were always getting jobs away from me. There was one fellow who kept saying to everyone who wanted a lawn mowed or a cistern cleaned, that he was saving money to work his way through

college, and I used to lay awake nights thinking up ways to injure him without being found out. I kept thinking of wagons running over him and bricks falling on his head as he walked along the street. But never mind him.

I got the place with Harry and I liked Burt fine. We got along splendid together. He was a big nigger with a lazy sprawling body and soft, kind eyes, and when it came to a fight he could hit like Jack Johnson. He had Bucephalus, a big black pacing stallion that could do 2.09 or 2.10, if he had to, and I had a little gelding named Doctor Fritz that never lost a race all fall when Harry wanted him to win.

We set out from home late in July in a box car with the two horses and after that, until late November, we kept moving along to the race meets and the fairs. It was a peachey time for me, I'll say that. Sometimes now I think that boys who are raised regular in houses, and never have a fine nigger like Burt for best friend, and go to high schools and college, and never steal anything, or get drunk a little, or learn to swear from fellows who know how, or come walking up in front of a grand stand in their shirt sleeves and with dirty horsey pants on when the races are going on and the grand stand is full of people all dressed up—What's the use of talking about it? Such fellows don't know nothing at all. They've never had no opportunity.

But I did. Burt taught me how to rub down a horse and put the bandages on after a race and steam a horse out and a lot of valuable things for any man to know. He could wrap a bandage on a horse's leg so smooth that if it had been the same color you would think it was his skin, and I guess he'd have been a big driver, too, and got to the top like Murphy and Walter Cox and the others if he hadn't been black.

Gee whizz, it was fun. You got to a county seat town, maybe say on a Saturday or Sunday, and the fair began the next Tuesday and lasted until Friday afternoon. Doctor Fritz would be, say in the 2.25 trot on Tuesday afternoon and on Thursday afternoon Bucephalus would knock 'em cold in the "free-for-all" pace. It left you a lot of time to hang around and listen to horse talk, and see Burt knock some yap cold that got too gay, and you'd find out about horses and men and pick up a lot of stuff you could use all the rest of your life, if you had some sense and salted down what you heard and felt and saw.

And then at the end of the week when the race meet was over, and Harry had run home to tend up to his livery stable business, you and Burt hitched the two horses to carts and drove slow and steady across country, to the place for the next meeting, so as to not overheat the horses, etc., etc., you know.

Gee whizz, Gosh amighty, the nice hickorynut and beechnut and oaks and other kinds of trees along the roads, all brown and red, and the good smells, and Burt singing a song that was called Deep River, and all the country girls at the windows of houses and everything. You can stick your colleges up your nose for all me. I guess I know where I got my education.

Why, one of those little burgs of towns you come to on the way, say now on a Saturday afternoon, and Burt says, "let's lay up here." And you did.

And you took the horses to a livery stable and fed them, and you got your good clothes out of a box and put them on.

And the town was full of farmers gaping, because they could see you were race horse people, and the kids maybe never see a nigger before and was afraid and run away when the two of us walked down their main street.

And that was before prohibition and all that foolishness, and so you went into a saloon, the two of you, and all the yaps come and stood around, and there was always someone pretended he was horsey and knew things and spoke up and began asking questions, and all you did was to lie and lie all you could about what horses you had, and I said I owned them, and then some fellow said, "Will you have a drink of whiskey" and Burt knocked his eye out the way he could say, off-hand like, "Oh well, all right, I'm agreeable to a little nip. I'll split a quart with you." Gee whizz.

But that isn't what I want to tell my story about. We got home late in November and I promised mother I'd quit the race horses for good. There's a lot of things you've got to promise a mother because she don't know any better.

And so, there not being any work in our town any more than when I left there to go to the races, I went off to Sandusky and got a pretty good place taking care of horses for a man who owned a teaming and delivery and storage and coal and real estate business there. It was a pretty good place with good eats, and a day off each week, and sleeping on a cot in a big barn, and mostly just shovelling in hay and oats to a lot of big good-enough skates of horses, that couldn't have trotted a race with a toad. I wasn't dissatisfied and I could send money home.

And then, as I started to tell you, the fall races come to Sandusky and I got the day off and I went. I left the job at noon and had on my good clothes and my new brown derby hat, I'd just bought the Saturday before, and a stand-up collar.

First of all I went down-town and walked about with the dudes. I've always thought to myself, "put

up a good front" and so I did it. I had forty dollars in my pocket and so I went into the West House, a big hotel, and walked up to the cigar stand. "Give me three twenty-five cent cigars," I said. There was a lot of horsemen and strangers and dressed-up people from other towns standing around in the lobby and in the bar, and I mingled amongst them. In the bar there was a fellow with a cane and a Windsor tie on, that it made me sick to look at him. I like a man to be a man and dress up, but not to go put on that kind of airs. So I pushed him aside, kind of rough, and had me a drink of whiskey. And then he looked at me, as though he thought maybe he'd get gay, but he changed his mind and didn't say anything. And then I had another drink of whiskey, just to show him something, and went out and had a hack out to the races, all to myself, and when I got there I bought myself the best seat I could get up in the grand stand, but didn't go in for any of these boxes. That's putting on too many airs.

And so there I was, sitting up in the grand stand as gay as you please and looking down on the swipes coming out with their horses, and with their dirty horsey pants on and the horse blankets swung over their shoulders, same as I had been doing all the year before. I liked one thing about the same as the other, sitting up there and feeling grand and being down there and looking up at the yaps and feeling grander and more important, too. One thing's about as good as another, if you take it just right. I've often said that.

Well, right in front of me, in the grand stand that day, there was a fellow with a couple of girls and they was about my age. The young fellow was a nice guy all right. He was the kind maybe that goes to college and then comes to be a lawyer or maybe a newspaper editor or something like that, but he wasn't stuck on himself. There are some of that kind are all right and he was one of the ones.

He had his sister with him and another girl and the sister looked around over his shoulder, accidental at first, not intending to start anything—she wasn't that kind—and her eyes and mine happened to meet.

You know how it is. Gee, she was a peach! She had on a soft dress, kind of a blue stuff and it looked carelessly made, but was well sewed and made and everything. I knew that much. I blushed when she looked right at me and so did she. She was the nicest girl I've ever seen in my life. She wasn't stuck on herself and she could talk proper grammar without being like a school teacher or something like that. What I mean, is, she was O.K. I think maybe her father was well-to-do, but not rich to make her chesty because she was his daughter, as some are. Maybe he owned a drug store or a drygoods store in their home town, or something like that. She never told me and I never asked.

My own people are all O. K. too, when you come to that. My grandfather was Welsh and over in the old country, in Wales he was—But never mind that.

The first heat of the first race come off and the young fellow setting there with the two girls left them and went down to make a bet. I knew what he was up to, but he didn't talk big and noisy and let everyone around know he was a sport, as some do. He wasn't that kind. Well, he come back and I heard him tell the two girls what horse he'd bet on, and when the heat trotted they all half got to their feet and acted in the excited, sweaty way people do when they've got money down on a race, and the horse they bet on is up there pretty close at the end, and they think maybe he'll come on with a rush, but he never does because he hasn't got the old juice in him, come right down to it.

And then, pretty soon, the horses came out for the 2.18 pace and there was a horse in it I knew. He was a horse Bob French had in his string but Bob didn't own him. He was a horse owned by a Mr. Mathers down at Marietta, Ohio.

This Mr. Mathers had a lot of money and owned some coal mines or something and he had a swell place out in the country, and he was stuck on race horses, but was a Presbyterian or something, and I think more than likely his wife was one, too, maybe a stiffer one than himself. So he never raced his horses hisself, and the story round the Ohio race tracks was that when one of his horses got ready to go to the races he turned him over to Bob French and pretended to his wife he was sold.

So Bob had the horses and he did pretty much as he pleased and you can't blame Bob, at least, I never did. Sometimes he was out to win and sometimes he wasn't. I never cared much about that when I was swiping a horse. What I did want to know was that my horse had the speed and could go out in front, if you wanted him to.

And, as I'm telling you, there was Bob in this race with one of Mr. Mathers' horses, was named "About Ben Ahem" or something like that, and was fast as a streak. He was a gelding and had a mark of 2.21, but could step in .08 or .09.

Because when Burt and I were out, as I've told you, the year before, there was a nigger, Burt knew, worked for Mr. Mathers and we went out there one day when we didn't have no race on at the Marietta Fair and our boss Harry was gone home.

And so everyone was gone to the fair but just this one nigger and he took us all through Mr. Mathers'

swell house and he and Burt tapped a bottle of wine Mr. Mathers had hid in his bedroom, back in a closet, without his wife knowing, and he showed us this Ahem horse. Burt was always stuck on being a driver but didn't have much chance to get to the top, being a nigger, and he and the other nigger gulped the whole bottle of wine and Burt got a little lit up.

So the nigger let Burt take this About Ben Ahem and step him a mile in a track Mr. Mathers had all to himself, right there on the farm. And Mr. Mathers had one child, a daughter, kinda sick and not very good looking, and she came home and we had to hustle and get About Ben Ahem stuck back in the barn.

I'm only telling you to get everything straight. At Sandusky, that afternoon I was at the fair, this young fellow with the two girls was fussed, being with the girls and losing his bet. You know how a fellow is that way. One of them was his girl and the other his sister. I had figured that out.

"Gee whizz," I says to myself, "I'm going to give him the dope."

He was mighty nice when I touched him on the shoulder. He and the girls were nice to me right from the start and clear to the end. I'm not blaming them.

And so he leaned back and I give him the dope on About Ben Ahem. "Don't bet a cent on this first heat because he'll go like an oxen hitched to a plow, but when the first heat is over go right down and lay on your pile." That's what I told him.

Well, I never saw a fellow treat any one sweller. There was a fat man sitting beside the little girl, that had looked at me twice by this time, and I at her, and both blushing, and what did he do but have the nerve to turn and ask the fat man to get up and change places with me so I could set with his crowd.

Gee whizz, craps amighty. There I was. What a chump I was to go and get gay up there in the West House bar, and just because that dude was standing there with a cane and that kind of a necktie on, to go and get all balled up and drink that whiskey, just to show off.

Of course she would know, me setting right beside her and letting her smell of my breath. I could have kicked myself right down out of that grand stand and all around that race track and made a faster record than most of the skates of horses they had there that year.

Because that girl wasn't any mutt of a girl. What wouldn't I have give right then for a stick of chewing gum to chew, or a lozenger, or some liquorice, or most anything. I was glad I had those twenty-five cent cigars in my pocket and right away I give that fellow one and lit one myself. Then that fat man got up and we changed places and there I was, plunked right down beside her.

They introduced themselves and the fellow's best girl, he had with him, was named Miss Elinor Woodbury, and her father was a manufacturer of barrels from a place called Tiffin, Ohio. And the fellow himself was named Wilbur Wessen and his sister was Miss Lucy Wessen.

I suppose it was their having such swell names that got me off my trolley. A fellow, just because he has been a swipe with a race horse, and works taking care of horses for a man in the teaming, delivery, and storage business isn't any better or worse than any one else. I've often thought that, and said it too.

But you know how a fellow is. There's something in that kind of nice clothes, and the kind of nice eyes she had, and the way she had looked at me, awhile before, over her brother's shoulder, and me looking back at her, and both of us blushing.

I couldn't show her up for a boob, could I?

I made a fool of myself, that's what I did. I said my name was Walter Mathers from Marietta, Ohio, and then I told all three of them the smashingest lie you ever heard. What I said was that my father owned the horse About Ben Ahem and that he had let him out to this Bob French for racing purposes, because our family was proud and had never gone into racing that way, in our own name, I mean. Then I had got started and they were all leaning over and listening, and Miss Lucy Wessen's eyes were shining, and I went the whole hog.

I told about our place down at Marietta, and about the big stables and the grand brick house we had on a hill, up above the Ohio River, but I knew enough not to do it in no bragging way. What I did was to start things and then let them drag the rest out of me. I acted just as reluctant to tell as I could. Our family hasn't got any barrel factory, and since I've known us, we've always been pretty poor, but not asking anything of any one at that, and my grandfather, over in Wales—but never mind that.

We set there talking like we had known each other for years and years, and I went and told them that my father had been expecting maybe this Bob French wasn't on the square, and had sent me up to Sandusky on the sly to find out what I could.

And I bluffed it through I had found out all about the 2.18 pace, in which About Ben Ahem was to start.

I said he would lose the first heat by pacing like a lame cow and then he would come back and skin 'em alive after that. And to back up what I said I took thirty dollars out of my pocket and handed it

to Mr. Wilbur Wessen and asked him, would he mind, after the first heat, to go down and place it on About Ben Ahem for whatever odds he could get. What I said was that I didn't want Bob French to see me and none of the swipes.

Sure enough the first heat come off and About Ben Ahem went off his stride, up the back stretch, and looked like a wooden horse or a sick one, and come in to be last. Then this Wilbur Wessen went down to the betting place under the grand stand and there I was with the two girls, and when that Miss Woodbury was looking the other way once, Lucy Wessen kinda, with her shoulder you know, kinda touched me. Not just tucking down, I don't mean. You know how a woman can do. They get close, but not getting gay either. You know what they do. Gee whizz.

And then they give me a jolt. What they had done, when I didn't know, was to get together, and they had decided Wilbur Wessen would bet fifty dollars, and the two girls had gone and put in ten dollars each, of their own money, too. I was sick then, but I was sicker later.

About the gelding, About Ben Ahem, and their winning their money, I wasn't worried a lot about that. It come out O. K. Ahem stepped the next three heats like a bushel of spoiled eggs going to market before they could be found out, and Wilbur Wessen had got nine to two for the money. There was something else eating at me.

Because Wilbur come back, after he had bet the money, and after that he spent most of his time talking to that Miss Woodbury, and Lucy Wessen and I was left alone together like on a desert island. Gee, if I'd only been on the square or if there had been any way of getting myself on the square. There ain't any Walter Mathers, like I said to her and them, and there hasn't ever been one, but if there was, I bet I'd go to Marietta, Ohio, and shoot him tomorrow.

There I was, big boob that I am. Pretty soon the race was over, and Wilbur had gone down and collected our money, and we had a hack down-town, and he stood us a swell supper at the West House, and a bottle of champagne beside.

And I was with that girl and she wasn't saying much, and I wasn't saying much either. One thing I know. She wasn't stuck on me because of the lie about my father being rich and all that. There's a way you know. . . . Craps amighty. There's a kind of girl, you see just once in your life, and if you don't get busy and make hay, then you're gone for good and all, and might as well go jump off a bridge. They give you a look from inside of them somewhere, and it ain't no vamping, and what it means is—you want that girl to be your wife, and you want nice things around her like flowers and swell clothes, and you want her to have the kids you're going to have, and you want good music played and no rag time. Gee whizz.

There's a place over near Sandusky, across a kind of bay, and it's called Cedar Point. And after we had supper we went over to it in a launch, all by ourselves. Wilbur and Miss Lucy and that Miss Woodbury had to catch a ten o'clock train back to Tiffin, Ohio, because, when you're out with girls like that you can't get careless and miss any trains and stay out all night, like you can with some kinds of Janes.

And Wilbur blowed himself to the launch and it cost him fifteen cold plunks, but I wouldn't never have knew if I hadn't listened. He wasn't no tin horn kind of a sport.

Over at the Cedar Point place, we didn't stay around where there was a gang of common kind of cattle at all.

There was big dance halls and dining places for yaps, and there was a beach you could walk along and get where it was dark, and we went there.

She didn't talk hardly at all and neither did I, and I was thinking how glad I was my mother was all right, and always made us kids learn to eat with a fork at table, and not swill soup, and not be noisy and rough like a gang you see around a race track that way.

Then Wilbur and his girl went away up the beach and Lucy and I sat down in a dark place, where there was some roots of old trees, the water had washed up, and after that the time, till we had to go back in the launch and they had to catch their trains, wasn't nothing at all. It went like winking your eye.

Here's how it was. The place we were setting in was dark, like I said, and there was the roots from that old stump sticking up like arms, and there was a watery smell, and the night was like—as if you could put your hand out and feel it—so warm and soft and dark and sweet like an orange.

I most cried and I most swore and I most jumped up and danced, I was so mad and happy and sad.

When Wilbur come back from being alone with his girl, and she saw him coming, Lucy she says, "we got to go to the train now," and she was most crying too, but she never knew nothing I knew, and she couldn't be so all busted up. And then, before Wilbur and Miss Woodbury got up to where we was, she put her face up and kissed me quick and put her head up against me and she was all quivering and—Gee whizz.

Sometimes I hope I have cancer and die. I guess you know what I mean. We went in the launch

across the bay to the train like that, and it was dark, too. She whispered and said it was like she and I could get out of the boat and walk on the water, and it sounded foolish, but I knew what she meant.

And then quick we were right at the depot, and there was a big gang of yaps, the kind that goes to the fairs, and crowded and milling around like cattle, and how could I tell her? "It won't be long because you'll write and I'll write to you." That's all she said.

I got a chance like a hay barn afire. A swell chance I got.

And maybe she would write me, down at Marietta that way, and the letter would come back, and stamped on the front of it by the U.S.A. "there ain't any such guy," or something like that, whatever they stamp on a letter that way.

And me trying to pass myself off for a bigbug and a swell—to her, as decent a little body as God ever made. Craps amighty—a swell chance I got!

And then the train come in, and she got on it, and Wilbur Wessen, he come and shook hands with me, and that Miss Woodbury was nice too and bowed to me, and I at her, and the train went and I busted out and cried like a kid.

Gee, I could have run after that train and made Dan Patch look like a freight train after a wreck but, socks amighty, what was the use? Did you ever see such a fool?

I'll bet you what—if I had an arm broke right now or a train had run over my foot—I wouldn't go to no doctor at all. I'd go set down and let her hurt and hurt—that's what I'd do.

I'll bet you what—if I hadn't a drunk that booze I'd a never been such a boob as to go tell such a lie—that couldn't never be made straight to a lady like her.

I wish I had that fellow right here that had on a Windsor tie and carried a cane. I'd smash him for fair. Gosh darn his eyes. He's a big fool—that's what he is.

And if I'm not another you just go find me one and I'll quit working and be a bum and give him my job. I don't care nothing for working, and earning money, and saving it for no such boob as myself.

Questions:

1. It has frequently been said by critics that Sherwood Anderson influenced Hemingway. Judging from the stories in this collection, could you find evidence for this? Consider theme, type of character, method, and style.
2. How would you compare "I'm a Fool" with "The Washerwoman's Day?"

ARABY

JAMES JOYCE

NORTH RICHMOND STREET, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two stories stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbors in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot,* by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant,* and *The Memoirs of Vidocq.* I liked the last best, because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple tree and a few straggling bushes, under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came, dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street, the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the color of ever-changing violet, and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odors arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, if uncle was seen turning the corner, we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea, we watched her from our shadow peer up and down

the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in, and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed, and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body, and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlor watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash, so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books, and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye, and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings, when my aunt went marketing, I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of laborers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys, who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not, or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp, and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room, in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening, and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves, and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *"O love! O love!"* many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me, I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*. I forget whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar; she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke, she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps, and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there, and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my [illegible] thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life, which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall, I could not go into the front parlor and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humor and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw, and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner, my uncle had not yet been home. Still, it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time, and, when its ticking began to

irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct, and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings, and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again, I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawn-broker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour, and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late, as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone, I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the hall-door. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner, I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going, and, when I had told him a second time, he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed*. When I left the kitchen, he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance, and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the center of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Cafe Chantant* were written in colored lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come, I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a . . . fib!"

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that

the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness, I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

Questions:

1. How can you compare the theme of this story with that of "The Killers" and "I'm a Fool?"
2. How is the style related to the main character and to the theme?

Introduction to the Essay

OF ALL the various forms of literature, the essay comes closest to having as its purpose merely the presentation of facts—for the sake of the facts. The essay lies therefore in a sort of borderland which touches on the one side the realm of "pure" literature and on the other the realm of practical and scientific writings, the realm of chemistry texts and medical prescriptions and cook books. In the essay the writer is concerned primarily with the explanation of a set of facts or perhaps with convincing the reader of the truth of a particular set of ideas.

We can make this point more vividly by referring once more to the story of Porphyria and her lover which was treated in the "General Introduction." Suppose our writer decided to write on the basis of this happening, not a poem or a story or a play, but an essay. What would be the nature of his essay? How would it differ from the other forms mentioned? It might, of course, take any of a number of forms. It might turn out to be an essay on abnormal psychology, using the psychology of the murderer as an illustration. Or it might be an essay on marriage and marriage customs; or it might be an essay on the attitudes which civilized people take toward such happenings as that involved in the story of Porphyria and her lover. Or it might be an essay on tragedy. But all the various possibilities which we have cited have one important thing in common: all tend to employ the original murder story as merely a starting point from which to go off into the discussion of a general idea, or to employ it as a illustration of a general idea. And this common trait separates the essay as a form rather sharply from the other literary forms which we have mentioned. In the story or the poem or the drama, the *particular* situation is the heart of the matter, the center of reference; in the essay the center of reference lies in some *general* idea or ideas.

But, though the essay may sometimes seem to be heavily burdened with the weight of facts, it is not difficult to point out that it can become literature, and that in it, *form* and *style* have an important and necessary place even when the main interest of the author may be in convincing his reader of the truth of some practical proposal. We tend, of course, to think of "fine" literature on the one hand, and the practical exposition of facts on the other—the two separated by an impassable gulf. But they are not of course so separated. For, what, after all, are the "facts" which an essay writer uses? And how much exposition of facts is purely practical or scientific in its purpose?

Suppose that we take an extreme case. If, first, the facts to be set forth are of a purely scientific nature, measurable and constant, and, second, if only the bare setting forth of the facts is attempted, then the exposition *does* lie outside the realm of literature. It lies outside because the writer need not use even words. He might, granted the conditions above as absolutely true, use a diagram or a mathematical formula; e.g., $2 + 2 = 4$; or, if he were forced to use words at all, he might employ terms so exact and technical that they could bear but one meaning and consequently would be abstract symbols after all; e.g., the square on the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

But few matters outside of the most exact sciences can be expressed in so special a set of symbols. Most writers must use *words,* and the possibility of literature opens at once with the use of words, for words are not exact, colorless symbols. They have not only basic meanings (denotations) but associations (connotations) as well. Even a cook book has in it the germ of poetry therefore—the possibility of going off into poetry. The "facts" which essay writers use therefore are rarely facts in any absolute mathematical sense. They are colored by the writer's own special and personal conception of them, and colored by his attitude toward them. Suppose, for instance, that a writer produces an essay, as Mr. Peffer does, on the bankruptcy of liberalism. What is *liberalism?* Mr. Peffer has his own special definition of it—and so with dozens of other "facts" dealt with in his essay.

Furthermore, few, if any, essays limit themselves to pure exposition. They are not so much statements of fact as *comments* on the facts. And this means that the author has an attitude toward his facts and wishes, presumably, to pass on a particular attitude to his reader. Mr. Peffer's title, for example, "Why Liberalism is Bankrupt," is already colored in its attitude. The term *bankrupt* has a special meaning and special associations. The title as stated does not mean quite the same thing as "Why Liberalism is Dead," or "Why Liberalism Has Perished," or "Why Liberalism Has Ceased to be a Dynamic Belief." The statement which

the author is making is not *merely fact,* therefore; it is an arrangement of facts, an interpretation of facts. This process of interpretation goes on in all sorts of ways throughout the article. The writer cannot be completely objective and noncommittal, and as a rule, he is not trying to be. He frankly shapes his writing to win his reader to his own interpretation, using not only the force of logical arrangement but emotional coloring of the conclusions drawn from his logic.

For example, in one of the essays contained in this text, "Culture versus Colonialism in America," Mr. Agar sets forth a great deal of information. There are many statements about civilization in America, civilization in Europe, and civilization in general; there are allusions to Spengler, to Cortez, to Andrew W. Mellon; there are a great many items of historical information. But even a hasty reading of the essay will indicate that Mr. Agar's intention is not merely to purvey these items of information to the reader. He is anxious to stir the reader's emotions also. Consequently, he arranges his facts so that they will lead the reader to accept certain conclusions. He appeals to his reader's pride in the "American Dream," he provokes him to scorn at the decay into which American culture has fallen and to indignation at certain subversive practices. Indeed, the author is like nothing so much as a good general who disposes his troops very carefully in order to win his battle. He wants the reader not only to know what he knows, but to believe and feel as he believes and feels.

The essay, then, may attempt to stir the emotions as well as offer facts to the intellect; and, therefore, it may be one of the works of the imagination, and as such, a form of literature.

We can make this general point even more positively if we take as an example another essay contained in the text, "The Cosmic Whirlpool," by George W. Gray; for here, apparently, the author *is* interested in conveying scientific information. The author even finds it necessary to supply illustrative charts. But it will be easy to find in this essay evidences of a literary impulse and of literary effects. The author tries, for instance, to humanize the universe. He abandons again and again strict scientific accuracy in favor of comparisons which have human associations and therefore not only make the theories discussed easier for the reader to comprehend but also tend to make the reader feel at home in the strange and bewildering universe which the essay reveals to us.

Closer examination of the essay will also show that our author employs devices such as suspense and surprise, devices which one finds in more emphatic form in the drama or the short story. He states, for instance, in his third paragraph the various objections to the whirlpool theory. Why? Obviously to create a sort of suspense in his reader so he will wonder how these objections are going to be removed, and so he may feel the pleasure of accomplishment as the relation of one discovery after another removes the objections and confirms the theory of rotation.

If Gray's "The Cosmic Whirlpool" may be taken as one extreme of the essay, the emphasis on information, another essay in our text which deals, interestingly enough, with the stars also may be taken as an example of the other extreme. Santayana ("The Stars") is not interested in information about the stars at all. He is interested in what the stars mean to us as human beings, what emotions they rouse in us, how we feel as we contemplate them, and why. In short, the slight interest on the human meaning of the starry universe which we have noticed in Gray's essay, in Santayana's treatment becomes the essay itself. We might call the two types *factual* and *speculative,* though we should not forget that they represent not hard and fast classifications but merely tendencies, that most of the essays actually written fall somewhere between the two extremes, and that it is perfectly possible to find facts and speculation in any essay ever written, or for that matter, in any story or play.

There is another type of essay, however, which represents a sort of specialization of some of the traits of the speculative essay. It is the type represented by Charles Lamb's "Old China" or his "Dream Children." When we examine such essays we find that the real interest is not in a particular body of information or even in the comment made on this body of information. The interest lies in the attitude, feeling, mood, etc. of the author. Or, to put it in slightly different phrasing, the comments on the ideas which are made are not interesting for the sake of the ideas but primarily for the sake of the commentator—for revealing the personality of the person making the comments. This interest obtains of course in many essays. We enjoy finding out what kind of person the essayist is; but with Lamb's essays, for example, or Montaigne's, the interest becomes primary.

This type of essay, then, has certain very definite connections with other literary forms, fiction and poetry. Like fiction it appeals to our interest in personality, the personality of the essayist and the personalities of other people he may in some cases describe. The essayist may even go so far as to give us glimpses of people in action, little incidents and scenes that have the germs of fiction in them. And he may depend rather heavily on such a device as dialogue which is so often important in fiction. In addition, we may say that this kind of essay shares with

poetry, especially lyric poetry, and with fiction to a degree, its origin in the impulse to communicate an emotion to the reader, not facts for the sake of facts. The impulse of this kind of essay is especially like that of lyric poetry, because in both cases the writer is not interested in making a statement, which he is prepared to prove by facts and logic, but is interested in conveying a personal mood.

Such essays are sometimes called *personal* essays, therefore. They are also called *familiar* essays, or *informal* essays. The reasons for using these terms are obvious. The tone of the essay is familiar, or informal, as opposed to a formal tone such as one might expect to find in a lecture or a sermon. The essay of this type has, on the other hand, the atmosphere of an informal conversation with a friend.

The structure of this type of essay may partake of something of this informal quality also. Ordinarily, the logic of exposition or the logic of the argument determines the arrangement of an essay. But since in the informal essay this matter does not bulk very large, the arrangement of the material often follows the apparent whim and impulse of the author himself or the apparently casual association of ideas—as it does in an actual conversation between friends. At its best, the structure is not a haphazard one, of course; but the form is closer to that of poetry (or some other art form, say, fiction or drama) than it is to the structure of workaday prose.

It is this fact that sometimes causes us to think of the informal essay as having preeminently style and the other types of essays as lacking it. But the proposition is true, of course, only in a very special sense. It is impossible to have style in a vacuum. The *style,* in its broadest sense, is the arrangement of the writer's materials, the adaptation of his means to his ends in the use of language. If style is an arrangement, there can never be just style—there must be an arrangement of something. But the statement is true in this sense: namely, that in the familiar essay the material is not so much objective fact as it is the sort of fact which one finds in a poem or short story. Consequently, the form is prominent in the familiar essay for the same reason that it is prominent in the poem or short story.

As we have just indicated the familiar essay lies very close, in its purpose to forms like the poem or the story. Lamb's essay on "Dream Children" is continually threatening to declare itself a poem quite explicitly, and some of Lamb's other essays almost turn into stories—stories with emphasis on a particular character or atmosphere. As a matter of fact, when Montaigne, several hundred years ago, began writing what he called *essais,* he was primarily concerned with expressing and revealing his personality. But the essay is one of the most flexible of forms and since his time has been put to many uses. In later years the familiar essay in its more extreme form has been written less and less often. It may be said, by way of partial explanation, that the great masters of this form of the essay, Montaigne, Addison, Steele, and Lamb, did their work before the development of the short story as we know it. This is not to say that good essays of the type have not been written during the last seventy-five or hundred years. But especially during the last generation the short story in the hands of writers like Anton Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield, Sherwood Anderson, Katherine Anne Porter, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce, has encroached on the field of the familiar or personal essay. This is the case probably because the stories of these and similar writers have been able to satisfy more concretely and variously the interest in character to which that type of essay appealed, and because in the hands of these writers the poetic quality of fiction has been highly developed. This is not to be understood as a criticism of, let us say, such an essay as "Dream Children"; it is merely an indication of the delicacy of the line that separates "Dream Children" from such a story as "Araby."

But at the same time in many modern productions the flavor of the personal essay has been carried over into essays that differ in conception from the strict type of the personal essay. For instance, in the present collection "Pulvis et Umbra," by Stevenson, has the flavor of a personal essay; but when we stop to analyze the content we discover that it is really much nearer such an essay as "Culture versus Colonialism in America," by Herbert Agar. That is, Stevenson is trying to analyze an idea for us and Lamb is trying to communicate a mood. And such a piece as "The Stars," by George Santayana, like the essay by Stevenson and many essays by Virginia Woolf, lies somewhere between the extremes of the formal and the personal types. It has no personal reminiscence, no bits of characterization, dialogue, or narrative; it has the structure of a logical discourse and not the casual, associative construction of the personal essay. Nevertheless, as has already been pointed out, it has an emotional force; it carries with its ideas a feeling about those ideas and an interpretation of them.

How are we to classify the thousands of articles which appear each year in the magazines? What separates the very few which we preserve from the thousands which are promptly forgotten? Here we may return to one of the points made in the "Introduction to Fiction." We stated there that one of our reasons for discarding certain pieces of fiction as valueless was the fact that they dealt with trivial themes. Many magazine articles are purely topical in their

appeal. Their only purpose is to treat some subject of transitory importance, to convey some piece of information pertinent at the moment. Obviously, our interest in such articles is exhausted when the particular bit of information has been discovered or the special interpretation has been made. The essays which we find of permanent value are usually those which not only deal with topics of a larger and more permanent importance but which also make interpretations of life that are of permanent significance—whether it be Santayana interpreting the meaning of the stars for human beings or Montaigne examining his own personality.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Skeptic

VERNON L. PARRINGTON

AFTER his immersion for some months in the Utopian dreams of Brook Farm, Miles Coverdale in *The Blithedale Romance* discovered that he had drifted far from reality. "No sagacious man," he remarked, "will long retain his sagacity, if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people, without periodically returning into the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint."

> It was now time for me, therefore, to go and hold a little talk with the conservatives, the writers of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, the merchants, the politicians, the Cambridge men, and all those respectable blockheads who still, in this intangibility and mistiness of affairs, kept a death-grip on one or two ideas which had not come into vogue since yesterday morning.

In this suggestive pronouncement the intellectual position of Hawthorne is revealed. Cool, detached, rationalistic, curiously inquisitive, he looked out upon the ferment of the times, the clash of rival philosophies and rival interests, only to bring them into his study and turn upon them the light of his critical analysis. One after another he weighed the several faiths of New England, conservative and transcendental and radical, and ended skeptic. He was too much of a realist to change fashions in creeds. Time, experience—he is always [illegible] ve created men as we find them, and very likely only time and experience can make them over into something different. The conservatives would seem to have common sense on their side, for they are seeking to retain what has hitherto been won; but the reformers are not without justification as well, for impelled by an ardent faith they are seeking to win new conquests. But whether that which the conservatives defend so valiantly is worth defending, or whether the goal towards which the reformers drive so furiously is worth the trouble, are questions about which the rationalist may be permitted his doubts. The universe in which he found himself was a moral universe, Hawthorne on the whole believed; and if that were true then man's chief business and urgent problem was the matter of a sufficient morality.

Radical in his intellectual processes, he could never become greatly interested in specific radicalisms. He is often though of as a transcendentalist, and his association with the Peabodys and his venture into Brook Farm might seem to lend color to such an interpretation. Yet nothing in his intellectual sympathies marks him as of the school. The polar conceptions of transcendentalism repelled rather than attracted him. Political and metaphysical speculation left him cold, and the twin revolutionary forces of the time, French romanticism and German idealism, never deeply affected his thinking. Amid all the flux he retained much of the older Calvinist view of life and human destiny. Though nominally a Unitarian he did not share Channing's faith in the perfectibility of man. The buried voice of God that the transcendentalists professed to have discovered in instinct, he greatly distrusted. Man seemed to him quite as likely to turn out to be a child of the devil as the first-born of God. Perhaps through a long and uncertain process he may grow into something nobler than he now is, but for the present the fact remains that the human heart, if not desperately wicked, is at least on familiar terms with evil; too often it is cold, selfish, malignant, and its secret promptings need watching. Doubting the indwelling presence of the divine Over-soul, he could find no justification for the transcendental faith in the excellence of the universe, out of which came the genial optimism of the Emersonians. Too pronounced a rationalist to comprehend the mysticism that lurked in the heart of the transcendental faith, he remained cold to the revolutionary criticism that was eager to pull down the old temples to make room for nobler. Eager souls, mystics and revolutionaries, may propose to

refashion the world in accordance with their dreams; but evil remains, and so long as it lurks in the secret places of the heart, Utopia is only the shadow of a dream. And so while the Concord thinkers were proclaiming man to be the indubitable child of God, Hawthorne was critically examining the question of evil as it appeared in the light of his own experience. It was the central, fascinating problem of his intellectual life, and in pursuit of a solution he probed curiously into the hidden, furtive recesses of the soul.

The isolation in which he chose to brood over the problem, seeking to take the solution by surprise in unguarded moments, was the natural consequence of his temperament and his habits. He lived singularly remote from common interests, singularly self-sufficient. Both as thinker and artist he suffered from the self-imposed isolation. The twelve years of his apprenticeship, closely immured and given over to spinning cobwebs about the old Puritan rafters, drawing the stuff of his romance out of his own bowels, may have facilitated the development of technic, but it laid narrow limitations on the matter of his art. Intellectually unlocalized in his Yankee world, he was the romancer of a dead but unforgotten past, at home only where the New England conscience brooded over sin—subduing the old nightmares to less terrifying dreams, intruding his doubts into old dogmas yet never emerging from the old shadows. Although he was a child of the liberation and had broken the web that Calvinism had woven about the mind of New England, he did not choose to quit the world from whose bondage he had freed himself. He would examine the old problem in a new light. In rejecting Calvinism as a religion, he retained it as a background for his inquisitive probing. It appealed to his imagination after his reason had rejected its dogmas; it determined his art after it had ceased to command his loyalty. In consequence, all his life Hawthorne dwelt between worlds. Though at times he tried to establish contact with Yankee reality, though he essayed to establish an intellectual *rapport* with his generation, he never quite succeeded, but remained to the last isolated, a frequenter of the twilight.

Only in a narrow and very special sense was Hawthorne a romantic. With the romance of love and adventure he was never concerned; what interested him was the romance of ethics—the distortions of the soul under the tyranny of a diseased imagination. How little he shares in common with other romantics is revealed in his detachment from his native Salem. The place was not lacking in picturesque charm, present and past. During the long years he spent in his Salem study, the city was rising to the zenith of its brisk sea life, with its ships in the China trade, its venturesome fisheries, its echoes of the whaling industry at Nantucket. Materials for romance were lying all about the Salem wharves—such a show of canvas and spars and rigging, such briny smells, such suggestions of far voyages to outlandish places, such strange figures slipping in from the ends of the earth—such romantic promptings in short as would have intoxicated the imagination of Herman Melville, and that Joseph Hergesheimer wove into the rich tapestries of *Java Head*. A romantic could scarcely have found in America a setting better calculated to awaken a sense of brave adventure than in old Salem; yet for three years Hawthorne sat in the Custom House, with such materials all about him, and then turned away to the seventeenth century to write of Hester Prynne. For a man gifted with imagination to fail to lift his eyes to the horizon beyond which the hurrying ships were seeking strange markets, and instead to turn them in upon a shadowy world of half unreal characters; to overlook the motley picturesque in the foreground of the actual, in order to brood over an old adultery and twist it into theological sin, can be explained only on the ground that Hawthorne was concerned with ethical rather than romantic values, that he was interested rather in the problem of evil than in the trappings of romance. Aloofness of time and place served to isolate the problem, stripping away the wrappings of the physical, delocalizing it, transmuting the individual act into the universal. Thus isolated, Hester's sin becomes a symbol of that ancient evil which forever waylays human life and by strange perversions brings havoc to our hopes—the greatest havoc to him whose heart, like Chillingworth's, is cold, selfish, malignant.

This temperamental aloofness from objective reality was both the strength and the weakness of Hawthorne's art. In choosing to follow the way of the inner life he was true to his Puritan breeding. The perpetual turning-in of the mind upon itself, the long introspective brooding over human motives, came naturally to one who lived in the shadow of a Puritan past. In their anxious concern over sin the Puritans had become in some measure psychologists; how else could the secret impulses of the soul be probed and it dark workings laid bare? Hawthorne was only doing what Jonathan Edwards before him had done in his psychological clinic of the Great Awakening—examining the reactions of sin on conscience and character. From this comes the simplicity of his theme and the compelling unity of his handling. To be sure it is pathological phenomena that he deals with, as the phenomena that Edwards dealt with in his *Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God*, were pathological; and like Edwards, Hawthorne is led into insubstantial and tenuous regions where he

breathes with difficulty. The substantial world of Puritan reality that Samuel Sewall knew, Hawthorne seems scarcely to have been aware of; he created instead his own Puritanism, fantastic and unreal. He was forever dealing with shadows, and he knew that he was dealing with shadows, and this consciousness was a perennial source of doubt and uncertainty that bred self-distrust. In setting himself the task of dramatizing sin rather than sinners, of creating romance out of the problem of evil, he encountered difficulties that oppressed him. The well-springs of his imagination were constantly running dry and he must wait till they filled again slowly. Hence the "development of his art is towards ever greater elaboration of scantier and scantier materials, until the joy of the whole becomes lost at last in the milder pleasures of detail."

From the grave difficulties inherent in his theme came the inveterate habit of sliding into symbolism and allegory—from this and from the narrowness of his emotional life and the restrictions of his sympathies. The cold thin atmosphere of his work, one comes increasingly to feel, was due not alone or chiefly to the severity of his artistic restraint that forbade all rioting of the sensuous imagination; it was due rather to a lack of nourishment, to a poverty of ideas and sensuous imagery. His inveterate skepticism robbed him of much, but his inhibitions robbed him of more. A romantic uninterested in adventure and afraid of sex is likely to become somewhat graveled for matter. Like the Pyncheon fowls, Hawthorne's imagination had suffered from too long inbreeding; it had grown anemic, and every grain of fancy is clucked over and picked at and made much of. Once an idea comes into his head he is loath to let it go, but he must turn it about curiously and examine it from every angle. The striking chapter in *The House of the Seven Gables,* where the death of Judge Pyncheon is played upon so persistently, is only an extreme example of his habitual method. The tongues that wagged over the minister's black veil were no more inquisitive and tireless than Hawthorne's when his imagination is fired by a vivid image. He will not let it go till it is sucked as dry as last year's cider cask. It is the way of one to whom ideas are few and precious. Knowing how little is in the bottle he will linger out the flavor of every drop. Hence his fondness for symbolism, and hence his frequent lapse into allegory when imagination grows dull. Because Hawthorne was an artist he was saved from the shipwreck that such a method might seem to invite; yet perhaps it is not unreasonable to suggest that he was an artist for the reason that only through the mastery of a refined technic could his scanty stock of ideas make any show at all.

The intellectual poverty that resulted from his long immuring himself in a void is sufficiently revealed in his *American Note-Books.* In the somewhat tedious volume covering the eighteen years between 1835 and 1853—the most vigorous years of the renaissance—there is no suggestion of interest in the creative ideas of the time, in metaphysics or politics or economics or humanitarianism. It is the occasional record of one who lived an unintellectual life, and it makes but a paltry showing when set beside the journals of Emerson for the same years. Few books are referred to; systems of thought lie beyond his ken. Compared with the thinkers and scholars of the time he is only an idler lying in wait for such casual suggestions as he may turn into stories. Almost childish is his delight in marvels. There is something of the spirit of Cotton Mather in his persistent recording of the gruesome and fantastic, in the hope that they will open a quarry for his art. In the year that Emerson wrote *Nature,* Hawthorne set down the following amongst some dozens of similar suggestions: "A snake taken into a man's stomach and nourished there from fifteen to thirty-five years, tormenting him most horribly. A type of envy or some other evil passion." The *Note-Books,* of course, are very inadequate records of his life, and yet that a mind should lie in wait for such grotesqueries, and treasure them, offers food for speculation. After his marriage they are much less frequent and his jottings become more normal—a change which the Freudians, no doubt, would be ready enough to explain.

The one great adventure of Hawthorne's life was the plunge into Brook Farm Utopianism, a plunge that only proved the waters colder and less hospitable than he had hoped. It was a curious adventure for one of his temperament to engage in, and his eventual disillusion might have been foretold. Perhaps it may be explained as reaction from his long isolation. The glowing enthusiasms of the times must often have tempted him to leave his narrow walls, and share the intellectual and emotional stimulus that others professed to discover in the work of making society over. Whatever the explanation, the venture turned out to be a failure. His skepticism followed him there and came to later expression in *The Blithedale Romance,* a work as thin and unreal as anything he ever did. It is worse. There is in its pages more than a hint of ill humor that colors his interpretation of the Fourieristic stage of the experiment, and slips out in his portraiture of the major characters. Hollingsworth both fascinates and repels him. A dramatization of the intransigent spirit of reform, his single-minded zeal for righteousness, is subtly fused with

an intolerant egotism that destroys Zenobia, cows Priscilla, and wrecks the venture. Perhaps Albert Brisbane may have been in the background of Hawthorne's mind when he drew Hollingsworth, for it was Brisbane who influenced the change he seems to have resented; perhaps Garrison may have served to fill out the picture. Whoever it was, the figure of Hollingsworth is Hawthorne's reply to the summons of the social conscience of the times, done by a critic whose insistent skepticism will not shut its eyes, but discovers under a new masquerade the ancient evil of a cold imperious heart. Seventeen years before he wrote *The Blithedale Romance*, he had jotted down in his *Note-Books* the conception out of which came the later portrait:

> A sketch to be given of a modern reformer,—a type of the extreme doctrines on the subject of slaves, cold water, and other such topics. He goes about the streets haranguing most eloquently, and is on the point of making many converts, when his labors are suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the keeper of a mad-house, whence he has escaped. Much may be made of the idea.

After Brook Farm came no further experiments in the unsatisfactory business of *rapprochement* with his generation. His marriage with Sophia Peabody brought with it the prosaic duties of providing for a family, and he had no leisure to play with social reform. Abolitionism he would have none of, nor perfectionism, nor Jacksonianism—the futility of such things became for him a fixed idea. . . . The man . . . had much to learn about life and society, much that he might have learned from Thoreau. But Hawthorne never grappled with economics as Thoreau did, and he learned no more from him than from Melville, or from Emerson, or from any of the books he read by the wise of other days. Self-sufficient he remained to the last, hard-headed and practical, yet missing many a deeper truth that more receptive minds discover. He was traveling the path that leads to sterility, and the lifelong business of playing Paul Pry to the secrets of the conscience brought him at last to the comment, "Taking no root I soon weary of any soil in which I may be temporarily deposited. The same impatience I sometimes feel, or conceive of, as regards this earthly life." He was the extreme and finest expression of the refined alienation from reality that in the end palsied the creative mind of New England. Having consumed his fancies, what remained to feed on?

Questions:

1. How many elements in Parrington's analysis of Hawthorne do you find borne out in Hawthorne's novel, *The Scarlet Letter*?
2. In what sense according to Parrington was Hawthorne a Puritan?
3. What aspects of life was Hawthorne really interested in?

RING LARDNER

MICHAEL GOLD

SOME of Ring Lardner's stories will live in the anthologies, for their deadly wit and precision. They are masterpieces in a minor technique, and remarkable, also, because produced by a mind that had worked on the conveyor belt of American journalism for so many years.

Ring Lardner had the gifts of a great satirist. But he never freed himself from the wage slavery of capitalist journalism. Hemmed in, stultified, and betrayed by its unwritten censorship, which all deny but which every editor and author must know if he wants to live, Lardner failed to develop a tenth of his unmistakable power.

The temper of his mind was not that of the professional entertainer. He was really a killer. He was a Dean Swift in the embryo, fully as sensitive to the ridiculous cruelty around him.

Gilbert Seldes has combed through American newspapers and magazines of the past twenty years and gathered the best fugitive pieces of the late satirist. The result, in a book, must come as a surprise to the most ardent Lardnerite. It is painfully thin and trivial. It is so because the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *College Humor*, the *New Yorker*, the *American Magazine*, and *Vanity Fair*, all of these professional time-killers and mind-wasters, want nothing that criticizes a fundamental capitalist institution. They want nonsense and circuses. It is their function in the scheme. To distract his victims while a pickpocket is at work, his confederates clown their way through a sham battle. Editors may never examine their own role in the social scheme, and never consciously abet the great robbery named capitalism. But as instinctively as bees or hyenas, they know what they want. Ring Lardner gave it to them. Like

any sweated miner or share-cropper, he was always making a living.

This book is about the best sort of thing that can be expected of that world. The super-gags follow each other with the monotony of a stamping machine. Having no mind, heart, or soul, they soon become boring. Ring Lardner could have written a modern *Alice in Wonderland* but did an Al Jolson instead. Even in the realm of pure nonsense, his work was frustrate.

Ring Lardner spoofs baseball, yacht races, the game of bridge, prize fights, the radio, the Dada school of art, and even a disarmament conference. Any anatomy of thought is lacking under the brilliant surface. At the disarmament conference he worries about his dress suit and says: "Last night President Harding and I attended *The Merry Widow* but not together."

He was a shrewd parodist, but here again he is superficial because of the trivial themes that are allowed him. A satirist who spends his time knocking over clay pigeons in a shooting gallery may become a fine marksman, but he hasn't proved himself until he has gone after big game. In our time, the monstrosities of capitalism are the true big game. Perhaps this is the reason America has thousands of gangsters, but not one satirist. It takes courage to hunt in this jungle.

Questions:

1. Why does Gold call Ring Lardner "an assassin of clay pigeons"? Is he merely assassinating clay pigeons in his story "Some Like Them Cold"?
2. Does Gold's review imply the sort of issues in American life which he wishes Ring Lardner would attack? How fair is his judgment in your opinion?

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

HENRY JAMES

THE first artists, in any line, are doubtless not those whose general ideas about their art are most often on their lips—those who most abound in precept, apology, and formula and can best tell us the reasons and the philosophy of things. We know the first usually by their energetic practice, the constancy with which they apply their principles, and the serenity with which they leave us to hunt for their secret in the illustration, the concrete example.

Of course we must, in judging a writer, take one thing with another, and if I could make up my mind that M. de Maupassant is weak in theory, it would almost make me like him better, render him more approachable, give him the touch of softness that he lacks, and show us a human flaw. The most general quality of the author of "La Maison Tellier" and *Bel-Ami*, the impression that remains last, after the others have been accounted for, is an essential hardness—hardness of form, hardness of nature; and it would put us more at ease to find that if the fact with him (the fact of execution) is so extraordinarily definite and adequate, his explanations, after it, were a little vague and sentimental. But I am not sure that he must even be held foolish to have noticed the race of critics: he is at any rate so much less foolish than several of that fraternity. He has said his say concisely and as if he were saying it once for all. In fine, his readers must be grateful to him for such a passage as that in which he remarks that whereas the public at large very legitimately says to a writer, "Console me, amuse me, terrify me, make me cry, make me dream, or make me think," what the sincere critic says is, "Make me something fine in the form that shall suit you best, according to your temperament." This seems to me to put into a nutshell the whole question of the different classes of fiction, concerning which there has recently been so much discourse. There are simply as many different kinds as there are persons practicing the art, for if a picture, a tale, or a novel be a direct impression of life (and that surely constitutes its interest and value), the impression will vary according to the plate that takes it, the particular structure and mixture of the recipient.

I am not sure that I know what M. de Maupassant means when he says, "The critic shall appreciate the result only according to the nature of the effect; he has no right to concern himself with tendencies." The second clause of that observation strikes me as rather in the air, thanks to the vagueness of the last word. But our author adds to the definiteness of our contention when he goes on to say that any form of the novel is simply a vision of the world from the standpoint of a person constituted after a certain fashion, and that it is therefore absurd to say that there is, for the novelist's use, only one reality of things. This seems to me commendable, not as a flight of metaphysics, hovering over bottomless gulfs of controversy, but, on the contrary, as a just indication of the vanity of certain dogmatisms. The particular way we see the world is our particular illusion about it, says M. de Maupassant, and this illusion fits itself to our organs and senses; our receptive vessel becomes

the furniture of *our* little plot of the universal consciousness.

> How childish, moreover, to believe in reality, since we each carry our own in our thought and in our organs. Our eyes, our ears, our sense of smell, of taste, differing from one person to another, create as many truths as there are men upon earth. And our minds, taking instruction from these organs, so diversely impressed, understand, analyze, judge, as if each of us belonged to a different race. Each one of us, therefore, forms for himself an illusion of the world, which is the illusion poetic, or sentimental, or joyous, or melancholy, or unclean, or dismal, according to his nature. And the writer has no other mission than to reproduce faithfully this illusion, with all the contrivances of art that he has learned and has at his command. The illusion of beauty, which is a human convention! The illusion of ugliness, which is a changing opinion! The illusion of truth, which is never immutable! The illusion of the ignoble, which attracts so many! The great artists are those who make humanity accept their particular illusion. Let us, therefore, not get angry with any one theory, since every theory is the generalized expression of a temperament asking itself questions.

What is interesting in this is not that M. de Maupassant happens to hold that we have no universal measure of the truth, but that it is the last word on a question of art from a writer who is rich in experience and has had success in a very rare degree. It is of secondary importance that our impression should be called, or not called, an illusion; what is excellent is that our author has stated more neatly than we have lately seen it done that the value of the artist resides in the clearness with which he gives forth that impression. His particular organism constitutes a *case,* and the critic is intelligent in proportion as he apprehends and enters into that case. To quarrel with it because it is not another, which it could not possibly have been without a wholly different outfit, appears to M. de Maupassant a deplorable waste of time. If this appeal to our disinterestedness may strike some readers as chilling (through their inability to conceive of any other form than the one they like—a limitation excellent for a reader but poor for a judge), the occasion happens to be none of the best for saying so, for M. de Maupassant himself precisely presents all the symptoms of a "case" in the most striking way, and shows us how far the consideration of them may take us. Embracing such an opportunity as this, and giving ourselves to it freely, seems to me indeed to be a course more fruitful in valid conclusions, as well as in entertainment by the way, than the more common method of establishing one's own premises. To make clear to ourselves those of the author of *Pierre et Jean*—those to which he is committed by the very nature of his mind—is an attempt that will both stimulate and repay curiosity. There is no way of looking at his work less dry, less academic, for as we proceed from one of his peculiarities to another, the whole horizon widens, yet without our leaving firm ground, and we see ourselves landed, step by step, in the most general questions—those explanations of things which reside in the race, in the society. Of course there are cases and cases, and it is the salient ones that the disinterested critic is delighted to meet.

What makes M. de Maupassant salient is two facts: the first of which is that his gifts are remarkably strong and definite, and the second that he writes directly *from* them, as it were: holds the fullest, the most uninterrupted—I scarcely know what to call it—the boldest communication with them. A case is poor when the cluster of the artist's sensibilities is small, or they themselves are wanting in keenness, or else when the personage fails to admit them—either through ignorance, or diffidence, or stupidity, or the error of a false ideal—to what may be called a legitimate share in his attempt. It is, I think, among English and American writers that this latter accident is most liable to occur; more than the French we are apt to be misled by some convention or other as to the sort of feeler we *ought* to put forth, forgetting that the best one will be the one that nature happens to have given us. We have doubtless often enough the courage of our opinions (when it befalls that we have opinions), but we have not so constantly that of our perceptions. There is a whole side of our perceptive apparatus that we in fact neglect, and there are probably many among us who would erect this tendency into a duty. M. de Maupassant neglects nothing that he possesses; he cultivates his garden with admirable energy; and if there is a flower you miss from the rich parterre, you may be sure that it could not possibly have been raised, his mind not containing the soil for it. He is plainly of the opinion that the first duty of the artist, and the thing that makes him most useful to his fellow-men, is to master his instrument, whatever it may happen to be.

His own is that of the senses, and it is through them alone, or almost alone, that life appeals to him; it is almost alone by their help that he describes it, that he produces brilliant works. They render him this great assistance because they are evidently, in his constitution, extraordinarily alive; there is scarcely

a page in all his twenty volumes that does not testify to their vivacity. Nothing could be further from his thought than to disavow them and to minimize their importance. He accepts them frankly, gratefully, works them, rejoices in them. If he were told that there are many English writers who would be sorry to go with him in this, he would, I imagine, staring, say that that is about what was to have been expected of the Anglo-Saxon race, or even that many of them probably could not go with him if they would. Then he would ask how our authors can be so foolish as to sacrifice such a *moyen,* how they can afford to, and exclaim, "They must be pretty works, those they produce, and give a fine, true, complete account of life, with such omissions, such lacunae!" M. de Maupassant's productions teach us, for instance, that his sense of smell is exceptionally acute—as acute as that of those animals of the field and forest whose subsistence and security depend upon it. It might be thought that he would, as a student of the human race, have found an abnormal development of this faculty embarrassing, scarcely knowing what to do with it, where to place it. But such an apprehension betrays an imperfect conception of his directness and resolution, as well as of his constant economy of means. Nothing whatever prevents him from representing the relations of men and women as largely governed by the scent of the parties. Human life in his pages (would this not be the most general description he would give of it?) appears for the most part as a sort of concert of odors, and his people are perpetually engaged, or he is engaged on their behalf, in sniffing up and distinguishing them, in some pleasant or painful exercise of the nostril. "If everything in life speaks to the nostril, why on earth shouldn't we say so?" I suppose him to inquire; "and what a proof of the empire of poor conventions and hypocrisies, *chez vous autres,* that you should pretend to describe and characterize, and yet take no note (or so little that it comes to the same thing) of that essential sign!"

Not less powerful is his visual sense, the quick, direct discrimination of his eye, which explains the singularly vivid concision of his descriptions. These are never prolonged nor analytic, have nothing of enumeration, of the quality of the observer, who counts the items to be sure he has made up the sum. His eye selects unerringly, unscrupulously, almost impudently catches the particular thing in which the character of the object or the scene resides, and, by expressing it with the artful brevity of a master, leaves a convincing, original picture. If he is inveterately synthetic, he is never more so than in the way he brings this hard, short, intelligent gaze to bear. His vision of the world is for the most part a vision of ugliness, and even when it is not, there is in his easy power to generalize a certain absence of love, a sort of bird's-eye-view contempt. He has none of the superstitions of observation, none of our English [illegible] our tender and often imaginative superficialities. If he glances into a railway carriage bearing its freight into the Parisian suburbs of a summer Sunday, a dozen dreary lives map themselves out in a flash.

> There were stout ladies in farcical clothes, those middle-class goodwives of the *banlieue* who replace the distinction they don't possess by an irrelevant dignity; gentlemen weary of the office, with sallow faces and twisted bodies, and one of their shoulders a little forced up by perpetual bending at work over a table. Their anxious, joyless faces spoke moreover of domestic worries, incessant needs for money, old hopes finally shattered; for they all belonged to the army of poor threadbare devils who vegetate frugally in a mean little plaster house, with a flower-bed for a garden. . . .

Even in a brighter picture, such as the admirable vignette of the drive of Madame Tellier and her companions, the whole thing is an impression, as painters say nowadays, in which the figures are cheap. The six women at the station clamber into a country cart and go jolting through the Norman landscape to the village.

> But presently the jerky trot of the nag shook the vehicle so terribly that the chairs began to dance, tossing up the travelers to right, to left, with movements like puppets, scared grimaces, cries of dismay suddenly interrupted by a more violent bump. They clutched the sides of the trap, their bonnets turned over on to their backs, or upon the nose or the shoulder; and the white horse continued to go, thrusting out his head and straightening the little tail, hairless like that of a rat, with which from time to time he whisked his buttocks. Joseph Rivet, with one foot stretched upon the shaft, the other leg bent under him, and his elbows very high, held the reins and emitted from his throat every moment a kind of cluck which caused the animal to prick up his ears and quicken his pace. On either side of the road the green country stretched away. The colza, in flower, produced in spots a great carpet of undulating yellow, from which there rose a strong, wholesome smell, a smell penetrating and pleasant, carried very far by the breeze. In the

tall rye the cornflowers held up their little azure heads, which the women wished to pluck; but M. Rivet refused to stop. Then, in some place, a whole field looked as if it were sprinkled with blood, it was so crowded with poppies. And in the midst of the great level, taking color in this fashion from the flowers of the soil, the trap passed on with the jog of the white horse, seeming itself to carry a nosegay of richer hues; it disappeared behind the big trees of a farm, to come out again where the foliage stopped and parade afresh through the green and yellow crops, pricked with red or blue, its blazing cartload of women, which receded in the sunshine.

As regards the other sense, the sense *par excellence,* the sense which we scarcely mention in English fiction, and which I am not very sure I shall be allowed to mention in an English periodical, M. de Maupassant speaks for that, and of it, with extraordinary distinctness and authority. To say that it occupies the first place in his picture is to say too little; it covers in truth the whole canvas, and his work is little else but a report of its innumerable manifestations. These manifestations are not, for him, so many incidents of life; they are life itself, they represent the standing answer to any question that we may ask about it. He describes them in detail, with a familiarity and a frankness which leave nothing to be added; I should say with singular truth, if I did not consider that in regard to this article he may be taxed with a certain exaggeration. M. de Maupassant would doubtless affirm that where the empire of the sexual sense is concerned, no exaggeration is possible: nevertheless it may be said that whatever depths may be discovered by those who dig for them, the impression of the human spectacle for him who takes it as it comes has less analogy with that of the monkeys' cage than this admirable writer's account of it. I speak of the human spectacle as we Anglo-Saxons see it—as we Anglo-Saxons pretend we see it, M. de Maupassant would possibly say.

At any rate, I have perhaps touched upon this peculiarity sufficiently to explain my remark that his point of view is almost solely that of the senses. If he is a very interesting case, this makes him also an embarrassing one, embarrassing and mystifying for the moralist. I may as well admit that no writer of the day strikes me as equally so. To find M. de Maupassant a lion in the path—that may seem to some people a singular proof of want of courage; but I think the obstacle will not be made light of by those who have really taken the measure of the animal. We are accustomed to think, we of the English faith, that a cynic is a living advertisement of his errors, especially in proportion as he is a thoroughgoing one; and M. de Maupassant's cynicism, unrelieved as it is, will not be disposed of off-hand by a critic of a competent literary sense. Such a critic is not slow to perceive, to his no small confusion, that though, judging from usual premises, the author of *Bel-Ami* ought to be a warning, he somehow is not. His baseness, as it pervades him, ought to be written all over him; yet somehow there are there certain aspects—and those commanding, as the house-agents say—in which it is not in the least to be perceived. It is easy to exclaim that if he judges life only from the point of view of the sense, many are the noble and exquisite things that he must leave out. What he leaves out has no claim to get itself considered till after we have done justice to what he takes in. It is this positive side of M. de Maupassant that is most remarkable—the fact that his literary character is so complete and edifying. "Auteur à peu près irréprochable dans un genre qui ne l'est pas," as that excellent critic M. Jules Lemaître says of him, he disturbs us by associating a conscience and a high standard with a temper long synonymous, in our eyes, with an absence of scruples. The situation would be simpler certainly if he were a bad writer; but none the less it is possible, I think, on the whole, to circumvent him, even without attempting to prove that after all he is one.

The latter part of his introduction to *Pierre et Jean* is less felicitous than the beginning, but we learn from it—and this is interesting—that he regards the analytic fashion of telling a story, which has lately begotten in his own country some such remarkable experiments (few votaries as it has attracted among ourselves), as very much less profitable than the simple epic manner which "avoids with care all complicated explanations, all dissertations upon motives, and confines itself to making persons and events pass before our eyes." M. de Maupassant adds that in his view "psychology should be hidden in a book, as it is hidden in reality under the facts of existence. The novel conceived in this manner gains interest, movement, colour, the bustle of life." When it is a question of an artistic process, we must always mistrust very sharp distinctions, for there is surely in every method a little of every other method. It is as difficult to describe an action without glancing at its motive, its moral history, as it is to describe a motive without glancing at its practical consequence. Our history and our fiction are what we do; but it surely is not more easy to determine where what we do begins than to determine where it ends—notoriously a hopeless task. Therefore it would take a

very subtle sense to draw a hard and fast line on the borderland of explanation and illustration. If psychology be hidden in life, as, according to M. de Maupassant, it should be in a book, the question immediately comes up, "From whom is it hidden?" From some people, no doubt, but very much less from others; and all depends upon the observer, the nature of one's observation, and one's curiosity. For some people motives, reasons, relations, explanations, are a part of the very surface of the drama, with the footlights beating full upon them. For me an act, an incident, an attitude, may be a sharp, detached, isolated thing, of which I give a full account in saying that in such and such a way it came off. For you it may be hung about with implications, with relations, and conditions as necessary to help you to recognize it as the clothes of your friends are to help you know them in the street. You feel that they would seem strange to you without petticoats and trousers.

M. de Maupassant would probably urge that the right thing is to know, or to guess, how events come to pass, but to say as little about it as possible. There are matters in regard to which he feels the importance of being explicit, but that is not one of them. The contention to which I allude strikes me as rather arbitrary, so difficult is it to put one's finger upon the reason why, for instance, there should be so little mystery about what happened to Christiane Andermatt, in *Mont Oriol,* when she went to walk on the hills with Paul Brétigny, and so much, say, about the forces that formed her for that gentleman's convenience, or those lying behind any other odd collapse that our author may have related. The rule misleads, and the best rule certainly is the tact of the individual writer, which will adapt itself to the material as the material comes to him. The cause we plead is ever pretty sure to be the cause of our idiosyncrasies, and if M. de Maupassant thinks meanly of "explanations," it is, I suspect, that they come to him in no great affluence. His view of the conduct of man is so simple as scarcely to require them; and indeed so far as they are needed he *is,* virtually, explanatory. He deprecates reference to motives, but there is one, covering an immense ground in his horizon, as I have already hinted, to which he perpetually refers. If the sexual impulse be not a moral antecedent, it is none the less the wire that moves almost all M. de Maupassant's puppets, and as he has not hidden it, I cannot see that he has eliminated analysis or made a sacrifice to discretion. His pages are studded with that particular analysis; he is constantly peeping behind the curtain, telling us what he discovers there. The truth is that the admirable system of simplification which makes his tales so rapid and so concise (especially his shorter ones, for his novels in some degree, I think, suffer from it), strikes us as not in the least a conscious intellectual effort, a selective, comparative process. He tells us all he knows, all he suspects, and if these things take no account of the moral nature of man, it is because he has no window looking in that direction, and not because artistic scruples have compelled him to close it up. The very compact mansion in which he dwells presents on that side a perfectly dead wall.

This is why, if his axiom that you produce the effect of truth better by painting people from the outside than from the inside has a large utility, his example is convincing in a much higher degree. A writer is fortunate when his theory and his limitations so exactly correspond, when his curiosities may be appeased with such precision and promptitude. M. de Maupassant contends that the most that the analytic novelist can do is to put himself -his own peculiarities- into the costume of the figure analyzed. This may be true, but if it applies to one manner of representing people who are not ourselves, it applies also to any other manner. It is the limitation, the difficulty of the novelist, to whatever clan or camp he may belong. M. de Maupassant is remarkably objective and impersonal, but he would go too far if he were to entertain the belief that he has kept himself out of his books. They speak of him eloquently, even if it only be to tell us how easy— how easy, given his talent of course—he has found this impersonality. Let us hasten to add that in the case of describing a character it is doubtless more difficult to convey the impression of something that is not one's self (the constant effort, however delusive at bottom, of the novelist), than in the case of describing some object more delicate, but that circumstance only increases the beauty of the problem. . . .

It may seem that I have claimed little for M. de Maupassant, so far as English readers are concerned with him, in saying that after publishing twenty improper volumes he has at last published a twenty-first, which is neither indecent nor cynical. It is not this circumstance that has led me to dedicate so many pages to him, but the circumstance that in producing all the others he yet remained, for those who are interested in these matters, a writer with whom it was impossible not to reckon. This is why I called him, to begin with, so many ineffectual names: a rarity, a "case," an embarrassment, a lion in the path. He is still in the path as I conclude these observations, but I think that in making them we have discovered a legitimate way round. If he is a master of his art and it is discouraging to find what low views are com-

patible with mastery, there is satisfaction, on the other hand in learning on what particular condition he holds his strange success. This condition, it seems to me, is that of having totally omitted one of the items of the problem, an omission which has made the problem so much easier that it may almost be described as a short cut to a solution. The question is whether it be a fair cut. M. de Maupassant has simply skipped the whole reflective part of his men and women—that reflective part which governs conduct and produces character. He may say that he does not see it, does not know it; to which the answer is, "So much the better for you, if you wish to describe life without it. The strings you pull are by so much the less numerous, and you can therefore pull those that remain with greater promptitude, consequently with greater firmness, with a greater air of knowledge." Pierre Roland, I repeat, shows a capacity for reflection, but I cannot think who else does, among the thousand figures who compete with him —I mean for reflection addressed to anything higher than the gratification of an instinct. We have an impression that M. d'Apreval and Madame de Cadour reflect, as they trudge back from their mournful excursion, but that indication is not pushed very far. An aptitude for this exercise is a part of disciplined manhood, and disciplined manhood M de Maupassant has simply not attempted to represent. I can remember no instance in which he sketches any considerable capacity for conduct, and his women betray that capacity as little as his men. I am much mistaken if he has once painted a gentleman, in the English sense of the term. His gentlemen, like Paul Brétigny and Gontran de Ravenel, are guilty of the most extraordinary deflections. For those who are conscious of this element in life, look for it and like it, the gap will appear to be immense It will lead them to say, "No wonder you have a contempt if that is the way you limit the field. No wonder you judge people roughly if that is the way you see them. Your work, on your premises, remains the admirable thing it is, but in your 'case' not adequately explained."

The erotic element in M. de Maupassant, about which much more might have been said, seems to me to be explained by the same limitation, and explicable in a similar way wherever else its literature occurs in excess. The carnal side of man appears the most characteristic if you look at it a great deal; and you look at it a great deal if you do not look at the other, at the side by which he reacts against his weaknesses, his defeats. The more you look at the other, the less the whole business to which French novelists have ever appeared to English readers to give a disproportionate place—the business, as I may say, of the senses —will strike you as the only typical one. Is not this the most useful reflection to make in regard to the famous question of the morality, the decency, of the novel? It is the only one, it seems to me, that will meet the case as we find the case today. Hard and fast rules, *a priori* restrictions, mere interdictions (you shall not speak of this, you shall not look at that), have surely served their time, and will in the nature of the case never strike an energetic talent as anything but arbitrary. A healthy, living and growing art, full of curiosity and fond of exercise, has an indefeasible mistrust of rigid prohibitions. Let us then leave this magnificent art of the novelist to itself and to its perfect freedom, in the faith that one example is as good as another, and that our fiction will always be decent enough if it be sufficiently general. Let us not be alarmed at this prodigy (though prodigies are alarming) of M de Maupassant, who is at once so licentious and so impeccable, but gird ourselves up with the conviction that another point of view will yield another perfection.

SELF-RELIANCE

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

I READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instill is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost,—and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is, that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to

us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else, tomorrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without preestablished harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text, in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces, we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold, then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him: he does not court you. But the man is, as it were, clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with éclat, he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges, and having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private, but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men, and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my

saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested: "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied: "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition, as if everything were titular and ephemeral but him. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbados, why should I not say to him: "Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper: be good-natured and modest: have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home"? Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affection of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached as the counteraction of the doctrine of love when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother, when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the doorpost, *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 thousandfold 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. . . .

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 reenforce 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 is 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 wreck 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 willfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face with the most disagreeable sensation.

For non-conformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The bystanders 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 loath 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 everything 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.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing, contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment. . . .

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom, and trade, and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the center of things Where he is, there is nature. He measures you, and all men, and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much, that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seems to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius, that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called "the height of Rome"; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper, in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book has an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seems to say like that, "Who are you, sir?" Yet they all are his suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture

waits for my verdict: it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact, that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history, our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both are the same. Why all this deference to Alfred, and Scanderbeg, and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act today, as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the luster will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty, even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For, the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist, and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom, and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind, and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My willful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the idlest revery, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statements of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for, they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, it is fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time, all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the center of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple, and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples, fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their center by their cause, and, in the universal miracle, petty and particular miracles disappear. If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God, and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old moldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fullness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence, then, this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light; where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury, if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright;

he dares not say, "I think," "I am," but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God today. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature, in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself, unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see, painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them, and are willing to let the words go; for, at any time, they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought, by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name; the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision, there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea,—long intervals of time, years, centuries,—are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life, and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates, that the soul *becomes;* for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why, then, do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present, there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies, because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric, when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is in nature the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing, and, therefore, self-relying soul. . . .

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfill your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct,* or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat, and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard, and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its

debts, it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity, and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force, and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion, we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises, they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges, and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened, and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days, and feels no shame in not "studying a profession," for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man, and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations, that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries, and customs out of the window, we pity him no more, but thank and revere him,—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor, and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity,—anything less than all good,—is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's *Bonduca*, when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies,—

> "His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
> Our valors are our best gods."

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities, if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work, and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly, and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide: him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him, because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him, because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, "Let not God speak to us lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors, and recites fables merely of his brother's or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification.

If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty, and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating everything to the new terminology, as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time, that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds, the classification is idolized, passes for the end, and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see,—how you can see; "it must be somehow that you stole the light from us" They do not yet perceive, that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-reliance that the superstition of Traveling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth In manly hours, we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveler; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion, call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still, and shall make men sensible, by the expression of his countenance, that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign, and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe, for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they He carries ruins to ruins.

Traveling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty, and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican, and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go

3. But the rage of traveling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the traveling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses, or Dante, but different from all these Not possibly will the soul all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of

one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shalt reproduce the Foreworld again. . . .

The form of this essay is not a closely knit, logical development. As Gorham B Munson says of Emerson's work, "the looseness is so great that one may without loss to the development of the essay shuffle its paragraphs in a quantity of arrangements" (Because of this, the cuts which have been made in this essay do not impair the presentation of the basic theme.) It is evident that Emerson was not primarily interested in convincing by logical argument but in persuading by an emotional appeal. The quality of the style itself—the strongly defined rhythms and the richness of metaphor—are associated with this intention. From the style, as Munson has said, one might deduce that his "philosophy is optimistic, it is founded upon emotional assurances that man is potentially a greater being than he actually is, and it is unsystematic. . . . Emerson's philosophic method, so far as he had any, was a large trust in the natural, spontaneous, irresponsible operations of the human mind and feelings, and could not this also be deduced from an accurate account of the way his style works?"

But this essay may be approached by an examination of its ideas. Emerson's championship of nonconformity, his belief in the future, his antipathy toward the past, his emphasis on individualism, represent attitudes which have been important in the development of American civilization. These ideas are discussed, sympathetically and unsympathetically, in several of the essays which follow.

Questions:

1 Does Emerson underestimate the importance of the individual's relation to society? Or underestimate the limitations of the individual's will? Was it easier to accept his general view during the period of "free land" and westward expansion? (In this connection, see "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," p. 405.) Could Emerson make a reply to a modern dictator who, while suppressing individualism and self-reliance, maintained that he was acting out his own individual destiny and was fulfilling the promptings of the "Oversoul"? Does Emerson give the rationale for fascism or has he simply failed to analyze the implications of his position?

2. Emerson condemns the "superstition of Traveling" and pleads for a native American art. Relate this to similar statements in Agar's essay, and define the difference between the assumptions on which the two essays are based

3. Would Emerson agree with the application, in Davidson's essay, of "self-reliance" to the matter of sectional cultures? Is there any difference between Emerson's notion of the "great man" and Davidson's notion of the hero, on the grounds of the hero's relation to the society from which he springs?

4 Do you judge that Emerson would have agreed, in the main, with Beard's conception of progress? What is the attitude of each toward the past?

5 After the student has compared Emerson's attitudes and method with those of Beard, Agar, Davidson, etc., he should return to this essay and attempt to re-evaluate it, for an essay of this type cannot be studied in a vacuum but should call into play the student's own opinions and all of the information which he can acquire. Even an evaluation of Emerson's style — if style is functionally related to the author's purpose—will be impossible, finally, without a broad basis of comparison. In general, this statement applies to all the essays; we can evaluate the style only in terms of the general intention.

A NOTE ON AMERICAN HEROES

DONALD DAVIDSON

BACK in the nineteen-twenties Mr. H. L. Mencken was asked—not perhaps by a genial admirer—why, if the American scene was so much to his distaste, he felt obliged to inhabit it. His answer was curt and in the temper then prevailing. Why, said Mr. Mencken, does one go to a circus? From this, the disgusted or unheroical view, we are now far removed. A generation of biographers, historians, folklorists, regionalists, and historical novelists have instructed us in the abundant goodness of the American life of the past. Whatever else we lack, we do not lack great memories. We have heroes, and we want to possess them affectionately as a mature nation ought.

Yet on this as on many other matters our minds are divided. We are not sure on what terms we may possess our heroes. The machinery of the heroic legend is all there, for poets and orators to use, but our approach to it is often hesitating and embarrassed; or else, in the old way of Americans, we hide our lack of self-confidence in bluster, and are entirely too positive.

This division of mind was never better illustrated than in Mr. Burton J. Hendrick's recent book, *The Lees of Virginia*. It is of course a fine specimen of the devotion of the amateur or lay historian to the task of interpreting the American past, and as such invites special remark. But that is not my reason for referring to it. It serves as a text in this connection because Mr. Hendrick has gone to unusual lengths in setting forth his attitude toward his work. In his "Introduction," after some reference to the great importance

of the old Virginia families, he says, "The history of one of these tribes should have at least antiquarian interest." And a little further on we come upon this passage:

> The type of society and public life they represented has gone and gone forever. Probably there was not much in its essential manifestations that the present generation would care to resurrect . . . Only a rash soul would picture this old Virginia, with its great plantations, its slaves, its upper class, full of snobbishness and of social oppression, its less fortunate stratum of whites, as superior to the present era. But the mere fact that such an order once held sway in this country and wrought great things for their descendants is interesting. It forms a humane and charming episode in the nation's annals—a kind of quiet interlude in the rushing progress of American life.

In other words, after writing a magnificent book, which may tend to make the reader worshipful, Mr. Hendrick enters a cold disclaimer, and assures him that he need not, or must not, be worshipful at all, for the figures he has reanimated really have no meaning except as charming antiquarian curiosities. There may be several reasons for this disclaimer—among them, perhaps, a determinist theory of history, or some condescension toward the share of the South in "the rushing progress of American life."

There is another possible reason. Mr. Hendrick has the retrospective impulse, but he fears and distrusts it. He restores to us a magnificent set of heroes, but he does not want to be caught in the act of creating a heroic legend. So he hastens to assure us that he has no really serious intentions. The Lee legend, although it has a historic basis, does not fit into any rationale that he can accept. If it has no rational existence, Mr. Hendrick cannot permit it any other sort of valid existence. Whatever cannot be explained, or whatever confuses the neatly arranged scheme of the present, must be stigmatized as "antiquarian." That is, it is myth, or near to being myth. And being myth it is futile and inferior.

This is an American disease which has afflicted more than one biographer and many a poet. It is in fact a modern disease, which Mr. I. A. Richards has attempted to describe on the poetic side. Mr. John Crowe Ransom, in *God Without Thunder,* deals with the religious side chiefly, but his words may be used to describe Mr. Hendrick's state of mind when he reduces the Lee legend to an inferior status:

> Myths are construed very simply by the hard Occidental mind: they are lies. It is supposed that everything that is written in serious prose ought to be historical or scientific; that is, devoted either to authenticated facts or to generalizations about these facts. Myths, like fairy tales, like poems, are neither. They are therefore absurd. We are given to understand that their effectiveness can be only with some simple and primitive population, that they are not nearly good enough for the men of our twentieth century generation, brought up in the climatic blessedness of our scientific Occident.

It seems clear that if the interpretation of the past is to be carried on in Mr. Hendrick's temper, the good it will do us will be questionable. We shall doubt whether our heroes are to be accepted, no matter how heroic they appear to be, because we cannot fit them into the rational scheme to which we are committed. If those are the terms on which the gallery of American national heroes is to be established, we shall never have any such heroes. Men have never found it easy to agree within the rational plane, and Americans will never be at peace with their heroes if they have the additional perplexity of being forced to choose between ideas and emotions, with no privilege of combination allowed. This predicament might well form the subject matter of a book like Mr. Ransom's, with a title to parallel his, such as *Heroes Without Glory.* The material for it could be obtained from such books as Mr. Hendrick's or from a type of book greatly inferior to his, generally known as the "debunking" biography, which assures us that the noble severity of George Washington's countenance ought to be attributed to his discomfort in wearing false teeth, or that John Hancock was a notorious smuggler.

Yet, returning to Mr. Hendrick as my example, I find that the end of his book does not agree with the beginning, and in not so agreeing, it illustrates another part of the divided mind that American writers exhibit toward American heroes. Mr. Hendrick, after all, is so excited by the Lee myth that he would like to incorporate it in another myth which, despite his disclaimer, is actively at work in his mind and has a respectable status.

After giving a sketch of General Robert E. Lee—which happens to be done with somewhat less gusto and understanding than his studies of the earlier Lees—he reports once more that the influence of the Lees is "gone forever." They have yielded to a changed America.

> The desolate aspect of the Potomac shore [he writes] manifests this change. One can search the region where the first Richard Lee assembled

> his plantations and find almost no trace of the ancient day. . . . But a new fact, emblematic of a new time, has been reserved for Arlington, where the last of the great Lees fixed his home. It is now a national shrine—the house a Lee museum, the surrounding country the burial place of Federal soldiers and sailors, one section set aside as grave and monument for the Unknown Soldier in the World War. As one stands on the porch, the object mainly in view is the Lincoln Memorial, joined physically and spiritually to the home of Robert E. Lee by the beautiful new bridge across the river.

The vocabulary and the tone are here no longer matter-of-fact, as in the "Introduction." The desolate aspect of the Potomac shore becomes a poetic symbol. We encounter metaphorical terms: *emblematic, shrine, spiritually*. The conjunction of Arlington and the Lincoln Memorial, joined by the "beautiful new bridge," is brought into rich symbolic contrast with the desolate Potomac.

Evidently Mr. Hendrick is a devout believer in the Lincoln myth, which for him is sublimated into a national myth. Involuntarily, quite without realizing what he is doing, he recognizes the power and dignity of the hostile Southern myth, and he would dispose of it by absorbing it and declining to treat it as hostile. In so doing he ceases to write history; he becomes a myth-maker. The action is very instructive. For while Mr. Hendrick has earlier gone on record as a thorough Modernist in his attitude toward myth, he would exempt his own myth, the Lincoln myth, and be strongly Fundamentalist toward it. It is as if a Mohammedan should argue against the deity of Jesus on the ground that the Virgin Birth is a logically untenable and "antiquarian" idea, and then turn around and accept Jesus if Christians will call Him a Moslem.

If now a Southerner—whose mind may also be divided, yet is likely to be less grievously divided than Mr. Hendrick's—should turn this historian's weapons upon him, the argument would run like this. On purely matter-of-fact grounds, what prevents the Lincoln myth from being regarded as also a charming, antiquarian interlude? The Lincoln idea, too, has had to yield to changed America and may be gone forever. The Union that Lincoln is said to have wanted to reestablish was never really set up. If Lincoln was a supporter, as in a dim way he may have been, of the Jeffersonian notion of a body of free and self-reliant farmers as the bulwark of the nation, then why did he fight the South? Lincoln made war upon his own idea, and the fruit of his victory, represented in sprawling, confused, industrial America, is a more pitiful sight than the desolate Lee plantations, for it is hardly even a noble ruin. However effective it may have been as a war measure, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was an inept bit of civil statesmanship, for it put the Negro problem beyond the hope of any such solution as America has been able to use for the Indian problem. By letting himself be used as the idealistic front for the material designs of the North, Lincoln not only ruined the South but quite conceivably ruined the North as well; and if fascism or communism ever arrives in America, Lincoln will have been a remote but efficient cause of its appearance.

Thus a Southerner might argue if he copied Mr. Hendrick and brought Modernist dialectic to bear on his cherished myth. Then with kindling emotion the Southerner might go on, prompted to declare where his own myth is invaded, and add that nothing could be more ironic, or perhaps more tragic, than to have Arlington made into a "national shrine," or to have the Lincoln Memorial "the object mainly in view" from the porch where Robert E. Lee once stood. Lee never reentered Arlington after he left it in 1861 to take command of the state troops of Virginia. His wife, a daughter of the adopted son of Washington, had to flee hurriedly from the mansion at the outbreak of hostilities. She was unable to carry with her the Washington heirlooms which formed a cherished part of the Lee possessions. These were respected by General McDowell, the first Federal invader of Virginia, but a little later the building was looted, and the Washington relics were stolen and hawked about the city of Washington, to be forever dispersed. If any gesture of courtesy emanated from Lincoln to mitigate these asperities, the Southerner has not heard of it; but Lincoln in viewing Southern secession as insurrection, put upon Lee the stigma of "traitor." And by what sort of an act, too, did Arlington pass into the hands of the Federal government in the first place?

As the Southerner reflects on these matters, his indignation is likely to rise to a point where he cannot with any comfort visit the old mansion of Arlington. In no case will he be likely to agree that the beautiful new bridge joins Lee and Lincoln in "spiritual" union. He may possibly consider the near presence of the Lincoln Memorial an affront which must be tolerated but cannot be enjoyed. To the sons of Confederates it is a reminder of tragedy, not an emblem of exaltation. If the people of Illinois wish to erect a memorial to Lincoln in Springfield, that is entirely proper. But why should the Southerner be called on to respect as a "national" symbol, the great image of

Lincoln in the attitude of a brooding god—Lincoln, who did not receive a Southern vote in 1860; who was never president of the Southern states; who was, alas, though with some healing kindness toward the end, a destroying angel to them. Whatever intellectual admiration the Southerner may have for Lincoln the great man—and he may have such an admiration—he will find himself unresponsive, if he retains the traditional Southern feeling in this matter, to the appeal of Lincoln as national hero.

The situation illustrates at its most painful and difficult point the embarrassment we are under in our wish to possess national heroes. We do not agree as to what is national and what is heroic. We cannot get the intellectual and the emotional element ideally united in the single figure who will stand for what all Americans desire. The agreement is hardest to obtain in reference to the period when Americans were most bitterly divided: Secession, War, and Reconstruction. We come nearest to obtaining it in our attitude toward the heroes of the Revolution and the early Republic. But even in this field of closest agreement, we hesitate and begin to make exceptions. George Washington grows ever more faint and far away for most Americans as the image of Washington built in the homely glorification of the Parson Weems tradition is dissected and cast aside, and as the man Washington, an eighteenth century gentleman farmer, with a little of the frontier and a great deal of the Southern plantation in him, is more and more insisted upon by the historian. Besides, Washington in his national aspect represents the difficult Federal conception at a time when it was really Federal, not "consolidated." We have progressed or degenerated from a time when a man could be Father of his country to a time when we are the Babies of the state. We have lately freshened our knowledge of Washington, but it cannot be said that we have thereby quickened our feeling for him as a hero. The urban intelligentsia of the East, the immigrant masses in metropolitan centers, the Hollywood producers, the worshippers in Aimee Semple MacPherson's temple—all these can know Washington, conceivably, in a book, as they can know Gustavus Adolphus or the Gracchi. That does not necessarily mean that they can connect Washington with a national ideal.

Mr. Herbert Agar may be right in holding, in his *Land of the Free*, that Jefferson has fared better in American respect than Washington, in the sense that he is a living symbol. Possibly Jefferson incarnates the basic democratic idea which every American feels obliged either to reverence or to seem not to violate. The Democratic Party still professes to be Jeffersonian. The Republican Party in its origin took the old name of Jefferson's party and at the outset pretended to Jeffersonian tenets. Yet it would not be far from the truth to say that the founding fathers, and Jefferson with them, are becoming more and more figures in the book, understandable enough there, but hardly to be conceived as appearing like a Theseus to aid us against the Persians of some national crisis. We have no sense of their personal presence, although we do sedulously preserve the houses they lived in and the beds they slept in, and pause to stare a moment, in wistfulness or boredom, before we finger the map that will direct us on our four or five hundred miles per day. We no longer name children, places, institutions, for them, but do occasionally use their names for things that least represent them—like hotels. Of not many counties in the United States can it be said, as it is still said of certain counties in the Old Southwest, that "they are still voting for Andrew Jackson."

With Jackson the focus becomes sectional again, but the line divides East and West rather than North and South. Whether in Massachusetts or Virginia, the opinion is the same, and is about to this general effect: Andrew Jackson was a quarrelsome roughneck. But west of the mountains admiration still flourishes, though perhaps in diminishing ratio as one moves west of north.

On either side of the Ohio River, the existing portrait of Andrew Jackson—whether one runs upon it in an antique shop or in some Western mind—is a portrait of the Hero of New Orleans, magnificently erect on horseback while Pakenham's bombs burst in vain. Andrew Jackson represents the Western idea of the American national tradition, which is "to be able to look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell." There is not enough decorum in this principle to suit the East, but the West has adhered to the tradition. Its heroes are men of direct action. They always assume the shape of the Man on Horseback who will ride roughshod to triumph. There is a direct link between Jackson's "Smash the Bank," Bryan's "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold," and Senator Huey Long's "Share the Wealth" plan. But the East just as consistently declines to admit the Western hero to the national rôle. It laughs at the Andrew Jacksons of the West, it patronizes or snubs them, and, if they grow powerful, it raises the cry of "demagogue" and trembles for the *res publica*. The West retaliates by a complete insensitivity to the leadership of the Adams family. In more recent times (aside from a disagreement in matters of religion and prohibition) the West could not see what the East saw of the heroic in Al Smith.

To this tendency there are exceptions. The Lincoln myth is a notable one. The East accepts Lincoln, but one cannot help realizing what a convenient acceptance it has been. For the East the prevalence of the Lincoln myth has meant the comfortable assurance of power long continued. There is a tacit bargain implied: we take your hero if you take our program. On the other hand, when the West, with a little less design, has accepted an Eastern hero, he is likely to be a Roosevelt, a man with some Western ebullience in him that serves him none too well in his home section.

The line between East and West cuts nothing like so deep as the line between North and South. No inappropriateness is felt in setting up splendid memorials in New York City to Grant and Sherman, who though they originated no further west than Ohio, still belong to the Western, not the Eastern tradition. It is safe to say, too, that the West will not raise any great clamor against certain figures in Borglum's great sculptures for the Black Hills monument merely on the ground that they are Eastern figures. But Sherman will not soon be memorialized in Georgia. The proposal that his route to the sea be indicated by markers was scornfully rejected by the Deep South. John Brown may be memorialized both in Connecticut and Kansas, but who dares to propose that his name be honored south of the Mason and Dixon line? The Federal Treasury, under a Republican administration, approved the issue of the Stone Mountain half-dollar to help raise funds for a great Confederate monument; but no Northern figure will appear on that memorial if it is ever completed. The plan to erect a joint monument to Grant and Lee on the scene of the Appomattox surrender had to be abandoned. Although the money had already been set aside by Congress and the design approved, urgent Southern protests intervened, and perhaps suggested to the sponsors that the monument, if erected, might not stay erected.

We are very little better off when we step outside the period of controversy and war. Outside of the East, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain boys are hardly more than hearsay. John Sevier and the King's Mountain patriots belong to the regional Valhalla of a few Southern states; Maine and Oregon do not celebrate their names. Sam Houston in his time was a "national" figure, but he would not be well remembered today if he were not dear to Texan and Southwestern tradition. A Louisianian, arriving in Albany, New York, will hardly know for whom the DeWitt Clinton Hotel was named. The upstate New Yorker is no more likely to know for whom Fort Sumter was named. The frontier West might fare better on a test of this sort. Few Americans are likely to miss the significance of Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, and Custer. But here we begin to deal with types rather than individuals and approach the borderland of true folk-myth, wherein a legendary, rather than a historical, Daniel Boone, becomes a general national figure, as unassailable as Washington and much better visualized.

In the realm of historical heroics, where the will to believe is forever locked in hard wrestle with the will to disbelieve, the line of ascent to the status of American national hero would seem to be from local to sectional to national. If an American hero does not attain to sectional status, he has little chance of becoming a national hero. And yet, paradoxically, the more richly sectional he is, the less chance he has to become a truly national hero. Is there a practical law of American heroics, which could be stated as follows: To be an American hero, a man must be a sectional hero; but no true sectional hero can be a true, or complete, national hero.

One does not need to indulge in mysticism—certainly not in the kind of mysticism that enables Mr. Waldo Frank to discover Swedenborgian essences oozing from the geography and history of the United States—in order to see a principle of equilibrium involved here, somewhat like the conception embodied in our Federal constitution. Theoretically, the only kind of really national hero we can have ought to be a hero who embodies the Federal conception. But that sphere is too abstract for a hero to thrive in it. Heroics there are dangerous to the principle of equilibrium which is vital to the American conception of the nation. The Federal sphere will accommodate the statesman, but not the hero, in the epical and tremendous sense. For that reason it may be that Americans have turned instinctively, during the latter part of their history, to presidents who were distinguished but not too distinguished. On the other hand, the sections, which embody culturally related groups of states and have approximate unity of feeling, are the true home of the particular and definite characteristics out of which arises the grand type, the hero. The sections, and within them the localities, are the true mothers of heroes, and our problem is how to venerate our heroes without disturbing the national equilibrium.

In practical affairs the problem is generally handled by a technique of compromise. Party leaders recognize the overwhelming importance of sectional predisposition. For presidential candidate they will choose a man who has enough sectional appeal to carry his own section, but not so much sectional difference that he will repel the other sections.

When compromise fails, the sectional clash occurs that is familiar to the student of American history. If the heroes are living and embody sectional feelings that will stop at nothing, there is nothing to do but have a show of strength. But if the heroes are dead and thus about to enter the realm of myth, we may witness a curious sort of adjustment. The Northerner may attempt to annex the Southern hero, as Mr. Hendrick does, by distilling out of him most of his sectional essence. (It will be noted that in *The Lees of Virginia* Mr. Hendrick plays up the nation and the state and plays down the section—the South.) Some years ago Gamaliel Bradford attempted a similar feat in *Lee the American*. But his attempt to capture Robert E. Lee did not go far beyond the title of his book, which in its details does not bear out his implied claim. On the Northern side, this kind of adjustment comes easier than it does in the South, for the victor can afford to be generous.

On the Southern side, adjustment often takes a different form, which is of the nature of genuine folk-myth. The Northern hero gets appropriated—or cancelled—by some depreciatory or possessive legend. There is a legend, well-known in every part of the South, that Lincoln was the illegitimate son of John C. Calhoun; and another one claims that Lincoln was the half brother of Jefferson Davis. On the Northern side this sort of thing is paralleled by the story, widely circulated during the War, that General Lee whipped and mistreated his slaves. And there is of course a Northern story that all the finest Southern gentlemen regularly cohabited with Negro women. All these stories are of the inferior type of myth known as gossip, and their purpose is evidently apologetic and more than a little malicious.

But though they do deadly work, they may be less dangerous than another kind of adjustment, witnessed in the sectionalist who denies his own myth and takes up the myth of another section. Often enough this may be noble and sincere enough. In all sections there are invariably sectional dissenters, as there were Copperheads in the North and Unionists in the South in war times. In modern times, too, there are dissenters who might be called disillusionists. We may have considerable respect for a dissent arising from principle, but it is hard to contemplate with any great respect a surrender of native myth when it has the flavor of being done in bald accordance with self-interest only. If a Southerner who is not of Unionist and Republican antecedents whole-heartedly adopts the Northern myth of Lincoln, he is naturally suspected of having an ax to grind, and generally he does. He is likely to be a "progressive" Southerner, out for all the material improvement of the Northern model that he can secure. Often he will not only take up Lincoln but surrender Lee, so ardent will be his recantation; or he will surrender Lee the soldier and adhere only to the milder, more yielding Lee, the college president and quietist. On the Northern side, however, there is no an equal tendency to recantation. The Northerner often appropriates Lee, but he rarely disowns Grant or Sherman or Lincoln. Significantly, it is most often Lee that he wants to appropriate. The Northerner reaches forth no clutching hand toward Stonewall Jackson.

Such adjustments, interesting though they may be, are hardly good enough to meet our difficulty, and they need only to be identified to receive the mistrust that they deserve. In the field of history our necessary loyalty to fact drives us to a continual checking and rechecking which in the end always upsets the false claim, even at the cost of spoiling some fine myths in the process. The sense of humor of Americans will not deal gently with such conceptions as Mr. Lloyd Lewis offers in his *Myths After Lincoln*. What American, whether he hails from Georgia or Illinois, could suppress a snicker at the notion of Lincoln as a "Dying God," a sort of American goulash of Osiris, Adonis, Baldur, and Christ? Besides, we are committed to a peculiar kind of nationalism which obliges us to view our great men in the national or Federal sphere with a certain Platonic reserve. Our regard for George Washington is Platonic.

In the field of myth, where regard ceases to be Platonic and becomes really warm, the heroes turn out to be sectional, and their sectional particularity is too [illegible] for them to be taken over where they are not understood and do not belong. There is no better proof of the existence of a barrier than what happens to heroes in our literature. Our history books are rich with heroic material, but not our works of literature. Whitman, who proposed to write national poems, celebrated Federal soldiers and nobly commemorated the fallen Lincoln; but he left the Confederate side alone. Benét's epical poem, *John Brown's Body,* although it deals generously with the Southern side, nevertheless by its very title, thesis, and conception makes the wrong approach to Southern feeling. We have minor heroical works that deal with sectional heroes, but we have no Finn or Arthur or Roland. In our literature there is an astonishing scarcity of works of fiction, drama, or poetry that deal convincingly with Washington, Jefferson, Lee, and other great names.

Only in genuine folk-myth do the barriers dissolve or tend to dissolve. It is hard to question the national

pretensions of such figures as Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Casey Jones, and John Henry; or of semi-literary but folkish creations like Leatherstocking, Rip Van Winkle, Huck Finn; or again semi-historical people whose mythical images are greater than their real images: Crockett, Pocahontas, Tecumseh, Sitting Bull, Miles Standish, Jesse James. The only trouble is that they are heroic symbols of an America that we cannot recover by romantic glances and scholarly researches only; that is, not recoverable in some high spiritual sense unless we bring the America of today into better harmony with it, as Yeats and Æ strove to do for the Ireland of the eighteen-nineties. But the Celtic analogy is not quite exact. The United States are not one potential Ireland but several. The merest look at the above loose enumeration will show that our folk-heroes are also divided. They show traces of sectionalism and marks of occupation, race, and class.

On what terms, then, do we have our American heroes? Let the crystal-gazer who can peer into the hidden unity of American character give a simple answer if he dare. To those who are not crystal-gazers, a complex and guarded answer seems wise. Let us beware how we nationalize the sectional hero or sectionalize the national hero. If we are to have any national heroes at all, they are best let alone in the entirely secular sphere, where, when admired, they will secure a Platonic admiration suitable to the highly abstract device by which the nation was originally put together. And the sacred sphere, where passionate devotion has a right to reign, not too closely queried by the cold instruments of pure history, is reserved for the sectional heroes in whose images we know our better, our wished-for selves. We govern best in the first sphere; but we best build shrines in the second.

Questions.

1. What advantages does Davidson have in tying up his statement with Hendrick's book? Is he fair to Hendrick? Compare his remarks on history as interpretation with the "Introduction to Biography and History" in this text.
2. What kind of heroes does Davidson think it is possible for America to have?
3. What does Davidson mean by "myth"? What is the "truth" or "myth" in his usage?

CULTURE VERSUS COLONIALISM IN AMERICA

HERBERT AGAR

HAVING been told many times that the future must be a strife between communism and fascism, a number of Americans are beginning to believe it. But their hearts are not given to either side; so the belief leads to pessimism, to the conviction that America is sold out and that there is nothing left to do but complain cleverly.

Such an attitude has the merit of completeness. It satisfies the part of the human mind that cries for an answer at any cost, even at the cost of suicide. But there is no excuse, as yet, for Americans to seek this shoddy comfort. We have a harder task and a more exciting. It is our job to save a corner of the world from the twin despotisms that encroach on Europe. If we do this we shall take a proud place in history. If we fail to do it we shall take no place at all; we shall just be a colony: a huge but awkward copy of the parent civilization.

If we are to seize our chance for greatness we must fight both the defeatism of the pessimists and the greedy optimism of those whose picture of a pretty future is a return to 1928. Our hope lies in the fact that we once had a political tradition which could give an answer in terms of freedom to this false fascist-or-communist dilemma. We have weakened that tradition shamefully, by taking its name in vain We have betrayed it item by item while assuring each other that we were merely adapting it to the modern progress. It will not be easily revived today. Yet there is our job. All over the United States men are waking to that knowledge at last.

The first step toward reviving native America is to define it. And before it can be defined it has to be isolated. The "real" America, from which a native Culture can grow, has to be distinguished from colonial America which seeks only to copy Europe. The present essay tries to make this distinction even at the risk of overstating the differences.

During six years of living in England I learned one basic fact about my own country. I learned that the best traits in American life are not the traits we have copied faithfully from Europe but the traits we have freely adapted, or else originated—the traits which are our own. I learned that in so far as America is an imitation of Europe, she is not so good as the original. This merely means that in so far as we are a colonial race we share the usual shortcomings of colonialism. "Society" life in the big cities of America is an example. "Society" has of course become ridiculous all over the Western world. The bourgeois revolution of

the nineteenth century, the rise of stock-market wealth to a power and prestige overshadowing landed wealth, doomed urban "society" to a comic-section end. But granting that it is absurd everywhere, "society" in New York or Chicago is more absurd than in London. In London, something that once had dignity and purpose has grown sick and silly; in Chicago something sick and silly has been carefully improvised. A colonial status is a poor one at best; it becomes abject in a period when the model is not worth copying.

Modern American art offers a similar example. In so far as our art is a copy of French Modernism, it is colonial and inferior. As Mr. Thomas Craven writes:

> Those who regard art as modish decoration, as inarticulate embellishment, have every reason to favor French Modernism, and every incentive to buy it. And it is more sensible to buy the original manufactures than the American imitations. Truly, they order these material things better in France. In the exhibition at the Chicago Fair, the French painters of the modern School of Paris made the American painters attached to that school look seedy and second-rate.

But there is another American art, such as that of Mr. Thomas Hart Benton, which has nothing to do with French Modernism, with Bohemia's abstract aloofness from Europe's passion and despair. This other art deals with American life; for side by side with our colonialism there is an America which makes an original contribution to the culture of Christendom.

The Colonial mind at its silliest is shown in our veneration for French cooking. Even in the South, where our native cooking will bear comparison with the cooking of any land, it is almost impossible in a first-class hotel to get anything but base imitations of the French. In a city of Tennessee, a hotel has carried this tendency one step further than is usual: over the door of its grillroom is a large sign reading *Le Grillé*. But even in this somberly named room, with its suggestion of a roasted heretic, the French cooking is vile and the American cooking does not exist. Presumably, the hotel managers know their business. Presumably, the traveling American public wants Parisian dishes even if they are always limp and tasteless, rather than American dishes to which the local cooks could do justice. But if this is true, the traveling public is colonial minded.

II

The town of Sheridan,* in the Middle West, illustrates the two Americas, and also the half-conscious fight taking place between them—a fight that will determine our future.

Sheridan is a suburb of one of our giant cities. Its population increased from thirty-seven thousand in 1920 to sixty-three thousand in 1930. But Sheridan is not yet "suburban." Having a strong local pride it has thus far kept its own identity. It has not become merely another dormitory to the giant city. It still has the character of a Middle Western small town. But it will not have this character for long, if recent tendencies continue unchecked into the future. For Sheridan is living on its spiritual capital. It is using the virtues that are left over from the past rather than tending the soil from which these virtues grew. Native America will not win its fight unless it grows more conscious of the danger, more vigilant in defense.

The most striking feature of life in Sheridan is that a feeling of equality is still almost universal, at least among the whites. It is an unforced equality, which is so widely accepted that it does not need to call attention to itself. A delivery-boy will meet the wife of a college professor on the street, and will wave his hand at her and call out, "Hello there, Mrs. Holt, you're looking just fine today." The clerk at the grocery store will say, "Good morning, Mrs. Holt. Why, you've washed your hair." And the ice-man will find Mrs. Holt digging in her garden, and will stop to tell her, "Don't plant your tulips there—it's too shady. Plant them over by that wall, where they'll have a chance to grow."

Social democracy of this sort is of course widespread in rural America. But there are few towns, and fewer suburbs to great cities, where it still is dominant. And in the big cities themselves it is giving way more and more to a nasty caricature of equality: a defensive smartness that has none of the virtues of equality and none of the virtues of a class-system.

Relations between people of different incomes, backgrounds, and education can be made smooth either by the institution of equality or by the institution of social classes. Either will work agreeably; either will promote human dignity. The one thing that will not work agreeably is a mixture of the two, which often occurs in American big cities. When you get into a New York taxicab wearing a top hat your driver may be a friendly soul who assumes that in spite of your clothes you are human. In that case he will give you a trial, and at the next red light will start on murder, politics, or the strange habits of the taxi-riding public. On the other hand, your driver is quite likely to be a man who not only believes in classes but who believes, reasonably enough, that his own class is unenviable.

*This is a real town, which I am calling by a made-up name because I am using the town for what is typical in it, not for what is individual

The sight of your top hat will not soothe him. He will make it clear that he thinks you neither useful nor pretty. For with the exception of the small group of trained domestic servants, the American who is class conscious has become so in order to vent a grievance, commonly a just grievance, against society. He therefore gets no comfort from the American system of equality, and no comfort from the foreign system of classes.

The Englishman, on the other hand, who believes he has a "place," who can define that "place" exactly, and who respects it, does not feel hampered by the class-system; he feels protected. He has been given a form, or fiction, with the help of which he can deal comfortably with people who are very different from himself. Go into a "pub" in an English village and the crowd in the bar-parlor will fall silent. You may think they are silent out of respect for your exalted position. That was what a friend of mine thought (he is professor of history at an American university), and he was indignant at such servility. He should have saved his anger. The English countryman is unimpressed by shiny shoes or city clothes. The silence is curiosity. And so far from finding the stranger an object of awe, the company is judging him. First they want to classify him; then they want to know whether they like him. If they do, and he has enough information to join in their talk, he will find how class distinctions can smoothe out social intercourse. And if they don't like him he will find what a clear and splendid difference there is between being granted "superior" social position and being looked up to, or even tolerated.

The English system is just as good a way of securing ease and stability in social relations as is the American system. Each system is a fundamental social institution, affecting the whole life of the community. Each system is a factor in the culture of the country where it has been established. Each system, while working healthily, insures against class consciousness in the Marxian sense. But neither system, today, is working healthily. The American system, like the English, is living on momentum from the past, and may die with the present generation unless the conditions that bred the system are kept alive.

It is heartening to find Sheridan preserving its social democracy on the doorstep of a giant city where "equality" has no meaning at all, where a landless, toolless Marxian proletariat faces a Marxian bourgeoisie. There are several reasons why Sheridan has been able to do this. In the first place, it has kept a high standard in its public schools. Practically all the children of the town, therefore, are sent to these schools, so that the boy who grows up to be an iceman and the girl who grows up to be the wife of a college professor may have sat side by side in class. This is often said to be customary in America; but it has long been quite uncustomary among people who, like many citizens of Sheridan, could afford to send their children to private school.

In the second place, there is no class of very rich people in Sheridan, and hardly any very poor. Though there is a wide range of income, there is no fantastic gulf of the sort that makes "equality" a joke. In the third place, the sense of civic pride among the citizens has been so strong that the town provides a number of amenities for all—not only cultural amenities, but abundant tennis courts, swimming beaches, and the like. These are well kept, with the result that the rich feel no need of having their own tennis courts, their own bath-houses and strips of beach. And not being over-rich they feel no need of advertising their pride. So they all use the communal facilities. In the fourth place there is a university in Sheridan, and the university has a large group of students from Middle Western farms where social democracy is as natural as breathing.

This equality which still lingers in Sheridan, making the half-hour drive from the huge neighboring city seem a bridge between two worlds, is a vital part of American culture. But what of the city, the antithesis to Sheridan? If the giant city grows and flourishes, Sheridan will die. And the city, with its skyscrapers, millionaires, gangsters, and polyglot proletariat—is not the city typical of America, too? Yes; but it is not typical of American culture. It is my thesis that the city stands for the other America big, loud, and un-self-confident as a new boy at school, but not half so native as Sheridan, not half so well rooted, and in the end not half so strong.

Since Sheridan survived 1929, it may never be engulfed. It is still threatened, but its old character is not yet gone. Perhaps Sheridan will turn back and save the institutions which gave it that character, instead of accepting its metropolitan doom. If it does, the moment when the tide turns, the moment when the city stops encroaching on its tiny neighbor, will be an important moment in the story of American culture, and an important moment in world history. In order to show how I can hope for such an event, I must explain what I mean by the phrase, "American culture." In common speech the phrase has little meaning, or else a meaning that is clear but trivial.

III

In the advertising columns of the *American Magazine* for November, 1934, there is a sample of the popular use of the word *culture*. "At Palm Beach and

Nassau, California and Cannes," reads the caption under a picture, "every year they flock by scores—those smart cultured women with enough money to indulge the slightest whim. And the number of them who use Listerine Tooth Paste is amazing."

And in the *Saturday Evening Post* for December 1, 1934, in an article called "An Industrial Design for Living," the following sentences occur: "Our nation has been on the receiving end of a cultural movement the like of which would be hard to imagine. All the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies, have been indoctrinating people with the idea of beauty in person, in clothing and in background, until they have developed an appetite for such things beyond ordinary comprehension."

Here we have two of the commonest uses of the word: culture as female wealth and smartness, and culture as a consumer's demand for beauty, a demand that has been whipped up by "all the colleges, all the magazines, the newspapers and the movies." The first use of the word is silly enough to be harmless. People are in no danger of believing that a cultured nation is a nation composed chiefly of beautiful bare young women "with enough money to indulge the slightest whim." But the second use is evil, for it leads to misunderstanding. It is a form of the heresy that culture is a thing which can be stored in libraries and museums. Culture, in this sense, is not a way of life but something you learn at school, like plane geometry, or something you catch, like measles. If you have learned it or caught it, if you have "been on the receiving end of a cultural movement," then you will know about beauty and will want some of it. And if you want beauty you will go to the shops where it is for sale and buy as much as you can afford, or as much as you have room for at home.

This is the industrial-commercial view of culture, as is made clear in the *Saturday Evening Post* article, which continues as follows: "The old-time pioneers who pushed beyond the Alleghanies felt that they had a continent to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit. But we who came after them, or rather, out of them, have lived into a time when the pioneering has come into something richer than a green continent. It is a fertile region that lies somewhere between the human intelligence and the human soul. Developing it will provide plenty of work for all the machines that can be contrived and all the labor that exists."

The last sentence is perfect. The "pioneers" are done with exploring North America, and they find themselves with quite a lot of redundant machinery on their hands. So they decide to "develop" the "fertile region that lies somewhere between the human intelligence and the human soul." By "developing" it they mean making it "beauty-conscious"; they mean teaching it to want goods and gadgets that have "eye-appeal." If you are in the market for goods with "eye-appeal," you have culture. Your "fertile region" has been developed. Of course, as the inventors turn out more and more machines, we shall have to get more and more cultured. In time, even our tooth paste and our telephones will have "eye-appeal." Everything we buy will be beautiful, and we'll buy an astonishing lot (for yesterday's eye-appeal can always be made into today's eye-sore). In this way America should become the most cultured nation in the world's history.

This industrial-commercial view of culture, which sees it as the next field for industry "to explore, and, if your mind runs that way, to exploit," flourished during the years when Big Business was glorified. During the 1920's there were people who thought that as soon as Mr. Hoover finished solving the problem of poverty, Americans would apply sound business principles to the Higher Life and would shortly be delivering large packages of beauty and truth to every taxpayer. Today such people, though less hopeful about Mr. Hoover, still think that culture can be "laid on" like gas or water. They believe that if only a group of technocrats, or bureaucrats, or commissars, would organize things so that the whole working population would have mechanical jobs for four hours a day and freedom for twenty, the national demand for Higher Life would be too surprising for words. They may be right, for what they mean by higher life is reading "good books," going to concerts and picture galleries, and listening to lectures. None of these pastimes has any necessary connection with culture. The American public, for example, might spend its time reading Greek and Roman literature, looking at Italian and Dutch paintings, hearing German and Russian music, and attending lectures by visiting playwrights from Vienna and Budapest. The result would probably be a nation of prigs. I see no reason to think it would be a nation with culture. "If I read as many books as that man," said Hobbes, "I'd be as big a fool as he." "Beware of the man who would rather read than write," warns Bernard Shaw. Beware of the nation whose culture means admiring the creativeness of other people.

The Pittsburg *Sun-Telegraph* for February 25, 1935, ran the following editorial:

> Andrew W. Mellon, former Secretary of the Treasury, spent more than $4,000,000 to buy six famous paintings, five of them from Soviet Russia. He planned to build a great art museum in

> Washington to house his famous collection of pictures, worth about $19,000,000.
>
> One by one he bought at huge prices great works of art from European collections in order to realize his dream of making Washington the art capital of the world.
>
> Mr. Mellon is proof of the utter falsity of the conception, once so widespread abroad, of American millionaires as ruthless money-grubbing materialists.
>
> In no other nation on earth, at no other time in history, have great individual fortunes so generously served the permanent scientific and artistic interests of mankind as here.

This is the perfect expression of false, colonial, imitative culture. The thought that Washington could become "the art capital of the world" by becoming the storehouse for a lot of Italian and Flemish and Byzantine paintings is a thought that does no honor to the human mind. Just as a city is a place where people live, not a place where they are buried, so an art capital is a place where art is produced, not a place where it is put away.

If the industrial-commercial concept of culture is dismissed to its proper home in the advertising columns, how can the word be redefined so that it can throw light on American life? As a prelude to trying such a redefinition, American life must be placed in a scheme of world history.

IV

Until quite recently, the prevailing theory of history was the one devised to fit the nineteenth century theory of progress. It showed man as advancing, in the course of a few thousand years, from a shocking and brutal-looking ancestor with long hair and a club to something quite commendable, like Mr. H. G. Wells. The advance was usually shown in two parts: first the advance from cave-man to classical civilization; then, after a brief relapse during the Dark Ages, a further advance to the mechanical triumphs of the modern world. The picture is a perfect example of false conclusions drawn from facts which are true but inadequate.

It is true that man was once a primitive nomad, possessing none of the arts of civilization. It is true that man, in certain parts of the world, has now become something which may fairly be symbolized by Mr. Wells. It is true that from our point of view Mr. Wells is more engaging than the cave-man, which means that there has been progress. But what is quite untrue is the assumption underlying so much progressive thought, that this advance has been along one fairly constant line, that millennium by millennium the progress has continued, and that it can be described in some such terms as a steadily increasing power to control the physical environment, or a steadily increasing store of real and final knowledge, or a steadily increasing friendliness toward larger and larger groups of people—a friendliness that began with the family unit and is destined to end by embracing the world state. This outmoded nineteenth century view of progress was summarized by Woodrow Wilson when he told an audience that "all through the centuries there has been this slow painful struggle forward, forward, up, up, a little at a time, along the entire incline, the interminable way."

It is a comforting view, for it suggests that if man refrains from committing suicide he will grow better and better until the time comes when he will have every reason for self-satisfaction. Such a theory of history transplants the Garden of Eden from the past, where it provoked nostalgia, into the future, where it provokes a lively hope. Heaven is transplanted out of space, where it was unattainable except by the grace of God, into time, where it becomes merely a question of patience, like waiting for the next train. But for all its soothing qualities the theory is now dying. It has been mortally hurt by the work done during the last thirty years in archaeology, anthropology, comparative religion and literature. Its place is being taken by a more complicated and less flattering view, which has at least the merit that it can be reconciled to the known facts.

The old division of history into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern is being scrapped. It was a division which cut straight across the facts, separating events that belonged together and joining others that had nothing in common. Instead of one long gratifying advance, with ourselves as the latest and most improved model of humanity, what history really shows is a series of high Cultures passing through similar stages of growth and decay. In China, in Mexico, in India, in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and now at last in our own West, we can trace this pattern. Out of a group of farming settlements a new culture is born, no one knows why. The challenge of life is suddenly met by a new affirmation. A new statement is made of man's old faith that life has a meaning and that the meaning is good. In our case, in the years between 500 and 1000 A.D. this birth took place in Western Europe. The Christian affirmation defined itself; it permeated the spirit of Western man; it began to find expression in social institutions which were to form the thought and manners of a continent.

The new culture, of course, may be much influenced by the remains of a previous civilization

which occupied the same, or neighboring, lands—just as the emerging Western culture was influenced by the Classical. But the basic affirmation of the new culture, though it may be built on many foreign contributions, will be its own, will be characteristic. The Christianity of the West clearly rests on Hebrew, Classical, and Arabian foundations. Yet the religion of Western man is not just a version of a religion from Asia Minor, or from any other part of the dying Roman world. It is a new thing, born with Western culture and unlikely to survive it.

No historian can say why this new thing came to birth during those centuries, and in just that part of the world. But once the thing is born (and assuming that it is given a chance to grow, that it is not wiped out by force), the historian can predict certain stages through which it is likely to pass. He can predict, in the first place, that the life-drama of the new Culture will take the form of a conflict between the deep instinctive faith which is the essence of the Culture and an abstractly rationalizing self-destructive element which is a feature of man's mind. He can predict that religion (the expression of this deep faith) will dominate in the early period of the Culture, that art and abstract thought will for a time be religion's servant. (For Western man, this is the period from the birth of his Culture to about the end of the thirteenth century.)

The historian can predict that a little later there will be a second stage, where a more even balance is attained. The inquiring, self-probing mind becomes steadily more confident. Art and thought are secularized, though they are still for the most part in harmony with religion. They have not yet begun their final task of tearing up their own roots. (This is the period corresponding, roughly, to the years 1300–1700 in Western Europe.)

The historian could also predict the character of the third period—which has proved the last great period of every previous Culture. In this period the perilous balance between faith and critical thought slowly breaks down. The questioning, nihilistic mind, which in the beginning was religion's servant, and in the second period its ally, becomes its master. The instinctive faith weakens; the critical and analytical power is left undirected. In its new freedom it knows a burst of energy. The ardor of the human spirit, which was once shared between heaven and earth, is now lavished solely on practical ends. The results are impressive. In every culture this is the time of imperial expansion, of great world cities, of mechanical triumphs: the giant buildings of Luxor, the Great Wall of China, the straight proud Roman roads across the body of Europe, the straight proud steel belittling the American sky. This is the time when man learns to do so many striking things that his brain is warped with his own grandeur and he makes the mistake of thinking he understands the forces he is using. This is the period reached by Western man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The historian could go still further. On the basis of the same analogy with other cultures he could predict what is likely to be the mood and meaning of Western man's next stage. There is clearly no proof to these predictions; they are not a doom imposed upon us; but they are a useful warning, for hitherto none of the many cultures of which we have knowledge has escaped this final stage. Seeing what happened in the period comparable to our twentieth century in the Classical world, in the Cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China, the historian can say that instead of being on the verge of a final triumph Western man is probably on the verge of despair. For the crowning work of man's criticism, having discredited the thought and religion of the past, is to discredit the mind that criticizes. At the moment when intelligence dreams it is about to reach out and explain all things, it wakes to the annihilating theory that explanations are relative, that one is often as good—or as bad—as another. The mind which has dissolved the basic faith on which the whole culture rested, ends by dissolving itself, ends in Classical scepticism, ends in Eastern despair, ends in European nihilism and relativity. For the rootless intellect means nothing, leads nowhere, and cannot even sustain the will to struggle. At the highest point of the Civilization's physical achievement, this poisonous doubt strikes it, and it falls.

When a people have reached this stage of disillusionment, the rest of their story can be imagined. They can still do all their mechanical tricks, but the heart has gone out of such tricks except for the silly few who can enjoy themselves doing nothing but making money. The old faith in religion has faded under the attacks of the critical mind; the new faith in reason has proved a fraud under the self-slaughtering honesty of the same mind. And then appears one of the strangest but most often repeated facts of history. Man is stricken with sterility. In his giant cities he finds himself too bored or too unzestful even to breed normally. Rome was weak with depopulation long before the barbarians pulled her down. Just as the birth of every culture-cycle is marked by a new affirmation of life, the end is marked by a hospitality to death. Man lies down tired in the midst of his marvels. His numbers dwindle, his cities stand half empty, and once again the beasts

of the wilderness prowl among ruined buildings.

Spengler reminds us that "Samarra was abandoned by the tenth century; Pataliputra, Asoka's capital, was an immense and completely uninhabited waste of houses when the Chinese traveller, Hsinan-tang, visited it about A.D. 635." And he cites a whole group of late Classical writers—Polybius, Strabo, Pausanias, Dio Chrysostom, Avienus—who tell "of old, renowned cities in which the streets have become lines of empty crumbling shells, where the cattle browse in forum and gymnasium, and the amphitheatre is a sown field, dotted with emergent statues and herms." And Mr. Charles Francis Atkinson adds that in the days of the Roman decline, "the amphitheatres of Nîmes and Arles were filled up by mean townlets that used the outer wall as their fortifications." The turn of the population-tide in the Western world is clearly fore-shadowed today.

In succeeding ages, after such a decline has run its course, the dwindled population takes refuge in the countryside, where, if not attacked from without, it multiplies until it pushes on the limits of subsistence, until it reaches the state of the teeming agricultural East.

A civilization, therefore, may simply fall into inner desuetude, enduring for millenniums as the booty of successive conquerors, like Egypt, or China, or India. But a civilization may also die suddenly, not merely looted but murdered, as happened to Mexico at the hands of the Spaniards. Here was one of the most dramatic confrontations in history: an old civilization where doubt and relativity had clearly done their corrosive work, and a group of energetic bandits from a world that still had trust in itself.

Tenochtitlan was an imperial city, on a scale that Western man was not to create for centuries. "We were amazed," wrote Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who fought with Cortez, "and said that it was like the enchantment they tell of in the legend of Amadis, on account of the great towers and *cues* and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream. . . I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about." But the simple Spaniard was wrong. Such things had been seen and heard of many times before: in Imperial Rome, in Baghdad and Tell-el-Amarna, in the world-cities of the last years of every civilization. They were to be seen in the Western world after another four hundred years, by which time London and Paris and New York had taken on shapes that would have startled Cortez's soldiers quite as much as did Tenochtitlan—and by which time, in certain deep and decisive matters, the point of view of London and Paris and New York was closer to that of the Aztec city than to anything that Cortez's men could have understood.

Montezuma, for example, said to Cortez, "Throughout all time we have worshipped our own gods, and thought they were good, as no doubt yours are." Diaz tells us the Spaniards were amazed at such a remark; but a New York literary critic, in 1935, quotes Montezuma with approval, just after calling Spanish Catholicism "a provincial religion." And the critic represents his age faithfully. It is right that he should approve of Montezuma's relativism: world-city is talking to world-city, and they speak the same language. Montezuma was a "civilized" man. He knew that all truths are relative, that all the high eternal Gods have ruled over comparatively small areas in space and time. He knew, therefore, that it would be banal to fight over religion. But the fierce and greedy Spaniards knew nothing of the sort. They knew that their religion was *true*—not true for them or true for the sixteenth century, but true for all men forever. So they fell on the tired cosmopolitans of that ageing city, and a handful of men abolished one of the world's marvels.

The New York literary man cannot approve of such self-confidence. He finds it definitely provincial.

> Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence
> Qui regarde passer les grands Barbares blancs,
> En composant des acrostiches indolents
> D'un style d'or où la langueur du soleil danse.

Doubtless there were many Aztec nobles who felt just that way.

> Là-bas on dit qu'il est de longs combats sanglants.

But why should a "civilized" man stir himself to a lot of vulgar fighting?

V

This cyclical view of history need not breed pessimism. Spengler, the great popularizer of the view, has used it to vent a pathological despair. As if driven to expiate some enormous guilt he offers the whole Western world as sacrifice to Fate, and he knows no words too impolite for the victim who demurs. With a scream of italics and exclamation marks, Spengler falls upon him: This is what *has* to be! History cannot be interfered with! Bare your throats and *don't argue!*

I should think, however, that a sincere Christian would be bound to argue, would be bound to insist that a pattern may have repeated itself eight or ten times and still be only a pattern, not a doom. For

instance, it is reasonable to predict a sorry end for a man who has become a steady, sodden drunkard; but it would be stupid to say the man was doomed to such an end. He might have a religious conversion and become a saint. The only safe prediction we can make is that if nothing unusual happens the man will die a sot. Similarly, the only safe prediction about our cosmopolitan civilization is that if nothing unusual happens it will not turn out to be the start of a splendid new era, but the start of another dreary decline. In Europe, the unusual happening might be a revival of Christianity; in America it might be a strengthening of our native, as opposed to our colonial tradition.

While taking this hopeful view it would be wrong to ignore the warnings implicit in the new theory of history. It is right to reject determinism; it is right to insist that if we have the moral energy we can still save our Christian civilization from the fate which struck all the great civilizations that have gone down to the grave; but it is wrong to let ourselves be soothed by the silly dream that good must somehow triumph in the end since man has already progressed all the way from the mud to Mr. Henry Ford. Man has certainly progressed; but the point of the story told by modern archaeology and history is that man has also declined, and with sinister regularity. He has not pushed steadily on, with a few temporary setbacks. On the contrary, he has risen again and again to what has seemed the top of his powers, and fallen again and again to a level not far above where he began. There are signs today that he may be preparing to fall once more, and though my own view of America's future is a hopeful one, it would be stupid not to take these signs into account, not to present my hope against the background of a real danger.

The great dividing line in the history of a high culture (such as the Classical, the Egyptian, or that of Western man) is the line between the second and third periods. On the one side of that line there is still a fruitful tension between instinct and intellect; on the other side the balance has been destroyed and the nihilistic mind has silenced the faith on which the whole culture rested. Spengler uses the word, Culture, for the period before that fatal division, and the word, Civilization, for the period that follows. The use of the words in this sense is arbitrary; but the distinction he makes is useful for an understanding of America today.

In these terms, Sheridan stands for American Culture, the giant city for Civilization. According to the pessimists, who have seized on the cyclical theory of history to justify their best fears, the giant city must win. And it is true that in the past, once the period of civilization has been reached, the clock has never turned back. The giant world-city, with its cosmopolitanism, its scepticism, its falling birth-rate, its lack of morals, its imitative and then its decadent art—in the past, each time this recurring prodigy has appeared, the stage has been set for an age of Caesars, of wars and dictatorships and aimless crowds kept quiet by doles, or by bread and circuses. In every characteristic detail, we seem to be giving our own Western version of the dejecting picture. Where our religious life, for example, has not been killed by scepticism, it shows signs of decaying into an eclectic superstition. Like the Romans who brought Isis and Ariman to the Tiber, many Westerners today flirt with Buddhism, or follow Hindu fakirs, or make strange mixtures of their own, adding a dash of neo-Platonism to a smattering of Lao-Tse.

There are good reasons for pessimism. And I agree with the most despairing that if Civilization (the point of view of the world-city) became dominant in America, if the judgments, the ambitions, the interests, the conditions and habits of life, represented by Chicago and New York became the standard of the country, we would be old without ever having been young. We would be as old as Europe, but ours would be a graceless old age. No maturity, no serene memories, no wisdom—only decrepitude and loss of purpose. We should not be a rich culture drawing to an end with dignity; we should be just another colonial nation going down hill with (or perhaps before) the parent stock, without ever having been anything on our own. We should deserve the jibe flung at us by Mr. Belloc in a magnificent passage where he gives the European Christian's answer to the pessimism that assails Europe:

> Our Europe cannot perish. Her religion—which is also mine—has in it those victorious energies of defence which neither merchants nor philosophers can understand, and which are yet the prime condition of establishment. Europe, though she must always repel attacks from within and from without, is always secure; the soul of her is a certain spirit, at once reasonable and chivalric. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. . .
>
> Her component peoples have merged and remerged. Her particular famous cities have fallen down. Her soldiers have believed the world to have lost all, because a battle turned against them, Hittin or Leipzig. Her best has at times grown poor and her worst rich. Her colonies have seemed dangerous for a moment from the

> insolence of their power, and then again (for a moment) from the contamination of their decline. . . She will certainly remain.

It is a proud boast. And even the attack on America is not unworthy. An American who has lived long abroad knows too well why foreigners take this view. They hear nothing about us except news from our world-cities, plays and books about our world-cities (or else plays and books and news about our countryside from the point of view of our world-cities). They know America as a Civilization; America as an attempt at a Culture they do not know at all. And how should they? After six years in London I began to wonder, myself, whether there was such an America, or whether I had made it up and called it memory.

Why should Europe respect us as a big-city Civilization? As a Civilization we are derivative and second-hand; we have the instability of people who are not themselves. As a Civilization we are somebody else's Culture grown old. But we, the people, are not old. And the combination, though surprising, does not breed confidence. In art, in talk, in lack of morals, in cosmopolitan nihilism, New York is old. As old as Vienna, yet as vital as a gold-rush camp. The vitality would be attractive if it were lavished on something young; it is bizarre when it is lavished on decay.

There is no capital in Europe where cynicism and defeatism are more constant than in New York. But in Europe they are negative qualities, as fits their nature. In Europe they are a mood of tired disdain. In New York they are boyish and positive as battle-cries. In New York men announce their ironies with a kind of hopeful ardor. The cartoonist, James Thurber, is an illustration. In Europe men are puzzled by Mr. Thurber. Not because they are strangers to his withering view of humanity. Thurber's men and women—small, misshapen, and malignant; sub-human because they have no trace of purpose, no memory of hope; sub-bestial because they have none of the dignity of beasts—Europe is accustomed to this view of human nature. From the early Huysmans to Anatole France to Aldous Huxley, half the cleverest minds have been perfecting it for seventy years. But what perplexes Europe is to find this scornful picture combined with such gaiety. Through all these deadly libels there runs a nursery touch. Enormous rabbits, fantastic misplaced seals, huge comforting dogs—if the men and women could be expunged, these drawings would be decorations for a child's bedroom. The mixture, to someone born in Mr. Thurber's world, is telling. But to many Europeans the mixture is merely distressful. They have their own picture of what age and disillusion should resemble. They do not like to know there can be such things as ancient, contemptuous children.

The mixture of moods that is found in a Thurber drawing is characteristic of New York. These boisterous pessimists, these hearty drunkards, these perverts who declare their barrenness with a happy grin—they make New York an exciting place, a puzzling place. I can see why Europeans should enjoy it, why they should marvel at it. But I cannot see why they should think well of it. I cannot blame them for predicting, like Mr. Belloc, a swift decline.

In Europe, if the soul is growing old, if hope and faith are dying, there is something to fall back on: the eternal tradition of the land, a religion that still makes the lives of millions, a memory of many disasters weathered. But to be old unnaturally, without these memories, without this background, is to be unstable. And Europe, knowing only those spots in America that suffer from abnormal, derivative old age, rightly judges us unstable. Civilization, in America, is derivative. It is colonial, and hence rootless. New York is colonial and rootless. But our provinces are not colonial. American Culture, so far as there has been one, is not colonial. Sheridan is a new thing in the world, a product of American soil. But in all essentials, Chicago and New York are as old as Luxor—and just about as important to the future.

These generalizations on Culture and the modern world cannot be proved. They are not offered as revelations. They are offered to suggest the following thoughts about our own Culture: in America we have the beginning of a Culture. It is derived from Europe, of course, and has the same ancestors as the Culture of Europe; but it has been here long enough to take on a native character. If it were let alone we might hope for an American contribution to history. It has not been left alone. It has been overlaid, and hampered increasingly, by an alien imitative old age, a colonial-minded old age. The story of America today is the story of the struggle between these two forces. And there are reasons for hoping that the native America may win.

If these generalizations are true, then it is a primary duty for Americans today to be nationally self-conscious, to seek an answer to the question, What is America? If we cannot answer that, we cannot hope to make the real America come true. And if we do nothing, if we drift with the tide of modern history, our country might as well never have been founded. For the tide of modern history, at least in Europe, is not a pretty tide.

Questions:

1. What is the distinction which Agar makes between "culture" and "colonialism"? How sound do you think this distinction is? How does Agar illustrate this distinction?
2. Why does Agar think that America has a chance to escape both communism and fascism?
3. What is Agar's attitude toward New York, as an actual place? As a symbol?
4. What is Agar's attitude toward religion?

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

CHARLES A. BEARD

ALTHOUGH hailed in some circles of conceit as a glorious symbol of more speed and bigger machines, and in others as a covering for cruel materialism, the concept of progress is one of the most profound and germinal ideas at work in the modern age. It is at the same time an interpretation of the long history of mankind and a philosophy of action in this world of bewildering choices. It gives a clue of meaning to the rise of civilization out of the crudities of primitive barbarism and offers a guide to the immense impending future. Briefly defined, it implies that mankind, by making use of science and invention, can progressively emancipate itself from plagues, famines, and social disasters, and subjugate the materials and forces of the earth to the purposes of the good life—here and now. In essence the idea of progress belongs to our own times, for it was unknown to the ancients and to the thinkers of the Middle Ages. It is associated, therefore, with every phase of the vast intellectual, economic, and rational movement which has transformed the classical and medieval heritage into what is called, for the sake of convenience, Western civilization.

Hence it is closely affiliated with democracy, natural science, technology, and social amelioration, and shares with them the strength of universality. It is more than a theory. It has achievements to its credit on every hand—diseases stamped out, pain silenced or assuaged, the span of life lengthened, famine made obsolete, comforts and conveniences established, sanitation supplied to multitudes, knowledge made popular through amazing instrumentalities of transmission and reproduction. And it suggests a faith of power, faith that the world, as Emerson said, "is all gates, all opportunities, strings of tension to be struck." Rejecting resignation as a philosophy of life, it confronts obstacles with assurance. Where the pessimist sees the worst, it proposes a search for the best and advances toward perfection by increments. The suffering, ignorance, and folly which drive the timid to the Nirvana of doubt and oblivion are, under the light of progress, calls to action, to research, to planning, and to conquest. Touched by the genius of universal emancipation, the idea cuts across the barriers of caste, class, race, and nationality, breaks through rigid boundaries, and regards the substances and forces of nature as potential instruments of humane purposes. Everywhere it makes its way, dissolving the feudal institutions of Europe, disturbing the slumbers of the Orient, arousing lethargic Russia, and finding a naked avowal in the United States of America: the earth may be subdued to the security, welfare, and delight of them that dwell therein.

Like religion, which may be used as a cloak for pious frauds, and patriotism, which may garb the profits of munition-makers, the idea of progress may be and indeed is employed to cloud issues, evade evident responsibilities, and justify cruelties. In the hands of the demagogue or noisy promoter it may be manipulated to avoid questions and obscure doubts. And yet the idea survives its friends as well as its enemies. Being a synthesis of all explorations, scientific, economic, and social, of all energies devoted to subduing matter and force to ordered human ends, it offers a philosophy of individual and collective action. Tendering no scheme of finality, it escapes the illusion of finality—the doom of all little systems. With natural science and the prodigious art of technology at its command, with indubitable achievements already on the credit side, it is no mere dream, but has demonstrated that symmetry and efficiency can be carried into modern life. If this is true only in part and in outline, the idea of progress, in any event, deserves exploration to its uttermost boundaries and illustration in particulars.

At the outset, the explorer confronts four fundamental questions which have perplexed thinkers since civilization began on this planet: Do nations, like human beings, pass through youth, middle life, and old age to death? Or do they revolve endlessly, as some ancient writers thought, in a cycle—despotism, kingship, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and mob-rule—or some such succession of forms? Or is it possible for a nation to stand still through countless ages, preserving what it believes to be an ideal

arrangement of things? Or is there discernible, under the surface ebb and flow through the centuries, some stream of tendency, some organizing principle indicating the course of nations, and giving to their peoples some guiding rule by which to shape their activities and mold their lives and their institutions?

These questions run deeply into our religious beliefs, our philosophies, our fundamental attitudes toward life and conduct. Individuals may avoid them if they will, may move from one thing to another under immediate impulses or "the instant need of things," and make one little decision after another, trusting to luck or fate or the immortal gods as far as all larger patterns and tendencies are concerned. But no great statecraft, art, letters, or program of economy can be founded on hand-to-mouth concepts of living and working. Within the universal scheme, small projects may be constructed and executed, no doubt, sometimes with outward appearances of success, but even they are subject to laws and forces which constrain them on all sides, are themselves parts of a larger whole. No one can think long and hard about the issues of private life or public affairs without confronting and attempting to answer these basic questions respecting the nature and course of the whole. And judging by the methods of the leaders of thought and action, by the achievements that endure through time, it is only in coming as nearly as possible to the central scheme of things that the worthiest and most lasting work can be accomplished. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that the wider the horizon, the more catholic the thought, the surer will be the insight of those who attempt great enterprises. How could it be otherwise?

Now among the fundamental notions competing for the allegiance of mankind in our age, as indicated in the beginning, none is more widely discussed, warmly defended, and hotly attacked than the idea of progress. In substance, it is a theory that the lot of mankind on this earth can be continually improved by the attainment of exact knowledge and the subjugation of the material world to the requirements of human welfare. Associated with it are many subsidiary concepts. Its controlling interest is in this earth, in our own time, not in a remote heaven to be attained after death. It assumes an indefinite future and plans for greater security, health, comfort, and beauty in the coming years. While a philosophy of history, it is also a gospel of futurism. It is founded on the belief that civilization is on the threshold of time and it is characterized by the bouyancy of youth, not the skepticism and morbidity of old age. If it lays emphasis on the material benefits of civilization, it makes no assumptions that are more materialistic than those of less earthly philosophies. It does not admit that nations move from youth to death or through endless cycles, but contends that mankind is advancing, in spite of calamities, errors, and disasters, and on the whole in a desirable direction. If the truth of this allegation be questioned, its defender may reply, as did the mathematician, Poincaré, when the validity of Euclid was challenged: whether true or not, it is convenient and is at all events one of the supreme products of intellectual history, the highest of all world courts.

Thus broadly conceived, the idea of progress runs counter, of course, to the doctrine of fatalism which has possessed large sections of humanity for long ages, especially in the Orient. The fatalist sees nations decimated by plagues, famines, floods, blights, diseases, and wars, and insists that "nothing can be done about it," that the more changes we have the more we have of the same thing. Those who make a philosophy of such fatalism, leave the world to its folly and withdraw within themselves to contemplate. Seeing many horrors wrought by physical nature and human nature, they conclude that "nothing really matters"; resignation, not effort and thought, is the best, if not the only, recourse. That such an attitude is fitting for a civilization in which science and invention have created no instrumentalities for eliminating or reducing calamitous forces must be conceded, but what justification can be made for accepting undoubted evils that can be eliminated by understanding and labor? By what criterion of values is it better to endure evils than to remove them? Let the philosophy of fatalism answer that question.

In a similar way the idea of progress is opposed to certain views of life which may fairly be said to have been dominant in Europe in the Middle Ages. With exceptions, of course, medieval thinkers looked upon this world as a mere vestibule to heaven. Man, ran the current theory, is a poor and miserable sinner, born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; faith and conduct are to be shaped with reference to eternal bliss hereafter rather than to a pleasant and comfortable living on this mundane sphere. The ideal was not to refashion the world after some concept of earthly needs, but to accept most of it, as it came, and pass on to joys beyond. Riches, and the delightful life which they provided, were not unknown, to be sure, but were objects of suspicion. "There is not to be found in the writers of the early Middle Ages," declares a competent scholar, "that is to say, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, a trace of any attention to what we at the present day would designate economic questions. . . . The writings of this

period, therefore, betray no sign of any interest in economic affairs." An exhaustive examination of the works of the outstanding thinkers of the time reveals not "a single passage to suggest that any of these authors suspected that the pursuit of riches, which they despised, occupied a sufficiently large place in national as well as individual life, to offer the philosopher a subject fruitful in reflections and results." Such was the Christian heritage near the close of the thirteenth century.

Although later in the Middle Ages religious philosophers were compelled to give attention to the economy of life and did work out systems of thought respecting it, they related their schemes to theology—to conduct acceptable in the sight of God, to sin, hell, salvation, and heaven. And their systems of thought were based upon the idea of a fixed order of society in which the established relations of classes were to be maintained and sanctioned by morality. Kings, bishops, priests, landlords, serfs, peasants, and artisans had their rights and duties—nothing fundamental was to be changed by the daring experimentation of the mind. The best thought of the time was concentrated on salvation in the hereafter rather than on the progressive reordering of earthly affairs. The great end of life—the purpose of history—was to secure the external welfare of that portion of humanity which could pass the gates of heaven. As for this world, well, it would be utterly destroyed sometime or at best was to be viewed as a place of temporary sojourn. While the Lord's Prayer mentioned a possible Kingdom of Heaven here below, medieval thinkers certainly did not concentrate on that aspect of their theology.

To the fatalism of the Orient and the otherworldliness of the Christian Middle Ages must be added a second idea opposed to the concept of progress—that is, utopianism. This idea takes two forms. In the minds of some thinkers it is related to the past: there has been a golden age, in the "good old days of the fathers" or in some remote period of the early evolution of mankind. In seeking to escape the evils of the present, we must return to the perfection of long ago when people lived in peace, happiness, innocence, and plenty. But, in other minds, utopianism is related to the future: by doing this or that we can establish a static order of bliss—a fixed scheme of things so nearly perfect that they will never have to be changed. A variant on these aspects of dreaming may be called the utopianism of whitewash: the present order is so nearly perfect that it is almost profane to inquire into its evils or to propose modifications, for the possibility of doing harm is always greater than the chances of doing good. Historians, with all their searching, have not been able to find the golden age in the past, and skeptics doubt the perfection of the present. Still the illusion of utopianism shadows all human thought about public and private affairs, challenging the idea of progress.

Unknown to the ancients, foreign to the theology of the Middle Ages, the idea of progress was slow in taking form and winning its way as a dominant concept of life. In reality it was a kind of gigantic intellectual outcropping—the product of the great commercial revolution ushered in by the discovery of America, the circumnavigation of the globe, and the development of natural science. As J. B. Bury points out, certain conditions were necessary to the flowering of the idea. First of all, there had to be respect for, and interest in, the common business of labor and industry—a respect which the slave-owners of ancient Athens and the landlords of the Middle Ages could not acquire. In the next place, since the idea of progress had to do with this world, it was necessary to shake off the dominance of other-worldliness and to think in secular terms; the recovery of ancient learning in the Renaissance and the commercial revolution to which reference has been made favored this shift from heaven to earth. Finally, the idea of progress could not flourish until thinkers had cast overboard their slavish adherence to ancient books; natural science, with its emphasis on experimentation, the observation of common things, and invention, was necessary to clear the way for the emancipation of the mind from the despotism of theology and the classics. By the end of the seventeenth century, when all the American colonies except one, had been fairly started on their course, the ground was prepared for the rise and growth of the idea of progress—the steady improvement of the lot of mankind in this world as a good in itself, as a value in itself, without any reference whatever to a possible life after death.

At last the idea of progress, long in germination, already dimly foreshadowed by a few thinkers, finally came out in positive form. If a single name must be associated with his origin, it may well be that of Abbé de Saint-Pierre who gave to the world in 1737 his epoch-making work entitled *Observations on the Continuous Progress of Universal Reason*. "Here," says Bury, correctly, "we have for the first time, expressed in definite terms, the vista of an immensely long progressive life in front of humanity. Civilization is only in its infancy. Bacon, like Pascal, had conceived it to be in its old age. . . . The Abbé was the first to fix his eyes on the remote destinies of the race and name immense periods of time." By shaking off its inertia, by taking thought, by devoting its talents to the enterprise, wrote the Abbé, in substance,

mankind can do more in a relatively short time to establish peace and improve its lot on earth than it has done in a thousand years under the régime of resignation, indifference, and complacency.

Once announced, the new philosophy ran swiftly through the minds of the French thinkers who were preparing the way for the Revolution that was to shake Church and State in the Old World and make room for secular supremacy. It was a dominant note in the great French *Encyclopaedia of Universal Knowledge*. It was implicit in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* published in 1776. In many ways the titanic labors of the French Revolution were guided by the idea of progress. The constitutional, economic, educational, and law-reform policies which accompanied that upheaval were secular, mundane, and directed to the improvement of the common fortunes of mankind. If, in immediate consequences, the Revolution was bourgeois in character, its achievements and ideas far outran the purposes of its directors, breaking the path for reconstruction of government and economy. If the bourgeois could be lifted into power, security, and well-being, why not the whole order of society? If the bourgeois could set up for themselves the goal of earthly advancement, why not the humblest laborers in the land? The genie was clearly out of the bottle and no human power could compress the spirit again into a class mold.

During these momentous years, while the idea of progress was taking form, spreading, branching, and working its way into the remotest divisions of European thought, the English colonies in America grew to maturity and burst upon the world stage as a united and independent power. Here the natural resources, intellectual climate, and social order were highly favorable to the growth of the new concept. Here nature had provided an enormous and diversified material endowment which could be used to establish a high level of life and sustain the continuous advancement of standards, if intelligently and efficiently used. Here the population was ready for secular enterprise. While many had migrated to America in search of religious freedom, the great majority who came voluntarily had come for mundane reasons—the improvement of their condition here and now—and even those who fled for religious reasons expected, as a rule, to find a decent living somehow. All the factors which had contributed to the germination of the idea of progress in Europe were even more prominent in America—respect for industry and labor, a preoccupation with secular enterprise, and a spirit of experimentation and invention.

In these circumstances, the leading thinkers of the New World, especially Franklin and Paine, carried the idea of progress more or less consciously into the plans they formulated for American culture. "It is impossible to imagine," wrote the former, "the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity and give them levity, for the sake of easy transportation. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce; all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in a fair way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!" Thomas Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, written in answer to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*—a plea for historic conservatism—sketched an outline of political economy that embraced universal education, the abolition of poverty, reform of the criminal law, pensions for the aged, the reduction of armaments, and international peace.

All through the nineteenth century the idea of progress continued to work as a powerful ferment in the opinions of the world. In America, the extension of the suffrage beyond the boundaries of the propertied classes, the adoption of universal education, and the growth of a leveling freedom in the agrarian West helped to widen its scope to include the whole population, to democratize it, in a word, and make it a guiding principle for a civilization. In previous times and in other circumstances, privileged classes and individuals could lift themselves to a position of comfort, security, and prosperity by law and economic advantage and thus enjoy the benefits and delights of culture; now at last in a vast natural theater, it was thought, a whole people could, through progressive development, enjoy the blessings of science, industry, and art, and become civilized. The hewers of wood and drawers of water were to rise above the level of serfdom and sit at the banquet prepared by applied science. Here civilization was conceived not as a beautiful fairyland of delight surrounded by brutalizing labor, illiteracy, and margin-of-subsistence living for the masses. The actualities of American life, it was easy to show, were far from the ideal held up to the faithful, but the concept of progress, once let loose in our democracy, continued to act as a dynamic force, transforming every aspect of American civilization.

With inescapable fatality the mass production made possible by machinery and nourished by our un-

paralleled natural resources accelerated the leveling democracy implied in the idea of progress. Gigantic industries could not flourish without an immense market. And where was that market to be found? In a small privileged class enriched by the profits of capitalism? Only one answer was possible. The few craftsmen of the Middle Ages might sell the choice products of loom, forge, kiln, and chisel to lords, ladies, bishops, princes, and kings, but masters of huge industries turning out commodities by the ton and the million could thrive in no such limited area of demand. Markets for mass production simply could not be found unless the masses themselves rose above the historic margin of subsistence and were able to buy by the ton and the million. Only when the standard of life for the multitude is constantly rising and buying capacity is expanding can widening outlets be found for the goods which pour in swelling streams from the vast industries made possible by science and machinery. If the American bourgeois were as indifferent, on moral grounds, to the lot of the masses as the French nobility of the eighteenth century to the plight of their laborious peasants, still their enterprises could not develop without a continuous enlargement of the popular market—without a steady growth in the capacity of the masses to buy and enjoy goods once confined to the classes.

Herein, no doubt, lies one of the main sources of the European criticism which is directed against the idea of progress as powerfully expressed in American civilization. Every quest for the inner nature of that criticism and for the roots of its inspiration leads immediately to an opposition of class ideals. True culture, we are told, is inevitably confined to "the superior minority," and cannot exist when boundaries are widened to include millions of nameless and unknown. This is the theme of one school of writers which had its origins in ancient Greece and survives in the latest hour, finding new spokesmen as the old are forgotten. Consciously or unconsciously, it is dominated by one secret wish or conviction: Democracy operating under the idea of progress is incompatible with "culture."

This concept and the antithesis were clearly and eloquently set forth long ago in the writings of Amiel. "In society," he remarks, "people are expected to behave as if they lived on ambrosia and concerned themselves with no interests except such as are noble. Care, need, passion, do not exist. All realism is suppressed as brutal. In a word, what is called *le grand monde* gives itself for the moment that flattering illusion that it is moving in an ethereal atmosphere and breathing the air of the gods. For this reason all vehemence, any cry of nature, all real suffering, all heedless familiarity, any genuine sign of passion, are startling and distasteful in this delicate *milieu* and at once destroy the collective work, the cloud palace, the imposing architectural creation raised by common consent. It is like the shrill cock-crow which breaks the spell of all enchantments and puts the fairies to flight. These select gatherings produce without intending it a sort of concert for the eye and ear, an improvised work of art. By the instinctive collaboration of everybody concerned, wit and taste hold festival, and the associations of reality are exchanged for the associations of imagination. So understood, society is a form of poetry; the cultivated classes deliberately recompose the idyll of the past, and the buried world of Astraea. Paradox or not, I believe that these fugitive attempts to reconstruct a dream, whose only end is beauty, represent confused reminiscences of an age of gold haunting the human heart; or rather, aspirations toward a harmony of things which everyday reality denies to us, and of which art alone gives us a glimpse." Undoubtedly this is a fair statement of the idealized case; although a student of the world's social memoirs may be inclined to believe that such a *grand monde* never existed, save perhaps in the Tokugawa era of Japan at the height of its glory.

Having drawn his perfect picture of *le grand monde* supplied by Europe, Amiel presents the contrast afforded by the United States: "For the Americans, life means devouring, incessant activity. They must win gold, predominance, power; they must crush rivals, subdue nature. They have their hearts set on the means and never for an instant think of the end. They confound being with individual being, and the expansion of self with happiness. This means that they do not live by the soul, that they ignore the immutable and eternal, bustle at the circumference of their existence, because they cannot penetrate to its center. They are restless, eager, positive, because they are superficial. To what end all this stir, noise, greed, struggle? It is all a mere being, stunned and deafened." In short, without stopping now to dispute the correctness of Amiel's contentions, Americans do not live on ambrosia, dispense with care, move in an ethereal atmosphere, breathe the air of the gods, escape from the world, and reconstruct a dream whose only end is beauty; they are incessantly engaged in subduing nature and in seeking to develop an ordered economy which will establish security, continuity in high productive output, and the widest possible distribution of the benefits flowing from efficient industry.

When once the antithesis presented by Amiel is clearly recognized and its implications understood,

the issue of civilization before us becomes perfectly evident. Whether and how long European countries will continue to maintain superior minorities concerned only with "noble" interests, with cloud palaces and associations of the imagination, is an appropriate matter for speculation. Assuming their virtues to be all that their advocates claim, it may be appropriately asked, "At what price glory?" Bent backs, knotted hands, and numbed minds must pay for parties at which such wit and taste hold festival and the idyll of the past is recovered for the delight of the participants. If, when the balance sheet is struck, the credits outweigh the debits, still it may be surmised that the knowledge released by science, the demands of industry for markets, the awakening insistence of the multitude on sharing the fruits of the earth, have made forever obsolete *le grand monde* of the lotos-eaters. Esthetes may regret it, but there is something Promethean in the vast upward thrust of the masses under the banner of progress, and those who have occasion to think, teach, or direct in the coming years will have to reckon with that invincible fact. Iron gates are closing on the dreams of privilege, and those who cherish the ideals of that order will have to look beyond this world for their lost Atlantis. This seems to inhere in the nature of things, even though poignant Americans will long continue to pay large honoraria to Europeans for the privilege of listening to deprecatory estimates respecting the very heart and dynamic of civilization in the United States.

If critics of progress fail to grasp its cosmic nature, friends of the idea often make it appear petty and ridiculous by the undiscriminating zeal with which they espouse it. As in the case of every other fruitful concept, a lunatic fringe is associated with the idea. To these short-sighted spectators at the great show, all movement is progress, means are ends, and the worth of a personality is to be measured by the number of motor-cars, telephones, radios, and bath-tubs he possesses. The idea of progress thus becomes purely numerical. J. P. Morgan has more things than Dante, therefore he is superior. Jim Fiske had more diamond rings than Francis of Assisi; accordingly, his rating in civilization must be higher. Zenith has more miles of paved streets than Athens, a single apartment house in New York will hold the entire population of that ancient city; evidently America transcends in achievement the best of the Greeks. Thus a noble concept of humanity is made both absurd and contemptible, obnoxious in the house of its friends, and a shining target for abuse at the hands of its opponents.

Yet when the critics and scoffers, writing under soft lamps or lecturing for fees to well-fed audiences, in comfortable rooms electrically lighted, venture to speak of an alternative, they can only offer a return to agriculture and handicrafts. Overlooking the fact that they can themselves go at any time to any one of a thousand waste places awaiting the plow or the hoe, they prefer to advise others to incur the risk. When asked for a bill of particulars, they become hazy and vague. Are we merely to surrender the tractor and return to the steel plow? Why not to the wooden plow? Or better still, to the forked stick hardened by fire? Each advance on the most primitive instrument is a gain in efficiency, a transfer of labor from man to a tool. In the process of retreat are surgery and dentistry to go into the discard? Sanitation, antiseptics, and anesthetics? Each of these gains has marked a step in progress or rather a long series of steps, and each art steadily advances in our own time as masters of the test tube and microscope penetrate deeper and deeper into the mysteries of nature. Fundamentally the machine differs from the tool in degree, not in kind, and the chemist works in materials no less than did the most primitive woman herbalist. His knowledge is wider, his skill is greater, but his ends may well be fundamentally the same—the relief of human suffering. Where then is the line to be drawn? To what point in the long upward progress of mankind is the return to be made? To ask these questions is to answer them. The severest critic of progress is forced to admit, when cornered, that the problem is not one of retreat, but of ends and methods, of choices and uses.

If in the hands of its superficial champions the idea of progress seems to emphasize means rather than ends, an examination into the history and nature of the concept shows that this notion is without basis. Although selfish men have seized upon the instrumentalities of progress and have left in the train of their exploits hideous industrial cities, slums, poverty, and misery, that upshot is no more to be attributed to the idea itself than the cruelties of the Inquisition to the teachings of Jesus. An inquiry into the writings of those who originated and developed the theory of progress shows at the center of their thought the concept of the good life at the end of progressive endeavor, the genius which is to preside over the searches and labors of explorers and experimenters. The good life for the multitude, not for a superior minority living in a land of illusion on the sweat of the "ignoble"—this is the kernel germinating in the heart of the concept of progress. To see life whole and to see it steadily, to sound its deeps, to illuminate its possibilities, and to make the noblest and wisest use of material resources in realizing its purposes, this is

the sum total of the idea of progress—a grand end, conceived in the light of universality, appealing to a mankind seeking high destiny and striving for mastery over the instrumentalities to be employed by the way. Anything less than this is a caricature of the idea.

Wrongly identified with capitalism, communism, or particular systems of economy, though standing at the very threshold of the great analysis and inquest, the idea of progress nevertheless clearly reveals the method by which ends are to be attained. Its method is that of science and technology—rationality, in short. And that method implies many things. It implies an open-eyed and open-minded attitude toward tasks in hand and problems to be solved. Working with concrete materials under positive law, technology is as indifferent to the emotional idiosyncrasies of individuals and classes as the elements themselves. Universal in its reach, as transcendent as the gods, it cannot be monopolized by any nation, period, class, government, or race. Its catholicity surpasses that of all religions. Essentially objective in its manipulations, dealing with materials, quantities, and known laws, technology is leveling and democratic in its effects; it is not a closed cult handed down by a few masters to a few students in cloistered universities. Rational in nature, corresponding to the mathematics of physical things and forces, this method is necessarily planful. It cannot begin anything without a goal, project, or purpose. To proceed at all it must stake out a field of work, a problem to be solved, and then it must proceed according to plan, on the assumption of predictable results, to predetermined ends. Inexorably, therefore, it cuts across the wild welter of unreasoned actions, irrelevant sentiments, and emotional starts and fits which have so long characterized human life in historic politics, industry, agriculture, and esthetics. Rational and planful, working in the unity of all things, this method is centripetal, drawing all arts, economies, and sciences inward toward the unity of the world—with implications so vast, so in harmony with mankind's noblest dreams, that the imagination is staggered by them.

Since the rationality of progress imposes limitations on inner impulses and cuts across external arrangements, it inevitably involves all departments of human activity—pure science, invention, industry, transportation, agriculture, government, finance, medicine, social adjustments, the work of women, education, arts, and letters. As the first carved gates of ancient Egypt celebrated the purpose of the ruling monarch, so the latest skyscraper in New York reflects the functions of its inhabitants. All branches of civilization mirror the dominant idea. If the escape of negation be sought, it will be found blocked at the exit. All arts, sciences, and crafts are drawn into the movement of regnant thought and practice. And when the thought of the thinker, the dream of the artist, and the aspiration of the practitioner draw together under a common principle of unification, the light and heat required for heroic endeavor are generated, giving to each the power of the whole, suffusing all with a sense of elevation and movement, supplying energy to the weak, and providing for the strong and willful who make history that social dynamic without which even Napoleon himself might have been a Corsican lawyer or Genoese scrivener.

Questions:

1. What conditions does Beard say were necessary to produce the concept of progress?
2. Beard quotes in his essay from Franklin: "O that moral science were in a fair way of improvement, that men would cease to be as wolves to one another and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!" Does Beard ever show in his article that morals can be put on a scientific basis or that they can be improved scientifically? Compare his views on this point with those of Ayres.
3. Beard gives the impression that those who oppose the concept of progress wish to live in a "cloud palace," in a fairy land of unreality. Do you think that this characterization fits Eliot who apparently opposes the concept of progress or Agar who also opposes it?
4. Compare Beard's treatment of the concept of progress with the first paragraph of Section Four of Agar's essay.

SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF REASON

C. E. AYRES

TO REGULATE society by the laws of science is a laudable ambition—theoretically. The idea is a captivating one. Like the theory of the order of nature which needs only to be let alone to realize the kingdom of heaven upon earth, it has a certain esthetic charm. It would be nice if things were like that. We can stamp out a disease by discovering its cause, as for instance mosquito bites, and then eliminating mosquitoes. Why not stamp out crime by the same process? Crime, let us say, is a product of poverty. We have,

then, only to stamp out poverty to prevent all crime. There is only one flaw in this reasoning, and that is that poverty is not like mosquitoes, something which can be extirpated, leaving all the rest of the visible world very much as it was before, but minus mosquitoes and minus yellow fever. Poverty is a very extensive and ancient institution. It is the nether boundary of affluence. Stamp out poverty and you stamp out affluence as well. Cut away both, and you have amputated civilization. In a very real sense, poverty is one of the elements which constitute civilization. So is crime. Crime is the nether boundary of moral and civic rectitude. Eliminate it and you eliminate civic virtue. There is no such thing as decency when there is no such thing as vice. In fine, the disagreeable aspects of civilization are just as much a part of the order of nature and just as definitely ordered by whatever laws there are as any other aspect.

Scientifically speaking, this is also true of mosquitoes —which only means that we do not exterminate mosquitoes as the result of scientific insights. We were resolved upon it for reasons of our own as an expression of our prejudice against dying of yellow fever before we knew that mosquitoes have any connection with that malady. Science applies only the means of achievement. The problems of civilization, on the other hand, are questions of what we want to achieve. Science has devised no technique for solving them. Whatever passed for solutions in former times was a product of the folkways, that is, of customs and habits that had always in some fashion got established. Reasoning from the past, the inference is that we can break away from one set of habits and the "superstitions" associated with them only by falling into another set of habits. What place is there for science in this cycle? In such a medium science can be effective only by abandoning its character of technician-in-chief to the mechanical arts and assuming the pontifical robes of folklore. In that character it can pour the anointing oil upon some "newly" established scheme of folkways. It can reveal our "infant industries" as the order of nature, and itself as a new and sublimer conception of God as the invisible hand. All this is quite effective—as a means of lending countenance to commerce. But it is not science in the "modern" sense; it is folklore in a very ancient sense indeed. On the other hand—and this is the real tragedy of science—to be itself it must put off its robes of omniscience and repair to the machine shop. There it can be modern, and efficient, and mechanical. But there, alas, it can do or say nothing that is in the remotest degree applicable to the problems of civilization.

We are just beginning to find this out. A generation or two ago, we began to realize that our infant industries were becoming lusty enough to tyrannize over the whole family. Simultaneously it occurred to us that human sympathies must have played a large part in the "intellectual" process by which the eighteenth century philosophers hit on commerce and manufacture as those departments of life most beloved of God the Invisible King. We could not accuse those grand old scholars of that kind of personal interest which was only too evident in the special pleading of public-be-damned business men. So we called theirs "unconscious bias" and when we had dissected it out, we labeled it "preconception." With these things in mind we determined that industry may require regulation after all; and we proceeded to regulate it with minds well cleared of the *laissez-faire* preconceptions of an older and less scientific day. Our procedure should be based on facts; and we went on to produce them in what is now generally known as the "era of muckraking." The stench was very great. We were therefore led to assume that the method was effective. We were at long last truly scientific. We were not formulating theories; we were exposing facts.

To our dismay and chagrin, however, all has not worked out precisely as our scientific calculations led us to expect. Gradually it began to appear that facts, even the most factual facts, are not self-operating. They require to be cranked up by some human driver before they will go anywhere; and this driver may be so very human as to influence the direction they are given. We could no doubt control our industries. But what is control? No one could possibly advocate a blind control which would exterminate all commercial combinations evenly and impartially, leaving nothing in the land but isolated business men. What we required was judicious control in the best interests of society. But the best interest of society, like prejudice against yellow fever, is a matter of tradition, and traditions are always subject to interpretation. In short, we found that the most eloquent facts mean different things to different men, and that what happened as a result of our determination to control our now stalwart industries was very largely affected by the human predilections of nine elderly men upon the Supreme Court of the United States. Preconceptions might be supplanted by facts in our array of evidence; but they could hardly be excluded from the breast of even the most august court. Some members of the court might be quite up-to-the-minute public-be-damned men of the world in their attitude toward these matters. Others might be sincere antiquarians, gentle and bookish octogenarians of pre-Adamite philosophy. Others might be warm-hearted sympathizers with the under-dog of the modern proletariat. But none could be scientific. That would be impossible. Moralists say that to understand everything is to forgive everything. Perhaps. But in science the rule is to know all the facts and to have no opinion.

Opinion is a substitute for facts. It is the point at which facts leave off. Now facts or not, opinion or not, a court has got to get something done. It has got to exercise control. It has got to exceed facts by proceeding to acts. Those acts will be human acts in spite of everything facts can do. They will be based on the facts; but they will be the effect of those inanimate facts upon human preconceptions.

Thus we have discovered the human equation in social control. We have learned to our sorrow that facts propose but courts dispose. In the meantime, however, we have been more impressed than ever by the methods and techniques of science. The period of greatest social disillusionment—the period of great reforms gone awry and ending in international and industrial strife upon an unprecedented scale—has also been the period of greatest scientific achievement. The oldest and best established sciences, which we had almost begun to address in the past tense, have suddenly revolutionized their fundamental laws; while the newer ones, such as the various branches of biology, have made equally rapid strides toward maturity. More than ever before we feel now that science is mighty and will prevail. Consequently we have been more strongly convinced than ever that what is wrong with our social science is an insufficiency of science. In our chagrin over the persistence of human factors in the conduct of civilization, we have turned for compensation to a refurbishing of inanimate facts.

These facts are to be of various kinds; but especially they are to be psychological The reason for this is that psychology is the science of the human equation. We have high hopes that by approaching these problems of civilization with a real scientific knowledge of the springs of sentiment in the human heart, we can dispose of them scientifically, consulting the heart only in the laboratories of psychology. In this fashion we shall be able to circumvent the preconceptions which so often influence even social scientists in the statement of their laws. We shall analyze preconceptions and provide against them. We shall similarly analyze the motives by which men in society are moved. The soft spot in eighteenth century philosophy was the theory of motives. Adam Smith and the others supposed men to be moved by quite simple considerations of economic self-interest. But later psychology has showed their economic man, their Robinson Crusoe on his desert isle, to be a far more complicated creature than they supposed. Very well; let modern psychology go on and exhibit the true economic man in all his complexity of motive. When it has finished, we shall have a sound scientific basis upon which to solve the problems of civilization. Social science, as we say so often now-a-days, waits upon psychology.

This is a large responsibility for psychology, which has its own preconceptions to deal with. In particular, it has been very much occupied with getting rid of the preconception that psychology is the description of the soul. As any one can see, the soul is a perfect storm-center of preconceptions. To be scientific, psychology also has to be objective, to deal only in established facts, to avoid ancient beliefs. Consequently psychology has become a laboratory science, and has more and more excluded from consideration anything which can not be examined with instruments. The result of this has been, as every one knows, that psychology has become more and more a branch of biology and less and less a department of philosophy. The more it has had to say about "the organism as a whole," the less it has cared to hazard an opinion about man, the mysterious author of civilization.

Surely there is no reason for disparaging the science of the organism. If psychology and neurology between them succeed in unraveling the structure and working of the nervous system, we may be in a position to cure many diseases which now resist all treatment. This will be no small gain. But curing epilepsy and preventing dementia praecox are very different matters from solving the mysteries of human motives, just as different as stopping yellow fever and preventing crime. Psychology may become more scientific by such procedure. It may even become—what William James hardly dared to hope—a regular branch of science. But it does so at the cost of ceasing to peer into the human soul. The more it knows of reflexes and secretions, the less it is able to choose among them. If "all human behavior results from conditioned reflexes," what conditioned reflexes should Supreme Court judges have? This, it will be seen, is not a scientific question.

If we turn the searchlight of science from the human organism to-man-in-society, the result is just the same. We get an accurate, detailed, and very disillusioning picture of how our vaunted civilization works. But we get no help. The fundamental "law" of social psychology seems to be that all human behavior is formed by pre-existing human behavior. This is the law of continuity. In adopting such a statement social psychology moved over into the neighborhood of anthropology just as psychology has courted physiology. Anthropology is the natural history of civilization. Instead of reflexes and secretions, it deals with folkways and folklore. The problems of anthropology are to identify the folkways and folklore of any given people as psychologists identify conditioned reflexes, and to trace them to their historic source. The fundamental law of anthropology is that all culture comes from culture, the law of continuity in another form. Anthropology is a science. The anthropologist may be able, by amassing tremendous

The inscription is by the directors of the bank. The italics are by the writer.

Less than three years after the cathedral was dedicated the people of Detroit were to swarm into the streets to gaze, ruefully and stunned, through the doors of their closed banks, and the depositors of this one were to look through its monel metal gratings and to read in the brilliant stained-glass windows the legends "Security" and "Fidelity." This was but one of Detroit's banking institutions. It was part of one of those two imperial groups which got possession of nearly all of the state's money and credit resources. The chairman of the board and the president are gone now from their dens of grandeur. A small-salaried government official sits amid the oriental splendors. Indeed, humble bankers from the Comptroller's office sit in almost all the banks of Detroit and labor honestly and for modest pay to administer the vast freeze which descended on the city.

II

I have said there were two Detroits. It is important to understand this. Perhaps more than any other great city, Detroit sends out of its borders the product of its mills. This means that into the city flows a tide of money from every quarter of the globe to pay for its cars. There are other industries, of course—glass, stoves, timber—but the automobile overshadows all others. Henry Ford alone employs more than all these other industries combined. In the last years of the great Coolidge rash the value of Detroit's products was nearly three billion dollars. The production of these cars and other things and the sucking of these vast sums of money into the city constituted one of the Detroits of which I have spoken. When the balances arrived to be distributed in wages, in interest, in money payments of all sorts, they were available for spending and saving. And it was the saving and spending and investing of these huge sums which made up the other Detroit.

It would have been strange indeed if there had not been present in the city men with an appetite for swift and easy profits who saw in these unprecedented floods of money the opportunity to satisfy their hunger. One might have supposed that among a civilized people the banks would be citadels to guard the population from the rapacity of these marauders and that the bankers would be the especial defenders of these fortresses. But as it happened the banks were taken over by the hungry gentlemen in question. And so they were able to do their work upon the treasure without let or hindrance from any force.

What they did not know was that this golden tide of funds would one day cease. From the assembly lines of the automobile plants went an endless line of cars to be seized by waiting pilots, rushed to testing fields, and hurried out to the world. All this complex and bewildering process the Detroiter understood. He knew and could explain to the visitor to the minutest detail how the cars were made. What he could not explain, what indeed he never even thought about, was how the dollars were made which paid for those cars. Every time a one-thousand-dollar car is made in Detroit somewhere in the world a very specific one thousand dollars must be made to buy the car. And these thousands had to be made before they could flow into Detroit. And of course what the Detroiter did not realize was that these dollars were being made out of nothing. He was making very substantial, very ponderable automobiles to ship out. The world was making very insubstantial and very imponderable dollars to ship in. As it turned out these dollars, looking real enough when they were materialized from nothing by banks, began, after a while, to dematerialize. Detroit didn't notice this. It continued to make cars and send them out. But presently the dollars ceased to flow in. And very soon the great assembly line halted; the factories closed their doors, and Detroit's hundred of thousands of workers were jobless. The depression had arrived, though Detroit was assured the whole thing was just a mere interlude.

It was at this moment that the city needed to lean upon its reserves—to rest for support upon those great sums which had been saved from the streams of the gilded years. The Detroiters now began to notice that those phantom dollars which had looked so real were melting away—not just passing out of their hands and into the hands of others—but evaporating into the air from whence they came. And then certain lordly men who supposed that they knew it all, sitting in their cathedrals of finance, began to discover that they had monkeyed with a force too vast for them and that the machinery was falling apart about their ears.

III

These Michigan magicians had invented something brand new in the way of banking. It was not so completely new, of course, as they supposed, for group banking has broken out in this country at intervals, and almost always with disastrous results. But this was group banking with more virulent tumescence and higher temperature and some new complications. It was a combination of unit banking and branch banking, security manufacture, real estate exploitation, and numerous other lines, including running a garage, and all brought together under

the control of a holding company like a utility web or department store chain. There were, of course, holding companies running wild among banks in other places. But in Michigan two groups—two holding companies—set out to capture the entire banking resources of a whole state.

One of these holding companies was known as the Detroit Bankers Group; the other as the Guardian Detroit Union Group. Let us not lose ourselves in the wilderness of corporate names and titles. These simple designations will suffice to pick our way through the jungle.

Each group had a great commercial bank of deposit with branches all over Detroit. Each group owned unit banks throughout Michigan, many of them with branches. Each group had its big trust company and each had its cluster of subsidiary corporations engaged in various types of security operations.

The Detroit Bankers group had the immense First National Bank doing a deposit and savings business with 140 branches in the city.

The Guardian Detroit Union group had its Guardian National Bank of Commerce with 38 branches in Detroit. Thus the two controlled 178 banking houses in Detroit, besides their main offices and trust companies, and they controlled eighty cents out of every one dollar deposited in the city.

The Detroit Bankers had nine banks in Michigan outside Detroit. The Guardian Detroit Union had thirty-six. And some of these had numerous branches. Thus the two groups had in their possession four out of every five dollars deposited in Michigan banks. Almost every merchant, every small shop owner, every small manufacturer, every business house employing people had their working capital in these banks and depended on their remaining open to keep in business. Almost every family in Detroit had their savings in these banks. There were 800,000 depositors. If these banks should fail, the working capital of the whole city, the savings of 800,000 persons, the security and commercial existence of nearly the whole population would be imperilled. In other cities one bank might fail and the others, somewhat strained, might continue. But in Detroit failure of one meant the failure of all. And they did fail. Not just two banks, but 178 banks closed their doors. A great industrial city and a rich industrial and agricultural state were left for months almost without money. It was the most comprehensive bank failure in our history, and it marked the crash of the kind of banking which these magicians gave Michigan.

When these holding companies came down all the elaborate and trumped-up explanations for their creation came down with them. The promoters explained very patiently to Congress, which looked them over with curiosity once, that Michigan and Detroit needed larger banking facilities; that Detroit business men could not get in the small Detroit banks the accommodations they required; that, therefore, it was necessary to create these banking giants to serve their community. But when they closed their doors it was discovered that in one bank 85 per cent of the loans were in securities and the rest in real estate mortgages. No banker needs to be told that this is a fatally unhealthy condition. The bank was not a commercial bank at all. But the explanation given by the bankers is that they were forced to seek investment in securities as there was no demand for commercial loans.

Then they declared that Michigan needed stronger banks; that the individual unit banks could not hope to be as strong as a great collection of banks bound together, each as strong as the resources of all. As a matter of fact, some day we shall learn that great depressions are nothing more than the accumulation of small failures which have been hidden, carried along, permitted to grow like a cancer under the skin until all these multitudinous failures roll together into one grand depression. These Detroit banking groups were not consolidations of strong banks into stronger and bigger ones. They were consolidations of weak banks into weaker and smaller ones. This will probably surprise a lot of people in Detroit who, as consolidation followed consolidation, heard the chantings of the ballyhooers and read the high horse-power proclamations of how a greater bank had arisen beside the lake.

Thus back in 1926 there was the Griswold National Bank operating alone. Presently it was announced that the Griswold and the First State would combine. There was plenty of journalistic yodling about that splendid constructive merger. The new bank was called the Griswold First State. Then a few months later the president of the combination resigned and a little later he was indicted and a little later died in a mysterious automobile accident. The truth is that the Griswold was growing feeble. Thirty per cent of its loans were locked up in real estate; it had enough bad loans to wipe out its surplus, and the bank examiner had secretly called attention to its unfavorable condition. After a while the Griswold First State merged with the National Bank of Commerce. Once again there was the usual flourish of drums. But this combination was made in order to strengthen the weakened condition of these banks.

Next, the old Union Trust Company, which had once been a strong fiduciary institution, and the National Bank of Commerce were brought together

under the dominion of the first holding company—the Union Investment Trust. About this time the Guardian Detroit group was formed. This was in 1927, and immediately the two began a race to buy up smaller banks. By 1929 they were hammering away at this. In May the Guardian crowd got three and the Union crowd bought two. In June the Guardian crowd bought five and in July the Union company took over four. In September the Union group bought six and the Guardian crowd put over a sock-dolager by gobbling ten. By this time there was little for them to do but eat each other. What is more, this was more or less necessary. For already the first premonitory symptoms of our great national indigestion had made themselves felt. Once more a giant consolidation varnished over the decaying tissues underneath. The amalgamators proceeded upon the theory that in banking you have only to save the surface and you save all. And thus the Union group and the Guardian Detroit group were put together to form the Guardian Detroit Union group—one of those grandiose holding companies I have already described. Commercial banks were combined and trust companies were combined, and Detroit was told it had bigger and better banks. But in fact it had smaller banks. A bank is really only as big as its capital and surplus. And in the case of the new bank —the Guardian National Bank of Commerce—it represented the merging of a series of banks whose combined capital before the mergers was round $30,000,000. After the mergers they had been reduced to a single bank with a capital of $10,000,000. There was a bigger building resting on a smaller foundation. Detroiters were putting more deposits into a smaller bank, but they didn't realize it.

IV

If you had been a depositor in one of the branch banks of these holding companies and had gone, as many did, to "ask your banker" what you should do with your money, you might have been told to buy bonds of the Bagley-Clifford Corporation. This company built the Michigan Theatre Building. The funds were provided by selling bonds to Detroit investors. But the one class of stock—a small amount—belonged to another corporation—the Detroit Properties Corporation. Among the directors of this company was the chairman of the board of one of the big banks and the chairman of one of the big trust companies. And if you wished, you could borrow money from these banks with which to buy the bonds. It is not necessary to lengthen out this narrative with an account of all the millions which were extracted from the people of Detroit by devices like this, floated by the security companies of the holding companies for the benefit of corporations in which the bank officials were interested. Hotels, club houses, magnificent apartment houses, office buildings, "towers" by the dozens were erected, the bonds sold to Detroiters and the loans carried on them by the various banks. Not only were such bonds floated against buildings but against vast stretches of vacant land. And today these sterile acres stand, buried under defaulted mortgages which are carried by the banks. What is more, the county was induced through well-directed political action to build streets, sewers, water mains through still uninhabited prairies, so that while the investors and banks are crushed under the load, the county is near bankruptcy because of the millions spent to aid these subdividers. One of these banks has $150,000,000 in mortgages—50,000 separate mortgages. One of the trust companies has 72 per cent of its assets invested in real estate mortgages or bonds.

These so-called bankers were not primarily interested in banking. They were interested in promoting. Above all, they were interested in the stock of the holding companies. In one of these the stock was issued at $20 a share. At one time it went to more than $300 a share. The insiders hoped to get it up to $1000 a share. One of the promoters owned a corporation. Its assets consisted of stocks and bonds of no great value, but marked at $6,000,000. He sold it all to the holding company in exchange for 100,000 shares of its stock—par value $20 or $2,000,000. But at the moment it had a market value of $17,000,000. It went at one time to more than $30,000,000.

Everything was done to force up the price of the holding company stock. Banks were forced to pay dividends to the holding company even though not earned, in order to make a showing. Employees and officers were pressed to buy the stock to create a demand for it. When the First National closed, 696 of its employees, 16 cashiers, 22 vice-presidents had borrowed money from the bank and put up as collateral the stock of the holding company. No banker should speculate. Certainly he should not speculate in the stocks of his own bank. Above all he should not speculate in the stocks of his own bank with the bank's money.

The companies owned by the holding companies were always heavy borrowers from the banks owned by the holding company. Four corporations owned by the Guardian Detroit Union group owed $17,000,000 to its bank, the Guardian National Bank of Commerce, and the securities given as collateral for the loans are worth not over $7,000,000.

All this is possible in holding-company banking because no examiner can follow transactions through

the labyrinth of corporations. The president of one of the trust companies organized an investment trust. He sold some 17,000 shares of this stock to Subsidiary A owned by the holding company. To make the purchase he borrowed the money from Subsidiary B. Then Subsidiary B borrowed the money from the Trust Company headed by the president aforesaid. These things are complicated. They are meant to be. I cannot help it. These are but samples.

Are we to wonder that banks like this, thus manned and implemented, should begin to sag a little at signs of business troubles? Yet, strange as it may seem, much of all this manipulation went on after Michigan had felt the first fury of the depression. Detroit's unemployed rose in numbers, but the bankers only increased the tempo of their operations. With nearly 400,000 people out of work, Mayor Frank Murphy struggled with the impossible task of feeding them. He had promised Detroit the "dew and the dawn and the sunshine of a New Era." He spent $20,000,000 in one year for welfare work and fought valiant battles against organized charities and Henry Ford. But the time came when Murphy's relief funds gave out. The whole country sank down upon the floor of the depression. Property owners stopped paying taxes. The dew and the dawn and the sunshine defaulted along with the subdividers who owed money on vacant developments and the corporations which owned the "towers." The wizards who had brought forth the "new banking" saw their assets freezing in their vaults. And now they proceeded to demonstrate the possibilities of a large collection of holding-company banks and affiliates for juggling purposes.

The bank examiner found $3,500,000 of bad collateral in one bank. He demanded that it be corrected. The bank borrowed $3,500,000 from Ford, but concealed the transaction. A new subsidiary corporation was formed. Ford lent the money to the new subsidiary. Then this corporation bought the bad assets from the bank.

On another occasion the bank's deposits had fallen $6,000,000. The annual statement was due. The bankers did not wish to show a decline. They induced a big depositor to deposit $10,000,000 on the last day of the month so that it would show in the statement, and then boasted of an increase in deposits. Two days later the $10,000,000 was withdrawn. Numerous other stratagems were used to conceal the failing condition, and finally loans were made for various units from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

Thus these two great banking groups moved toward dissolution, but with the utmost secrecy. Only a few weeks before the end they paid dividends. But on February 14th, as the new administration prepared to take over the government, one of their largest units came to the end of its string. It was almost completely frozen. And in that emergency, to conceal the facts from the people, to hide the weaknesses of most of the other banks in the groups, the distraught promoters appealed to the governor of Michigan to declare a state-wide banking holiday. And this was done. Thus all of those independent banks which had steadfastly resisted the blandishments of the groups to join them and which remained healthy, were compelled to close together with the frozen-group banks, and an entire state saw all of its money reserves imprisoned. What is more, the crash sent a shiver through the enfeebled banking structure of the nation. Panic was in the air. The big motor companies to meet their Detroit pay-rolls began drawing on banks in other states, which in turn were weakened. And on March 5th the new President, as his first act, was driven to close every bank in the United States.

Then the men who had organized this vast disaster began to blame everybody—Henry Ford because he would not empty his wallet to save them, Senator James Couzens of Michigan because he would not approve a loan of preposterous size from the government, the public because it asked for its funds—everybody, in fact, but themselves.

It is not possible to describe the plight of the city they have thus cast down. It could not have got along save for outside aid, like a town struck down by a flood or an earthquake. The motor companies really saved it from utter disaster by getting their meager pay-rolls from outside banks. The government rushed in millions. Merchants trusted their old customers. Hundreds of merchants accepted checks on the closed banks, because, the town was made to believe, all would yet be well and they would open soon. These checks were, of course, never presented. The whole commercial life of the city and state was paralyzed and remained so for about two months.

The two great banks are still closed,* and as one rides round Detroit there are those numerous bank buildings dark and lifeless, including 152 of the branches. The city is in default on its bonds—$400,000,000 of them. It is paying its teachers in scrip. People have practically stopped paying taxes; interest on mortgages has almost wholly ceased. The city's 40,000 families dependent on public charity would starve were it not for the federal government which has footed all the relief bills for a year. While the proud nobility of Grosse Pointe and Bloomfield are almost as broke as their humbler brothers in the tenements, many live in their splendid homes because it hardly pays to foreclose on them. What is more serious, the

* This article was published in December, 1933.

city is torn by bitter hatreds. For this too the men who wrecked the banks are responsible. They face, along with other stockholders, suits by the government to pay a double assessment on their bank stocks. Their one drive now is to escape that. They have been trying to hush up all investigation. They turn with rage upon anyone who seeks to probe the causes of the failures. They have continued to struggle to get government money to open these utterly insolvent banks. Leading the fight against them is Senator Couzens. They call him a traitor to their city because he insists on getting at the facts.

In the meantime some relief has come. The motor companies have put large numbers of men to work this fall, though the number is declining again. And the burden of relief has been lightened by the exodus of several hundreds of thousands from the city. And, with the aid of the government and two of the large motor companies a new and healthy and rapidly growing bank has been opened through which forty per cent of the deposits of the old banks were rescued and distributed. The city enjoys one great advantage —the one I referred to at the outset. Its motor plants are still there and, when running, can bring in fresh streams of money income from the outside. And sooner or later this will begin to set in motion fresh tides of blood in this troubled town. It has a good banking example in those few smaller banks which, despite all the storm and pressure, were able to continue doing business because they had stuck to banking and left the garage business, stock-jobbing, subdividing, and promoting to others.

Meantime, it all stands as a terrifying lesson to a country which has not yet finished making its banking laws safe, and which is even farther from making sufficiently exact the ethical standards of its business leaders. While I was in the West I read that one of our enterprising cities had held high jubilation. The citizens flocked to the main street. Four brigades of firemen, with fire apparatus, motorcycle police, civic associations, and a band of music paraded up the main street while whistles blew and bells rang and the populace cheered. And for what? An American city in a land where poverty had been abolished was celebrating because it was being given a bank—largely with government funds. Congratulations were showered on the new bank president. And who was he? A gentleman who at that very moment had in another bank an unpaid note for several hundred thousand dollars secured by a mortgage on a graveyard. Alas! we have some distance yet to travel.

The poison of the old Coolidge era is still in our blood. America does not yet realize how far business strayed from those paths of simple honesty which, even as we turned our backs on them, we continued to glorify in print. And from these simple standards no one strayed farther than our bankers. It is indeed a commentary on our moral befuddlement that those who called out that we were going astray were—and indeed still are—branded as radicals. Honesty is not one of the inventions of Lenin or Stalin or the Third Internationale. It is supposed to be one of the fruits of civilization. But in the universal worship of riches, with the successful acquisitive man proclaimed from magazine and newspaper and radio and pulpit and academy as the prime hero of the American scene, our people seemed to have lost interest in the moral appraisal of the means by which these men became rich.

How do they become rich? Above all, how do bankers become rich? It is a question well worth asking. Certainly they do not become rich upon their salaries—that is, out of the pay they receive for the services they perform. Their fortunes are made out of those opportunities which come to them through the custody of so much money. Whose money? The money of other people, money they hold in trust. No man has a right to seek or use such opportunities. The banker, well paid for his services, ought to be content with the wage he receives for them. Indeed, if we were as thoroughly civilized as we like to believe, a rich banker would be an object of scorn.

We have a job of civilizing to do, and this is a task for the schools. To the extent that the pulpit is a part of our ethical educational system, we may take a little hope when preachers remember a little more faithfully the principles of religion they preach, and when our colleges cease dishonoring their high missions by putting wreaths on the brows of men whose chief claim to academic distinction is the piles of money they have accumulated.

But we ought not to trust merely to education. I repeat now solemnly what I ventured to say well before our present difficulties brought us up in our unthinking rush—that unless some means are found to take out of the hands of these grasping men the implements of financial racketeering with which we have provided them, the present system to which Americans are wedded will vanish long before the slow processes of education can save it. Let us remember that the instrument with which these money-crazed men operate is the corporation. That useful instrument has been tortured out of all semblance to its original character. But whatever it is, it is an invention of the state. No man can obtain a corporation charter with which to run amuck in society without getting it from the state. It is with the modern corporation, with its modern gadgets, that the American

promoter manages to seize control over the resources of so many other people and use them to the injury of society. And the worst feature of these modern corporate devices is the holding company. Whatever may be its evil characters in other areas of business, in the banking world it is an unmixed curse. Congress has made a law against the bank affiliate, but it has not yet outlawed the bank holding company and few, if any, states have done anything about it. That should be the first care of Congress when it reconvenes and of every state legislature at its earliest session.

Questions:

1. Discussions of economics are often thought to be dull, and someone once called economics "the dismal science." How does Flynn make his discussion exciting?
2. Is Flynn justified in using slang terms like "sock-dolager" or flippant statements like, "The amalgamators proceeded upon the theory that in banking you have only to save the surface and you save all"? Do such devices detract from the seriousness of the essay or not?
3. Flynn's essay is obviously bound up closely with a particular item of financial history. Does it have any permanent value? Do you think that it will still be interesting a few years hence?
4. Is Flynn fair? Does he distinguish between the Michigan magicians and true bankers?

WHY LIBERALISM IS BANKRUPT

NATHANIEL PEFFER

THE moral and intellectual bankruptcy of liberalism in our time needs no demonstration. It is as obvious as rain and as taken for granted. That is not in question. I want instead to put the question of why it has to be. I do not mean why liberalism as a philosophy of life and an approach to human conduct has to be a failure. I am not sure that it does. I am sure only that liberals are a failure, and I am asking why.

Why is it that high aspirations and hard thinking are incompatible? What is it that makes men of fine instincts, just those who seek a better human order, incapable of tough-mindedness, of facing unpleasant realities and looking at the world as it is? And why should this be true in America more than anywhere else? For here surely the fecklessness of liberalism has been carried to the extreme. For what reason? It cannot be racial; for racially we are of the same stock as the Europeans. Nor can it be the conventional explanation that we are a young people; for we are no younger than the European stock from which we come. Is it something in the American climate, or the ease with which we plundered an empty continent of its wealth, or our traditions? What is it in the American soil or system that makes what we like to call idealism inseparable from immaturity?

One of the familiar figures of our time is the tired radical, or the tired liberal for that matter. The truth about him is not so much that he is radical or liberal as that he is tired, and it was not so much his radicalism or liberalism that tired him as his pursuit of adolescent illusions. It is in character, therefore, that so many radicals or liberals, when tired, should become more conservative than those who have never been anything else. They come to the conclusion that they have been defying fate and that the liberal cause is hopeless, wherefore what has been must be. A more logical conclusion would be that only the illusions they cherished were baseless and that they never had served their cause.

We are likely now to drift into a form of fascism on the specious pragmatic ground that liberalism, democracy, and the whole system of nineteenth-century beliefs cannot function. That may or may not be so, but there is no way of knowing. They have never been tried. No serious effort has been made to apply democracy or save it. When first, about a generation ago, we no longer could pretend to ourselves that the promise of democracy had been fulfilled for the mass of men, when it became glaringly patent that democracy had been emasculated, what did we do? We flung ourselves into passionate crusades for the initiative and referendum, for the direct primary and the direct election of senators; in choking voices we sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and battled at Armageddon for Theodore Roosevelt and, inferentially, the Lord. Thus we showed our discernment of the reason why the American dream had faded, so we interpreted what was wrong with democracy. And then we got the initiative and referendum and the direct election of senators and the direct primary. A host of other lost causes which were fought and bled for were won. And then what? What was changed? The connection of ideas implicit in that sequence or lack of sequence has never been made to this day. For the initiative and referendum and the direct primary in 1934, read the New Deal and

the technic of peace by conference, the international peace machinery so-called.

Let us take these last as the point of departure, since they comprehend the larger questions of modern life. The two problems overshadowing all others for contemporary man, those determinant for his generation and his children's, are the problems of war and the economic system. On war or peace hangs not the future of all civilization perhaps but certainly the survival of the civilization which has characterized the white race. On our ability to restore to the economic system the equilibrium it has lost by the evolution of power-machine industrialism and finance capitalism depends the hope of happiness for the race. All those who profess to think seriously about their world and themselves in relation to it can be judged by their approach to these two problems.

II

Take war first. Just now the workers for peace are in the depths. They are publicly confessing the collapse of the hopes they had cherished since 1919. They have reason to be dejected. The so-called peace structure erected since then has manifestly toppled The League of Nations is relegated to trivial issues or benevolent generalities. The Kellogg-Briand Pact is an almost forgotten formula. There is no longer even a pretense of intention to disarm. For many this is merely a crushing blow; by others it is likely to be taken as proof that it is hopeless to prevent war. They will in consequence come unconsciously and by slow stages to the conviction that preparedness is morally justified, being in self-defense in an imperfect world.

The premises are sound enough. Internationally all is as it was before the World War. If there is any change, it is that nationalism is more aggressive and rampant than in 1913. National rivalries are sharper. International competition, with the goad of economic need added to chauvinistic ambition for glory, is keener. We are coming back to balances of power, rival alliances, and diplomatic dueling. Competitive arming is in full swing and a naval race is about to set in. With tariffs, quotas, embargoes, and "managing" of currencies, we are already engaged in trade wars. The results are in full view: the Far East smolders and Europe is ready for the spark. Despite all the flamboyant pronouncements, the invocations of Utopia, the successive commitments to a new international order, and the multiplicity of conferences, commissions, and other devices of organization, the progress toward abolition or control of war since 1919 is negligible. The net result is revealed as nil.

From all of this it does not follow, however, that war is inevitable, that it is innate in the scheme of things or "human nature." To the contrary, never before has it been so clear that war is preventable, provided men will pay the price for preventing it. Never before has it been so clear what are the causes of war and how they might be controlled. Indeed, one can say that never before has there been so good a chance for peace and never before so little hope of peace. The failure of all the supposed efforts since 1919 proves nothing. The point is that there have been no efforts. What has been so construed—the magniloquence, the rhetoric, the enunciation of formulas, the elaborate paraphernalia—has been either puffing or pretense and, therefore, futile. On the part of governments and those for whom governments speak and act there has been no attempt to make any efforts for peace. On the part of those classes which have been most vocal and most ecstatic at the signing of every new treaty behind which there was neither sincerity nor conviction or at the convocation of every new committee to take up what there was no intention whatever to take up —on their part there has been only gullibility. Actually nothing more has been done to prevent war since 1919 than before 1914. Failure? There has been no failure. There has been only nullity.

What is this peace structure whose collapse is now mourned? The League of Nations, for example. But one need only read carefully the newspaper files for the first few months of 1919 or the diaries of the more discerning participants of the Versailles Conference from Keynes to Nicolson. In its origin the League was a sop to Woodrow Wilson and a consolation to genuine Wilsonians in the Allied countries who had been sickened by the War and responded to the prospect of a fairer world without the jungle law. It has been little more since then. On the part of those classes that wield authority there has never been any intention or desire that it be anything else. There has never been any intention or desire to effectuate the ideas implicit in the Covenant. There has been no sign of willingness to subordinate national sovereignty to review by any international organ or to subject national acts, policies, ambitions, or economic interests to veto by any international government. In the sense implied by the Covenant the League has been taken seriously only by certain nice but naive classes in America. In many European countries there have been men of the type of Gilbert Murray, cultivated men imbued with the best of the European humanistic tradition, for whom belief in the League is a counsel of despair. But they have been restrained, inarticulate, and chastened compared with

the swarms of twittering Americans, members of women's clubs, foreign policy associations and peace societies, or jejune college professors who darken the streets of Geneva every summer, ecstatically believing whatever they are told and asking questions at which hall porters giggle.

Had those who really cared about international organization for peace remained astringently skeptical, squarely recognized how strong was the opposition to any change, and mobilized their energies to prevent the sabotage of the League and the League idea, eventually there might have been a functioning League. At least, by pointing out derelictions and betrayals by omission, they might have galvanized public opinion, for many years left disgruntled by the War. But that would have required a different attitude. It would have required an honest confrontation of the fact that people who counted cared nothing about the League, which has been the only fact about the League worth considering since 1919. So far from being disloyalty, that would have been the highest loyalty. It would have meant opposition to the League in order that there might be a League. Instead, the League became a holy cause in itself. Its purposes were stated in evangelical terms: that was enough. So we consecrated ourselves at innumerable luncheons and committee meetings, and he who registered doubts—doubts founded on the most palpable facts of European politics—was branded a mocker and an outcast from high principle. For in America it can never be understood that anybody who faces an unpleasant fact and calls attention to it is not necessarily in sympathy with the unpleasantness. And now the League is sinking into desuetude, with vestiges of statistical bureaus compiling figures on unemployment and committees on intellectual cooperation cataloguing archives. But the League has not failed. There has been no League. There has been no effort to bring it into being. And there is no more reason to believe now than there was in 1913 that the idea of international supervision is impracticable. The greatest disservice done to that idea by the passionate but innocent exponents of international peace machinery is that, by concealing with lush sentimentality the fact that the League was a façade for the workings of the *realpolitik* of the big Powers, they have given ordinary men reason to believe that the League was tried and could not work. Therefore, why not nationalism?

Is argument necessary concerning the Kellogg Pact? The emotional catharsis that Japan's violation of that treaty produced in large and influential groups in America would be incredible if we had not ourselves witnessed it. The Powers of the world had bound themselves in solemn covenants not to resort to war, and Japan had broken the bond; that is true. But that any adult human being capable of reading the newspapers in 1930 and 1931 should ever have really believed that any of the Powers took that pledge seriously or with any intent to abide by it is not credible even if we know it to be so. The Powers bound themselves not to resort to war; and from the day that they signed the pledge every one of them, the United States of America included, steadfastly refused to reduce by one unit the instruments and weapons that can be used only in war. And hundreds of thousands of men and women in America, men and women of education, of position and with opportunities to observe their world, deduced from those two pieces of synchronous and contiguous evidence that the Kellogg Pact had become the law of nations and that war was really proscribed. So when Japan did use force to accomplish its aims in Manchuria they first were shocked, then something deep within them was wounded, then they were morally outraged and cried for vengeance on the outlaw. This is not an episode out of a satire by Dean Swift. It can be read in newspaper headlines.

As a matter of fact whatever may be said of Japan (and that its recent acts are antisocial and inimical to the hope of an ordered, civilized world is self-evident) it can also be said, first, that Japan read its world aright and, second, that it can be credited at least with intellectual honesty. It assumed that the proclamations of a new dispensation were only a concession to a certain post-War sentiment in the West and were not to be permitted to interfere with any nation's method of pursuing the ends its [illegible] groups deemed essential. It assumed that no nation would be restrained from using all the physical force it commanded whenever the necessity arose and the occasion was propitious. What was wrong in that reasoning? What nation had abandoned any ambition or policy it was strong enough to maintain? What nation had reduced the strength necessary to maintain ambitions or policies? Consider France and Italy in Eastern Europe, England in the Near East and India, the United States in the Caribbean. Consider the haggling of British and American naval experts on the higher mathematics of parity. So the Japanese ceased pretending. The Japanese ruling classes had long cherished ambitions to dominate Eastern Asia and never had receded from the determination to retain possession of South Manchuria at any cost. When, therefore, the challenge of Chinese nationalism threatened their retention of South Manchuria, they acted in the way that international precedent had shown to be most effective. And be-

cause the preoccupation of the rest of the world with its private nationalistic feuds and its economic paralysis offered a propitious occasion, they proceeded to realize their larger ambitions. They took all of Manchuria and assumed a kind of informal protectorate over North China. They ignored the existence of the Kellogg Pact and flouted the League because, on the evidence of acts rather than phrases, it was plain to them that no other Power would have been restrained by the Pact or the League in an equally vital situation.

What did these events teach those who presumably cared about peace? Not that Japan was only more brutally frank than the others. Not that the law of power politics still prevailed. Not that so long as nations pursued aims which were in conflict with other nations and could be realized only by force, force would be used, notwithstanding verbal professions of lofty purpose. Not that what was happening in the Far East was a result of old international rivalries, just one more incident in a century-old imperialistic struggle for economic expansion, a struggle which could not be eliminated by euphemistic declarations or by conferences. Not at all. The friends of peace saw the world as a melodrama, with good contending against evil, and Japan the villain of the piece. If, therefore, Japan could be thwarted, virtue would prevail and the piece have a happy ending. The sanctity of the Pact would be vindicated and peace would be enthroned. So they cried vengeance on Japan.

Had they had their way, America would now be at war in the Pacific. They did not want war, of course; they only wanted severance of diplomatic relations, embargoes, boycotts, and other measures which could have had no other result than war. Fortunately they did not have their way. Mr. Stimson may have been indiscreet. Events have proved that the Stimson Doctrine was a commitment that could be made good only by war, and happily we have not attempted to make it good. Indeed, the Japanese have not only ignored the Stimson Doctrine and taken full possession of Manchuria but have gone farther than the prohibitions laid on them by the Doctrine. Compared with the advocates of peace, however, Mr. Stimson was caution itself. As a result the climax in the East was at least postponed, which was some gain. But a pall of disillusionment settled over the workers for peace. They are saddened, but not with the sadness in which wisdom ripens. It does not include humiliation at allowing themselves to be gulled by words. They are still ready to go off on another crusade for some other treaty equally high-minded with words. It is the old American law of action: to cure a deep-lying social ill, look for a villain and pass a law.

III

The third cornerstone of the international peace structure was disarmament. What need be said of that now in 1934? I take it that everybody admits that there will be no disarmament. But that is not new. All that has changed is that the pretense is being formally abandoned. Never since 1919 has there been any chance of disarmament. Never since then has there been, on the part of those who make decisions in the important countries, any intention, willingness, or desire to disarm. And nobody in Europe with any knowledge of public affairs has ever had the remotest expectation of disarmament. At the most some may have had faint hopes. Nor is the only obstacle to disarmament to be found in the international armament rings which are now being "exposed." There is danger, in fact, that these exposures may lead us as usual to fasten our attention on the villains, scourge them and then discover that something more was involved than personal villainy. Armament rings and armament races may be one of the causes of war, but they are only a supplementary and secondary cause. Competitive armament operates as a war cause only after it has itself emerged as an effect of an antecedent cause. There are other reasons for refusal to disarm, the principal one being that all the Powers have policies, ambitions, and interests which conflict with similar policies, ambitions, and interests of other Powers and which they wish to be in a position to sustain if and when necessary.

Disarmament has been an American mirage, and all the talk about it here has been adolescent prattle, without the charm of youth's freshness. A year ago I sat at a meeting in New York attended by academic and professional men and women and heard a speech by one of the best-known academic paladins of peace, a man of high place in the educational hierarchy and of oracular repute in organizations for "studying international relations." He was expounding a plan for world peace, one of many evolved by himself on paper. This concerned moral disarmament, which was as necessary as military disarmament. What constituted moral disarmament? First, compulsory study of the provisions of the League Covenant, Kellogg Pact, World Court regulations, and other peace instruments would be introduced into the schools in all countries. Second, all civil-service examinations for important posts would have to include questions on the same instruments. Thus we should come by moral disarmament for all peoples. His exposition over, he turned to exhortation; for there was need

for haste. To be effective, the plan for moral disarmament would have to be ready to be attached as a rider to the treaty for military and naval disarmament which was to be consummated at the international conference to be held two months later. And he was speaking one month after Hitler and the National Socialists had come to power in Germany! With all Europe tense and the question in men's minds whether there would be a preventive war immediately or whether war could be postponed for a while, a man of responsible position appeals to others of the intellectually upper class to make haste with agitation lest the provision for moral disarmament be omitted when armies and navies were abolished in two months. Not one person in that room giggles. Nor do any arise to ask how he arrives at his interpretation of contemporary events in Europe. By inquiry I learned later that nearly all of them saw nothing amiss in his reasoning. Nowhere else in the world could that incident have occurred. In any European meeting on the same social level there would have been a spontaneous guffaw. If not, the reason would have been the natural assumption that the speaker was being ironical. The incident was indeed ironical, but the irony lay in the fact that the speech was in deadly earnest and was received in deadly earnest.

It is the irony that has underlain the whole effort for peace, and the incident is the epitome of the whole post-War farce. I do not mean that the advocates of peace are insincere. They are sincere. That is what is so sad. For their cause is the highest in the world. Man could have no higher earthly goal than that of emancipating himself from the curse of war. If ever there was a cause worth enlisting the best faculties and most vital energies of the race, it is that of abolishing war. Never was its appeal so urgent as now. In 1913 hollow exhortation and dilettante trifling could have been understandable; we did not know then. We live among war's ruins now, and more is threatened. It is not a moral issue now; it is a matter of survival. And it is just those who are aware of the need and sensitive to the evil that inhabit a world of myth and mirage, a land of Bluebird fantasy, seeing only what they want, believing whatever they hear if it is pleasant and euphemistic, and taking their wishes for thoughts.

Those who profit by war or do not mind war or prefer it to losing what must be lost if there is to be peace—they beguile themselves with no fancies and feed on no illusions. They know what they want and move relentlessly to secure it. Perhaps what they want is suicidal for them too in the end, but that is beside the point. The militarist, the foreign-concession hunter, the trading corporation seeking a market, and the diplomat maneuvering for territory for his country's honor and his friends' profit know their goal, appraise the obstacles correctly, and use means calculated to attain their end. It is only from the larger social point of view that they are stupid. From the view of their own interests they are intelligent. At least they have an even chance to get what they want, and from success they derive high satisfactions —wealth, power, pomp, and pride. The war system may be destructive of the whole, but not of all its parts. At any rate, if they are defeated by an enemy seeking the same objects they have at least had their fling.

Those who oppose war have not been defeated. They have not fought yet. They have been self-immobilized, self-emasculated. They have not even recognized the enemy. They thought that peace could be secured by appeals to idealism and maintained by devices of organization, as if war resulted only from lack of right thinking. So they worked zealously for "international cooperation," whatever that may mean. As if nations would refuse to cooperate if they were allowed to state their terms. Japan would cooperate with the League and America tomorrow if it were permitted to take over China. Germany would have buried the feud with France long ago if it could proceed to organize *Mitteleuropa*. What makes war is that there are irreconcilable conflicts of interest which offer no basis of cooperation. There is only one baby, and not even a Solomon to order it cut in half. That the causes of war may have something to do with nationalism and national aggrandizement for economic expansion, and that economic expansion may have something to do with conditions imposed by the results of the industrial system, and that the urge to economic expansion may be the only alternative to internal economic collapse —all this is ignored as if it were not. Naturally, for to face such considerations is to acknowledge that no specific will be a quick cure-all, which is less satisfying than to institute coöperation by legislative enactment. There is emotional glow only in wooing the progress that comes with a bound and by invocation. What matter that progress never has come that way in human history?

The causes of war cannot be wished away by exhortation or annulled by legal proclamation; neither, however, are they innate in the universe like death and climate and the tide. They are controllable if sufficient effort of the right kind be taken and if the price be paid. There can be no peace except at a price, and the price is the surrender of those objects and advantages which can be obtained only by *war*.

Not only the malevolent benefit from those advantages. To surrender imperialistic perquisites, including foreign markets, penalizes all alike. The struggle for markets, among the other stakes of imperialism, which is a solemn word for international economic competition, is not the fruit of iniquity. It is a necessity arising out of the present social and economic organization. But the present organization is neither divinely ordained nor eternal. It is the result of choices, conscious or unconscious. To ask our governments, composed of men who are themselves parts of the organization and its beneficiaries, to act as Galahads under these circumstances is both absurd and unfair: absurd, because it is certain that they will not be Galahads, and unfair, because it is not certain that we really want them to be. It is not certain that we are willing, even the most vociferously idealistic of us, either to accept the retrogression in standard of living which would be entailed or to make the drastic and painful social changes which are the only alternative.

This is far from saying, however, that war is ineradicable. It can be eradicated, but only if those who devote themselves to the task recognize its dimensions and measure up to them. They must be relentlessly clear-sighted, tough-minded, hard-bitten, worldly wise, incredulous, jaundiced in their skepticism of words unsupported by deed, and deaf to mellifluous rhetoric and the glib grandiloquence of easy idealism. Why should those qualities be restricted to those who accept what is because they do well by it? Manifestly they are, but why must they be? Why cannot those with high aspirations be also intelligent? Because they have not been, the war system is as strongly entrenched as it ever was.

IV

I have said that the two overshadowing problems for modern man were war and the economic system. I have discussed them separately not because they are unrelated but because they are usually separated in our [illegible], which in itself reflects the unreality of our thinking. It is no longer possible to draw a line of demarcation between political and economic. For university curriculums and intellectual liberals there may be such a boundary, but even government officials no longer recognize one. Cabinets decide how many yards of muslin shall be imported and how many pounds of butter exported.

War and the economic system are interrelated too in that the effort to prevent destruction has been equally futile in both and for the same reason: there has been no effort. The argument that has been made with reference to war can be repeated with regard to the economic dilemma. As the Kellogg Pact was in 1930, so was the New Deal in 1933. As the Kellogg Pact is in 1934, so will the New Deal be in 1937: both writ in water. Just as in 1919 it was apparent that war was fatal to society and that only heroic measures could save us, so in 1933 it was apparent that we were beset by something more than a periodic depression, that a deep-seated organic disease was working a slow paralysis through the economic body. All the forces released by the introduction of power machinery were drawing to a point. The strains could no longer be escaped in outlets for continuing expansion. Unhappily there are only five continents. The social organization of an agrarian eighteenth century and the economic organization proper to mass production, world markets, international finance, and concentration of credit could no longer coexist. The pressure was disruptive. Huge stores of produce piled up to rot and millions of men on the streets were the outward signs.

The results were easily grasped, if not the causes, and the word reconstruction came easily off the lips as, remember, it did in 1919. The New Deal was proclaimed as the translation of reconstruction and the N. R. A. as the translation of the New Deal. The nation was swept by revivalistic fervor. No peacetime act in American history had been similarly acclaimed, particularly by the intelligentsia. Mr. Roosevelt's sincerity was moving, his declaration of principles was convincing, and his appeals were winning. They deserved the response they received. Characteristically, however, we concentrated our attention and our loyalty on the admittedly fine generalities, and only the churlish pointed out the hiatus between the generalities and the concrete provisions for carrying them out. It was ungracious to read the National Industrial Recovery Act critically.

We appear now to be somewhat disillusioned. But what was there in that act that touched any of the fundamental factors in the economic situation, that affected the causes which had brought about the depression? What was there to reconcile the contradictions at the heart of the system—high productivity and lack of purchasing power to absorb the product? In his messages and radio broadcasts Mr. Roosevelt talked eloquently about the imperative need for distribution of wealth on a new principle to obviate concentration at the top. But what was there in any of the acts of his administration to bring that about? Minimum wages at rates which would have been considered shocking in the New Era, although they existed then, and which did not prevent the depression? Working hours shortened by a negligible fraction relative to the increase in productive effi-

ciency? Collective bargaining, subsequently nullified, which was an established institution in nearly all civilized countries and had not prevented the depression? Self-rule for industry, which furthered the tendency to monopoly which had accelerated the evolution to a crisis? What was there in the New Deal as revealed in act that had not been ordinary practice in advanced European countries for anywhere from ten to thirty years? Yet this was hailed as "the American way," as our demonstration to the world how to thread a course to prosperity and fulfillment between the Scylla of dictatorship and the Charybdis of collapse. Had the N. R. A. constituted only a beginning, the first of a series of steps in New Deal, the mildness of its provisions would have been unobjectionable. But it became an end in itself. By virtue of frequent repetition of his general purposes, Mr. Roosevelt, through a familiar process of psychological transference, took the declaration for the accomplishment. So likewise did the celebrants of the dawn, though the months wore on and General Johnson shadow-boxed, the velvet hand in the iron glove, *fortiter in modo, suaviter in re.* Industry was told that a new dispensation had come and it must submit to control; but industry did what it liked, as it always had. We had voiced ideals and passed a law embodying them. That was enough.

At this date I assume that it is generally conceded that the N. R. A. was a flourish in a void and that the net result is to free big business of such few trammels as we had managed to keep on it before. I assume that it is conceded that the New Deal is neither new nor a deal, and that a Rip Van Winkle who had fallen asleep in 1932 and awakens in 1937 will not be aware that there has been a New Deal. In essentials nothing has been changed in our economic system and nothing has been interposed to arrest or deflect the course of evolution which the system was taking before 1929. Surely no one today can talk about "the American revolution," not even corporation directors with their tongues in their cheeks. We are as we were. The point to which economic forces were drawing will grow sharper. Unless there is interposed some factor now invisible, we shall go on to fascist dictatorship or social revolution or economic catastrophe, or the first or second as the result of the third, with perhaps a few years' respite of deceptive recovery.

This is not to say, however, that either fascism or revolution was inevitable in the nature of the universe. It may be that there is no escape and that the momentum was already too strong to be checked. Perhaps it is impossible to bring about fundamental changes in a society by an orderly process, with transitions made at the easiest points and most favorable times. But that has not been proved. The experimental method of which we heard so much has not failed. There has been no experiment. There have been too few to demand experiment as the alternative to extremes. Just those classes that by instinct and tradition are opposed to extremes and know the dangers have been self-immobilized. The intellectuals and liberals not only are aware of the waste and cruelty of violent revolutions and the bestiality and terrorism of reactionary dictatorships but have the largest stake in the preservation of freedom of expression and opinion. Had they not been taken in by New Deals, which are the equivalent in economics of the direct primary in politics, had they been conscious of the distinction between declaration and consummation, they might have arrayed the force of opinion so as to compel the Administration to take itself at its word and put principle into practice. Unless they do so, no other class can. The plutocracy and its camp followers will fight for vested interests, of course; in this country the working class is helpless and the ordinary middle class is sodden. But they did not do so, or even make the attempt. They were fobbed off with exhortations as usual.

As a result, at the present status, the future goes by default to dictatorship by the plutocracy under a modulated form of fascism or revolution by upheaval of the proletariat. In this country such a statement of alternatives is artificial. There can only be a concealed fascism. If so, it will be by default, not by defeat. Fate has been neutral. It is we who have surrendered voluntarily. With everything at stake that we of the intellectuals prize, we have not even attempted to preserve it. We have been feeble and vocal and left decision to those who want to keep what they have and know how to do so. They are neither feeble nor vocal. They may be stupid from the social point of view, but not from the point of view of their own interest or what they have reason to believe is their own interest. The intellectuals and liberals have been stupid from both points of view. Their intelligence and effectiveness have been in inverse ratio to the loftiness of their purposes—in the social question just as in international relations.

Why that must be so is, to me at least, a riddle. Perhaps the key may be our cult of superficiality. From the grade schools to the Saturday luncheon meetings of upper middle-class associations we go by the principle that there is a royal road to learning and that information is wisdom. We assume that to know a little bit about many things is knowledge, and that the more "interests" one has the broader

one is. We go to fortnightly Saturday luncheons, one about Hitler and another about Manchuria and another about Chaco and another about Freud, and at the end of the season we have a confused idea that Mr. Hitler's conception of the libido is an evolution from Confucianism. We know something about more subjects than any other people in the world, and we know just enough about them to believe everything we hear and to form ill-founded opinions. We come by our philosophies easily and adopt our principles on the run. Maybe the reason liberals underestimate the obstacles they would subdue is that they are liberals only because they underestimate the obstacles. They have never really understood the ideas implicit in liberalism.

This may be the key to the riddle, and perhaps the key is, rather the callow philosophy of progress by which we live. There was a time when American optimism was only d[illegible], now it is also debilitating. Interestingly enough, the Americans are the only optimistic people in the world. The other nations, whether of Europe or the Orient, have not much hope of achieving mastery over destiny or surmounting the obstacles which nature puts to man. They are resigned. But they manage to have a good time by the way. They are hopeless but gay. They enjoy life, taking it as it is and always must be. We are sure that there is nothing in the scheme of things that will not yield to our assault, and we are more oppressed by life than those who have surrendered to it. We do not have a good time. The Viennese taxi chauffeur, who will never have a new suit and knows there is no use in anything, or the Chinese peasant, who never has quite enough to eat and knows that he may be swept away by flood tomorrow, laughs easily and enjoys the little things of the moment. Whoever has lived much abroad has noticed on returning that there is less laughter on the streets of an American city than anywhere else in the world. Other nations are pessimistic but happy. We are the most optimistic people in the world and the unhappiest.

Our optimism has always been hollow and artificial. It is founded on the specious belief in our conquest of nature because we occupied an undeveloped and fabulously rich continent simultaneously with the discoveries of science which made it possible for us to extract those riches easily. We have only developed resources, not conquered nature. The universe is still impregnable even if we have an automobile assembly line and can thrust back Lake Michigan to make a park for a century of progress exposition. We humored ourselves with the belief that we were immune to the woes that beset the rest of mankind. We are not. It is plain now that we have inherited all the age-old ills of man—war, poverty, stratification of classes, even the subjective maladjustments and unhappinesses that send us flocking to study groups in psychology. Even what was once called "un-American" in sexual relations—the "decadence" of Europe—is American too. Endowed with natural advantages such as no other nation has been given, we have managed our collective life no more successfully than any other nation. Except in material comforts there was no reason to expect that we should or could. The curse of Adam lies on us too. We have been the spoiled children of nature, not its favorite sons.

Now since 1919 and, more particularly since 1929, we can have no more illusions. It is time to put away childish things and cease from callow prattle. It is time to face the world maturely. Then we may be able to deal successfully with the harsh problems that face the next generation or two.

Those who would work for a better order will conceive the task as something more than formulating fine phrases as an escape from harsh choices. If they would rid mankind of the curse of war they will abandon all evangelicalism and take account of the causes of war. They will recognize the primary cause to be sovereign nationalism, not as an abstract concept but as an agent of competitive economic expansion. And they will recognize economic expansion not as impulse or dereliction from high moral principle but as a condition of survival for an industrialized capitalistic system of which private profit is the highest law and the motive power. To secure peace then is not a matter of converting diplomats and admirals. It is a question of giving up national economic expansion and accepting the retrogression that entails as a result of lower profits, unemployment, higher taxes, and a reduction in standard of living, or else of fundamentally recasting the economic system which was founded on continuous expansion and cannot function without it. Neither alternative is easy or pleasant. The second would be a surgical operation, with all the consequent loss of vitality and subsequent pain. These are the alternatives, however, unless we are to fight for markets, investments, and stores of natural resources. Agreeable or not, between them we must choose, and "coöperation," "understanding," and other vacuous nouns are vain.

Those who desire a higher social system not only as an insurance against war but for its own sake will likewise abandon recourse to appeals on ethical grounds. If they discern in the anarchy of laissez faire the causes for the economic debacle they cease thinking in terms of a vague "planning," which

leaves everything as it was before, and accept the necessity of applying the compulsions of social control in the full sense of the word, control as affecting property and profits. They will recognize that we cannot have the advantages of social control and retain the liberties of individual autonomy—liberties which in fact were doomed with the introduction of the first power machine. The price of collective control may be a violent wrench of our deepest instincts, but there is no alternative if we would escape the wastes and cruelties of the present system. Our only choice then is one of method—how control shall come and by whom imposed. For the middle ground, that of graduated steps taken at a predetermined pace and without the accompaniment of force, it may already be too late. The abdication of the liberals may have left the field to dictatorship, either Red or White. If so, there is left to us only to determine which of those we find less repellent. If not too late, then we can still escape dictatorships and violence only if liberalism as philosophy and method can have a rebirth with some virility. Then liberalism must be something more than well-meaning adolescence, and it must no longer be just to define a liberal as one who allows himself the luxury of appearing to deliberate before relapsing safely into the ranks of the mighty.

Questions:

1. Compare this essay carefully with Agar's "Culture versus Colonialism." Both men speak of the "American dream"; both think we may fall into fascism; both think we can avoid it. How much are they in agreement? What differences, if any, are to be found in their attitudes?
2. Is Peffer proud of the fact that "the Americans are the only optimistic people in the world"? How does Peffer connect our optimism with our belief in progress? Compare his attitude with Beard's
3. In any discussion of this sort definitions are highly important. What is Peffer's definition of Liberalism? Does he make his definition clear?

THE COSMIC WHIRLPOOL

GEORGE W. GRAY

PERHAPS the most straightforward evidence for the unity of the stellar universe is the discovery of galactic rotation. The idea itself is not new. Many world-builders have assumed that whirl is king among the galaxies as among the atoms; but it was not until 1926 that the speculation as applied to our home system found scientific formulation, and not until 1933 was the complete evidence massed for proof of the amazing effect in which our Sun—and the Earth too!—participate.

In the former year B. Lindblad, of the Stockholm Observatory, presented through the Swedish Academy of Sciences a theory which sought to account for certain peculiarities of stellar motion as consequences of the rotation of the whole system. A few months later J. H. Oort, a twenty-seven-year-old astronomer at Leyden Observatory, pointed out the observational means for testing Lindblad's theory, and demonstrated their use. In 1927 John S. Plaskett, at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in Victoria, British Columbia, applied the Oort analysis to distant stars which he had previously catalogued at Victoria, and during 1933 he further fortified the discovery by extending the analysis to hundreds of additional stars. To these three men of different nations then—Lindblad of Sweden, Oort of Holland, and Plaskett of Canada—we owe our latest picture of the star swirl we inhabit.

Objections immediately arise. If the whole system turns like a gigantic pinwheel, how can there be two opposing streams of stars, as Kapteyn discovered in 1904? The problem was further complicated by another systematic peculiarity pointed out by G. Stromberg in 1924. Stromberg, at Mount Wilson, had been classifying stars according to their velocities, and noticed that the high-speed stars (those moving faster than fifty miles a second) were all coursing toward one hemisphere of the sky. This "asymmetry of stellar motions" was almost at right angles to the center of the Galaxy in Sagittarius—which seemed inexplicable. By what strange operation of cosmic law were the speedy stars all crowding into one half of the sky?

Lindblad undertook to answer that and the earlier riddle posed by star streaming.

Suppose, to begin with, we assume that the Milky Way does rotate, how would its stars behave? It depends on their distribution. If the stars are evenly spaced throughout then the gravitational influence is directly proportional to the distance from the center of the system; and under those conditions all will revolve round the center in the same time, the system as a whole turning like a solid wheel.

But if the stars are unevenly spaced, and are more concentrated toward the center of the swarm, then the gravitational influence cannot act according to

the simple distance relation, but it is proportional to the *square* of the distance from the center. This means that the stars nearest the center will move fastest, and those farthest at the slowest rate. The Solar System provides an obvious analogy. Most of its mass is concentrated at the center in the body of the Sun, and we find that each planet moves with an individual velocity: Mercury, nearest the Sun, at 29 miles a second; Venus, next, at 21 miles a second; the Earth, third, at 18 miles a second; and so on, each outer planet having a slower motion, until we reach the outermost known, Pluto, whose velocity is 2 miles a second. The principle is also demonstrated by the rings of Saturn, those rotating belts of millions of particles which the spectroscope shows revolve round the planet in a series of zones of velocity, the inner zone moving fastest.

Now, the Milky Way is made up of millions of stars, more numerous, it may be, than the particles which make up Saturn's rings. In such a dispersed system, with stars highly concentrated toward the center of the swarm, as they seem to be in the Sagittarius region, would not the moving stars be compelled to revolve round that distant center in zones of varying velocity? The idea may be suggested in a simple diagram, though in adapting a graph of such widely separated bodies to the width of magazine columns serious distortions of scale are unavoidable, and must be allowed for. With this understanding, we picture the stellar zones of varying velocity as arranged somewhat in order of Diagram 1.

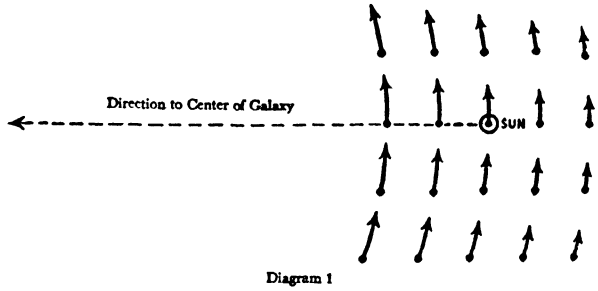


Diagram 1

If we could look at the Milky Way from the outside, we believe, on Lindblad's theory, that it would show a rotational effect something like that suggested above. The stars to the left of the Sun move more rapidly, and their velocity increases progressively as we approach the center of the Galaxy; while those to the right of the Sun, therefore more distant from the center, move more slowly. The length of the arrows suggests the relative speeds, though here again nothing is claimed as to exactness of scale.

But we are not able to view the Milky Way from the outside. Our observation post, the Earth, is hitched to the Sun, therefore we see the other stars as they appear from that moving platform. This means that all the stars in all the zones on the left move more rapidly than the Sun, and continually gain on us and pass us; whereas the stars in all the zones on the right are continually being outstripped by the Sun, therefore they fall behind, and seem to move in the opposite direction from their real motion. It is the optical effect that one gets from looking out the window of a fast-moving train at a slow train on a parallel track. Though the slow train is going in the same direction, it seems to the observer on the fast train to be backing. Thus it is that from our moving observatory in the Solar System the stars appear as if they were traveling in directions shown in Diagram 2.

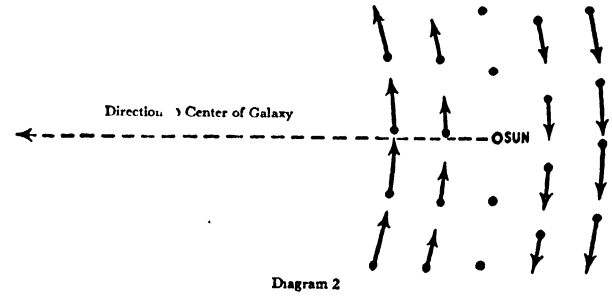


Diagram 2

The actual detection of galactic rotation is not so simple, however. The real motion of a celestial object rarely is across the sky. More usually the star paths are along diagonals or in curves, so that their real motion is compounded of two effects: (1) a motion across the sky, called the proper motion, and (2) a motion of approach or recession, called the radial velocity. Since the stars which betray the galactic rotation are all very distant objects, their changes of position across the sky are not perceptible within the few score years for which we have precise observations. Consequently, we must pitch our hopes on the radial velocities, that is, the apparent motions of the stars toward or away from the Earth. Fortunately this is an effect that can always be measured, irrespective of the distance, provided we can get a clear photograph of the star's spectrum. If the star is approaching, its spectral lines show a shift toward the violet end of the rainbow; if it is receding, the shift is oppositely, toward the red. And the effect is so directly related to the distant stellar motion that, by measuring the amplitude of the shift, the astronomer clocks the actual velocity in miles per second.

If we accept this situation and understand that all we are going to be able to see of the rotation are those apparent motions of approach or recession, our Diagram 3 assumes still a different form.

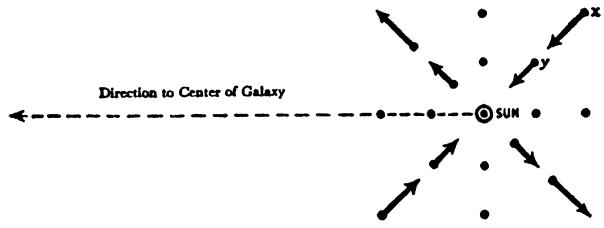


Diagram 3

The effect is as though the Sun were the focal point toward (or from) which all the moving stars are either converging or dispersing. But some of the stars appear to stand still. Those parallel to the Sun along the imaginary line drawn to the center of the Galaxy have no motion either toward or away from the Sun; similarly, those stars at right angles to this line, therefore immediately in front of or behind the Sun, are all moving with us at the same speed round the distant center, and so they too appear to be standing still. But between these lines of zero effect —and, most rapidly, along those directions midway between them—the stars do move in our spectrographs.

Those of the outer zones appear to be sweeping in toward the Sun from the upper right of the diagram and receding toward the lower right; while those of the inner zones seem to approach from the lower left and recede into the upper left. The velocity depends on the angle which the star makes with that imaginary line of direction to the galactic center. And it depends on another item as well: on the *distance*. You will notice in the diagram that Star x appears to be approaching with a higher velocity than Star y. Distance has the effect of heightening the apparent speed—and therein is the key to the observation of galactic rotation and the actual measurement of its rate.

After Lindblad had outlined the theory, Oort worked out the mathematics of these appearances, reduced the correlation of distance with velocity to an exact formula, and proceeded to test theory with fact. According to the theory, a star must be 200 light-years distant for the rotational effect to show a change of one kilometer (about two-thirds of a mile) per second in the radial velocity. But our instruments cannot detect so slight a change. Because of the disturbing effect of random motions and because of probable errors which inevitably enter into all such measurements, it has been found that five kilometers a second is about the smallest difference that can be discerned. In other words, Oort had to depend on the radial velocities of stars at distances of 1000 light years and more. He found about 300 remote stars conforming to these requirements; and when their data were analyzed according to his formula, they showed the predicted rotational effect.

This was an interesting correspondence of observation with theory, but more complete data were desirable before the confirmation was accepted. It happened that these data were available at the Canadian observatory. Here, during the preceding six years, Plaskett had been concentrating his studies on stars of the O and B types, investigating them for other reasons, and had recorded hundreds of radial velocities which had not yet been published. These O and B stars are the hottest, most massive, most luminous giants of the Milky Way; hence they give sharp spectra at great distances, and are ideal beacons for testing the rotational effect. Indeed, it was mainly stars of these two classes that Oort had used, but Plaskett and his associate J. A. Pearce had an additional 553 stars reliably clocked, and by 1933 they had extended this list to embrace 849 stars, many of them more than 6500 light-years distant.

It is these stars that have provided the principal observational proof, for analysis of the Canadian records completely confirmed Oort's conclusions. The stars appeared to be rushing headlong toward the Sun, or to be speeding away from it, and at about the velocities that Oort's equations predicted. The rotation of the Milky Way thus becomes one of the best authenticated of recent astronomical finds.

II

The discovery of the rotation is highly significant to science, not only as a revelation of the dynamics of our stellar system, but also as an opening to new methods of determining its dimensions. The motion of a single star tells us very little, but the motions of a group or system of stars in rotation round a center speak loudly. They give us a means of determining the center, of measuring the distance from the center outward to stars of a given velocity, and of weighing the mass of the whole system.

Early in his investigations Oort calculated the center of rotation, finding it to lie in Sagittarius, not far from the center of the Galaxy as fixed by Shapley on other indicators.

Several derivations of galactic dimensions have been made from the rotational data. The latest computation is that of Plaskett and Pearce, announced in 1934 from analyses of the rotational motions of all the O and B stars whose speeds are reliably known.

From their picture of the Milky Way, as thus derived, I abstract these features:

Distance from Sun to center, 32,500 light-years
Diameter of Milky Way, 97,500 light-years
Rotational velocity at Sun, 175 miles a second
Period of rotation at Sun, 224,000,000 years
Total mass of the Galaxy, 165,000,000,000 Suns

On the evidence of these figures the stars of the Sun's zone in the celestial whirl require 224,000,000 years to make one revolution round the distant center. Thus we may say that during the thousand million years we believe life to have been on the Earth our Solar System has made the circuit more than four times.

The fastest rate at which man has propelled himself through space is about four hundred miles an hour—attained in some of the airplane races and tests. At this speed one might dart from New York to Paris in less than half a day; but the Milky Way swings the Sun and planets through the same distance in less than half a minute! Our vaunted age of speed—with its streamlined vehicles on the roads and the rails and in the air and the ocean—is that of a tortoise compared with the velocities that the planet Earth has known for millions of years.

And it isn't only the Sun and planets and innumerable stars that are swept along in this wide curving whirlpool. There is something material between the stars, finer even than the cosmic dust of meteors—an elemental mist of diffuse gas. This almost impalpable stuff was stumbled on many years ago, but was misunderstood, the first guess being that the gas was some sort of halo or cloud surrounding certain stars. But recently, and largely through the researches of Professor Plaskett, it has been established that the gas pervades interstellar space throughout the Milky Way.

The presence of the interstellar gas is betrayed by absorption lines of calcium and sodium in the spectra of stars, showing that atoms of these elements are loose in space and are absorbing certain rays of passing star-light. Sir Arthur Eddington, to whom we are indebted for the theoretical interpretation of the cosmic cloud, doubts if the cloud is confined to these two elements. We see calcium and sodium signals because these two elements happen to have the sort of absorption preferences that are visible. Eddington infers that many other elements may be similarly dispersed through interstellar space, but their absorptions occur far out in the ultra-violet beyond the range that can be photographed through our atmosphere.

Not only do we find that this cosmic cloud permeates the Milky Way, but the spectroscope also shows that the cloud is in rotation, and at velocities identical with those of the stars.

If there is any community of motion between the stars and the cloud, remarks Eddington, "it must be because the same causes have operated in both, and not because one has constrained the other. At first sight a similarity seems plausible. We often treat the stellar system as a glorified gas, with stars for molecules. Is it then a case of two 'gases' finding their own conditions for equilibrium independently? Why should we be surprised that they both hit on the same solution? Nevertheless, I admit that I am surprised; the reason is that the two gases differ enormously in *viscosity*."

Viscosity, Eddington defines as "the rubbing of one zone of gas on another zone rotating at slightly different speed," and the possibilities here would seem to be almost infinite. But let us attend his explanation. I quote from Eddington's Halley Lecture at Oxford.

"An atom in the cosmic cloud may in the course of its wanderings expect a collision with another atom about once a year; in that time it traverses a path about equal to the distance from the Earth to the Sun. This is a long free path according to ordinary standards, but it is insignificant in the scale of the stellar universe. On the other hand, the free path of a star is practically infinite; it can go hundreds of times round its orbit without appreciable risk of deflection. The length of the free path determines the viscosity of a gas. The viscosity of the cosmic cloud is [illegible] for astronomical purposes; the viscosity of the star gas is enormous. In fact, the stellar universe, regarded as a gas, is the stickiest thing you could possibly imagine."

And what will be the outcome of this stickiness? There appear to be two alternatives. "We have a tug-of-war between the viscosity conditions and the simple pressure conditions which must inevitably end in the collapse or disruption of the system." Thus the Milky Way cannot be regarded as a permanent structure. By the law of rotation its parts are forever tending to fly off into space—indeed it is this centrifugal force that keeps the cosmic cloud distended, and the very presence of the cloud throughout the system is evidence of the rotation. Similarly, the viscosity conditions tend to slow down the motion and cause the parts to fall toward the center. It seems inescapable that one or the other of these contestants must finally triumph—with the odds perhaps better for dispersion than for collapse.

Meanwhile we are permitted to inhabit the system in what appears to be its youthful age, to look out

upon the whirlpool from our planetary mote within its swirl, and to catch broken glimpses of these complicated goings-on. Perhaps they are not complicated, and the fault lies in our defective vision. Again we must remind ourselves that we see the system only in fragments, never as a whole. Also, we see only that part of the Universe which is luminous, though it may well be that the dark matter exceeds the incandescent matter.

III

We know that dark matter exists, for here and there in the heavens we see blank areas in the midst of brilliant luminosities. In the southern Milky Way, not far from the famed Southern Cross, is a patch which early navigators named "The Coalsack" because of its shape and plutonian blackness. With the aid of the telescope smaller areas can be seen, and E. E. Barnard in his various studies at Yerkes, Lick, and Mount Wilson made a special search for these obscurations and listed hundreds of them. They were explained as nebulae too cool to radiate and too remote from stars to be excited to luminescence.

But in 1930, at Lick Observatory, R. J. Trumpler found evidence that these patches may be only more condensed agglomerations of a fog that is diffused through the Milky Way. He was studying open clusters of stars and noticed that when a distant cluster was in or near the belt of the Milky Way its light showed a distinct reddening which was absent from similar objects outside the galactic plane. Other studies confirm this. Individual stars, which tell by their spectra that they are blue giants, are reddish if their position is in the Milky Way girdle; whereas similar stars outside show no such color change.

Trumpler accounted for this on the idea that the fog is concentrated along and through the Milky Way's flattened swarm, but is absent or very diffuse in the space outside where the stars are more thinly spread. In viewing stars in the direction of the Milky Way we are looking through the thickest section of the fog. The reddening effect may be likened to that of the Earth's atmosphere, which shows the Sun as yellow at noon, and as red at sunset when the rays must pass through a long horizontal section of dust-laden air.

The galactic obscuration is not to be confused with the earlier discovered cosmic cloud. The cosmic cloud, which we know only by its absorption of calcium and sodium lines in the spectrum, is a finer, more elemental stuff, and causes no serious weakening of light. It seems likely that the galactic fog is made up of small solid particles rather than atoms—as though some of the star stuff had cooled to solidity, been ground to dust, and scattered. Joel Stebbins has calculated that if a single body like the Sun were pulverized and distributed through space in the form of dust, the obscuring power of this fine matter would be greater than that of all the stars in sight.

Trumpler's discovery caused a stir among the stellar explorers. For it told them, in effect, that their measuring rods were defective and would have to be recalibrated. To learn that light from the Milky Way stars is dimmed, not only by the distance through which its rays travel, but also by the presence of fog, is to learn that we have overestimated many of our distances. This absorption coefficient is one of the uncertain factors which make it difficult for astronomers to agree on the precise dimensions of the Galaxy; but that the fog exists, and that its absorption of stellar light in certain directions is appreciable, no stellar investigator now denies.

Indeed one may see facsimiles of the arrangement in the skies. Some of the spiral nebulae are so positioned that they appear in our photographs as on edge, and several of these show a dark belt encircling their inner luminosity. This dark belt looks *as if* it were an outlying zone of obscuring matter. Many authorities believe that our Galaxy would show a similar non-luminous edge if seen from the outside.

Knowledge of galactic obscuration has brought understanding of other effects. For example the absence of globular clusters from the Milky Way circle no longer requires us to assume an actual avoidance. It is more reasonable to believe that globular clusters exist in the direction of the galactic plane, as in all other directions, but that their light is dimmed into invisibility by the obscuration which is most pronounced along the plane.

Also, we can understand better now why Kapteyn's survey presented a stellar system so much smaller and more uniform than the real world. "Kapteyn," recalls Bart J. Bok, "neglected interstellar absorption in most of his investigations on galactic structure. He pointed out that a small absorption might have had a serious effect on his deductions, but at that time (1922) even a small absorption seemed improbable." The wide discrepancy in dimensions between Kapteyn's World and Shapley's World is chargeable —in part, at least—to ignorance of the existence of the galactic fog. Shapley's early approximations had to be scaled down because of neglect of this same factor. When we know more precisely how dense the fog is we shall be able to make our estimates of distance with more definiteness and with a greater unanimity.

Recently, at Mount Wilson Observatory, Stebbins

undertook to determine the effect of this dark matter on the light of distant globular clusters of stars. He used a sensitive photo-electric eye at the focus of the 100-inch telescope, and by measuring the progressive reddening of the clusters at increasing distances arrived at an estimate of the rate of the absorption. From these studies he made a calculation of the distance from the Sun to the center of the Milky Way and found it to be about 32,500 light-years. This is the figure that was arrived at by Plaskett and Pearce from their study of the galactic rotation—and the fact that these two independent methods of gauging dimensions are in close agreement gives added validity to each.

One consequence of these recent advances is enlarged confidence. Another is deeper humility. The discoveries of galatic rotation and galactic obscuration, both made within a five-year period, have strengthened the confidence of astronomers in their observational and mathematical tools of exploration. At the same time they have upset ideas which ten years ago seemed impregnable. The net gain is the intensification of the urge to research.

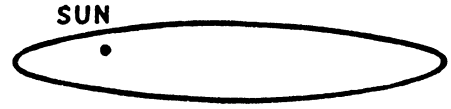
We encounter strange uniformities, or exceptions: zones of avoidance, zones of reddening of light—and now in one discovery we find the key, not only to these peculiarities, but also to a surer and more exact grasp of great distances.

Amid a welter of random motions, we see the high-speed stars heading for the northern hemisphere of the sky. No one would suspect on the eye evidence that these apparently swiftest stars are really the laggards—members of the slowly rotating outer zones which we pass so rapidly that they all seem to run away in the opposite direction. Thus simply and reasonably the galactic rotation explains Stromberg's "asymmetry of stellar motions."

Equally mystifying were the two opposing streams of Kapteyn's discovery—one river of stars flowing toward Orion's place in the heavens, the other flowing almost oppositely toward the constellation Telescopium in the southern skies. Various explanations were proposed to account for these preferential motions, but they were more ingenious than convincing until Lindblad outlined his theory of the rotation of the whole system. Assuming local gravitational effects, it is reasonable to derive from the rotation the elliptical orbits which explain star streaming as a natural consequence.

IV

Where is the Sun's place in this cosmic whirl? If we reduce our picture of the flattened lens-shaped swarm to the simplest form and represent it in cross-section by a bar two inches long, the Sun's place would be indicated by a point about two-thirds of an inch from center, and rather nearer the top than the bottom of the bar, thus:



The bar represents a slicing through the center of the plane of the Milky Way, where the stars are most thickly congregated; but a more realistic diagram would show a scattering of stars above and below the plane, and gradually thinning out. On the scale of the drawing the dot represents not so much the Sun as the solar neighborhood; and all the individual stars that we see with the naked eye would be within the dot. It is from this eccentric position that we survey the universe. The Local System, the cluster of which the sun is a member, surrounds us on all sides, and constitutes perhaps half of the left arm of the bar.

We may well wonder what is going to happen to a sub-grouping like our Local System in a rotating swarm. That part of the Local System which is toward the center is moving more swiftly round a shorter orbit than its other half which lies in a zone of slower motion. The difference in velocity can hardly be less than fifty miles a second. How many revolutions will be necessary to pull this sub-structure apart?

I asked Plaskett that question. He answered: "Undoubtedly there is a gravitational effect in the Local Cluster itself, tending to keep it intact, and there is some evidence that the Cluster has a rotary motion of its own. Both of these would tend to overcome the shearing effect of galactic rotation. If it were not for something like this, the Local Star Cloud or Local System would be spread into a complete ring in seven or eight revolutions, or less than 2000 million years. The presence of star clouds in the Galaxy must be regarded as only temporary eddies in a whirlpool, which form and dissipate continually."

Our recently found evidence for unity—the rotation of the whole system—turns out to be no evidence at all for permanence. Our dwelling place and observation post is not only a minor planet of a minor star, but it appears also to be caught within a transitory eddy of a cosmic whirlpool which itself seems to be in process of disruption—at least, these effects suggest themselves as the most probable outcome of such equilibrium as we have glimpsed.

If the structure of the Milky Way confesses itself to be a continually changing and apparently dissipating system, are we thereby stopped in our quest? Is this the end of systems and order? No, beyond the outermost bounds of our Galaxy, far outside the last outpost star, are the spiral nebulae. These nebulae are not green-tinted and diffuse, like those of our Galaxy, but are white and compactly symmetrical in form, and in some of the nearer of them individual stars have been seen. The most probable explanation is that these faint white glows are compounded starlight. And so we interpret them as other Milky Ways, other systems of stars and star clusters and dark and luminous clouds—other whirlpools in a vaster macrocosmic structure that is the world.

Questions:

1. This is primarily an expository essay. How many comparisons, however, does the author use?
2. Do these comparisons have any other function than that of illustration? (See the section on figurative language in "The Introduction to Poetry.")
3. Why does Gray use the comparison of the galaxy to a whirlpool in the title?
4. Gray writes "One consequence of these recent advances is enlarged confidence. Another is deeper humility." What is he attempting to do when he makes this statement?

THE STARS

GEORGE SANTAYANA

TO MOST people, I fancy, the stars are beautiful; but if you ask why, they would be at a loss to reply, until they remembered what they had heard about astronomy, and the great size and distance and possible habitation of those orbs. The vague and illusive ideas thus aroused fall in so well with the dumb emotion we were already feeling, that we attribute this emotion to those ideas, and persuade ourselves that the power of the starry heavens lies in the suggestion of astronomical facts.

The idea of the insignificance of our earth and of the incomprehensible multiplicity of worlds is indeed immensely impressive; it may even be intensely disagreeable. There is something baffling about infinity; in its presence the sense of finite humility can never wholly banish the rebellious suspicion that we are being deluded. Our mathematical imagination is put on the rack by our attempted conception that has all the anguish of a nightmare and probably, could we but awake, all its laughable absurdity. But the obsession of this dream is an intellectual puzzle, not an æsthetic delight. Before the days of Kepler the heavens declared the glory of the Lord; and we needed no calculation of stellar distances, no fancies about a plurality of worlds, no image of infinite spaces, to make the stars sublime.

Had we been taught to believe that the stars governed our fortunes, and were we reminded of fate whenever we looked at them, we should similarly tend to imagine that this belief was the source of their sublimity; and if the superstition were dispelled, we should think the interest gone from the apparition. But experience would soon undeceive us, and prove that the sensuous character of the object was sublime in itself. For that reason the parable of the natal stars governing our lives is such a natural one to express our subjection to circumstances, and can be transformed by the stupidity of disciples into a literal tenet. In the same way, the kinship of the emotion produced by the stars with the emotion proper to certain religious moments makes the stars seem a religious object. They become, like impressive music, a stimulus to worship. But fortunately there are experiences which remain untouched by theory, and which maintain the mutual intelligence of men through the estrangements wrought by intellectual and religious systems. When the superstructures crumble, the common foundation of human sentience and imagination is exposed beneath. Did not the infinite, by this initial assault upon our senses, awe us, and overwhelm us, as solemn music might, the idea of it would be abstract and mental like that of the infinitesimal, and nothing but an amusing curiosity. The knowledge that the universe is a multitude of minute spheres circling, like specks of dust, in a dark and boundless void, might leave us cold and indifferent, if not bored and depressed, were it not that we identify this hypothetical scheme with the visible splendor, the poignant intensity, and the baffling number of the stars. So far is the object from giving value to the impression, that it is here, as it must always ultimately be, the impression that gives value to the object. For all worth leads us back to actual feeling somewhere, or else evaporates into nothing—into a word and a superstition.

Now, the starry heavens are very happily designed to intensify the sensations on which their fascination must rest. The continuum of space is broken into points, numerous enough to give the utmost idea

of multiplicity, and yet so distinct and vivid that it is impossible not to remain aware of their individuality. The sensuous contrast of the dark background—blacker the clearer the night and the more stars we can see—with the palpitating fire of the stars themselves, could not be exceeded by any possible device.

Fancy a map of the heavens and every star plotted upon it, even those invisible to the naked eye: why would this object, as full of scientific suggestion surely as the reality, leave us so comparatively cold? The sense of multiplicity is naturally in no way diminished by the representation; but the poignancy of the sensation, the life of the light, are gone; and with the dulled impression the keenness of the emotion disappears. Or imagine the stars, undiminished in number, without losing any of their astronomical significance and divine immutability, marshalled in geometrical patterns; say in a Latin cross, with the words *In hoc signo vinces* in a scroll around them. The beauty of the illumination would be perhaps increased, and its import, practical, religious, and cosmic, would surely be a little plainer; but where would be the sublimity of the spectacle? Irretrievably lost: and lost because the form of the object would no longer tantalize us with its sheer multiplicity, and with the consequent overpowering sense of suspense and awe. Accordingly things which have enough multiplicity, as the lights of a city seen across water, have an effect similar to that of the stars, if less intense; whereas a star, if alone, because the multiplicity is lacking, makes a wholly different impression. The single star is tender, beautiful, and mild; we can compare it to the humblest and sweetest of things:

> A violet by a mossy stone
> Half hidden from the eye,
> Fair as *a star when only one*
> *Is shining in the sky.*

It is, not only in fact but in nature, an attendant on the moon, associated with the moon, if we may be so prosaic here, not only by contiguity but also by similarity.

> Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-regioned star
> Or vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky.

The same poet can say elsewhere of a passionate lover

> He arose
> Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star,
> Amid the sapphire heaven's deep repose.

How opposite is all this from the cold glitter, the cruel and mysterious sublimity of the stars when they are many! With these we have no tender associations; they make us think rather of Kant who could hit on nothing else to compare with his categorical imperative, perhaps because he found in both the same baffling incomprehensibility and the same fierce actuality. Such ultimate feelings are sensations of physical tension.

Questions.

1. Compare and contrast in as many ways as possible George W. Gray's essay with Santayana's. If Gray is attempting to satisfy our curiosity about the stars, may it be said that Santayana is trying to satisfy our curiosity about ourselves?
2. Compare Santayana's attitude toward the reader with Gray's.

OF THE RESEMBLANCE OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

THIS fagoting up of so many different pieces is done in this manner: I never set pen to paper but when too much rascally laziness oppresses me, and never anywhere but at home; so that it is the work of several pauses and intervals, as occasions keep me sometimes many months abroad. As to the rest, I never correct my first by any second conceptions; I peradventure may alter a word or so, but it is only to vary the phrase, and not to cancel my meaning. I have a mind to represent the progress of my humors, that every piece, as it comes from the brain, may be seen. I could wish I had begun sooner, and taken notice of the course of my mutations. A valet of mine that I employed to transcribe for me, thought he would make a prize by stealing several pieces from me which best pleased his fancy; but it is my comfort that he will be no greater a gainer than I shall be a loser by the theft. I am grown older by seven or eight years since I began; neither has it been without some new acquisition. I have in that time become acquainted with the colic, by the liberality of my years; and a long course of years does not pass easily without some such fruit. I could have been glad that, of other infirmities age has to present

long-lived men, it had chosen some one that would have been more welcome to me; for it could not possible have laid upon me a disease for which, even from my infancy, I have had a greater horror, and it is, in truth, of all the accidents of old age, the very distemper of which I have ever been most afraid. I have often thought with myself that I went on too far, and that, in so long a voyage, I should infallibly, at last, meet with some severe shock. I perceived, and oft enough declared, that it was time to be off, and that life was to be cut to the quick, according to the surgeon's rule in the amputation of a limb; and that Nature usually made him pay very dear interest who did not in due time restore the principal. And yet I was so far from being then ready, that in the eighteen months' time, or thereabouts, that I have been in this uneasy condition, I have inured myself to it, I have compounded with this colic, and have found therein to comfort myself and to hope. So much are men enslaved to their miserable being, that there is no condition so wretched that they will not accept for preserving it. According to Mecaenas:

Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxâ,
Lubricos quate dentes·
Vita dum superest, bene est;

"Let me be weak in hand, foot, back, loin, and teeth; what does it matter so that life remains?" And Tamerlane, with a foolish humanity, palliated the fantastic cruelty he exercised upon lepers, when he put all he could hear of to death, by pretending to deliver them from a painful life; for there was not one of them who would not rather have undergone a triple leprosy than to be deprived of his being. Antisthenes, the Stoic, being very sick, and crying out, "Who will deliver me from these evils?" Diogenes, who was come to visit him, "This," said he, presenting him a knife, "presently, if thou wilt." "I do not say from my life," he replied, "but from my disease." The sufferings that only attack the mind I am not so sensible of as most other men, and that partly out of judgment. For the world looks upon several things as dreadful, or to be avoided at the expense of life, that are almost indifferent to me; partly through a stupid and insensible complexion I have in accidents which do not hit me point-blank; and that insensibility I look upon as one of the best parts of my natural constitution: but essential and corporeal sufferings I am very sensible of. And yet, having long since foreseen them, though with a sight weak and delicate, and softened with the long and happy health and quiet that God has been pleased to give me the greatest part of my time, I had in my imagination fancied them so insupportable, that, in truth, I was more afraid than I have since found I had cause; by which I am still more fortified in this belief, that most of the faculties of the soul, as we employ them, more disturb the repose of life than any way promote it. . . .

My fits come so thick upon me that I am scarce ever in health; and yet I have hitherto kept my mind in such a frame that, provided I can continue it, I find myself in a much better condition of life than a thousand others who have no fever nor other disease but what they create to themselves for want of reasoning. There is a certain sort of subtle humility that springs from presumption; as this, for example, that we confess our ignorance in many things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge that there are, in the works of Nature, some qualities and conditions that are imperceptible by us, and of which our understanding cannot discover the means and causes. By this honest declaration we hope that people shall also believe us in those that we say we do understand. We need not trouble ourselves to seek miracles and strange difficulties; methinks there are wonders among the things that we see that surpass all miracles. What a wonderful thing it is that that from which we are produced should carry in itself the impression not only of the bodily form, but even of the thoughts and inclinations of our fathers! Wherein can that matter contain that infinite number of forms? And how do they carry on these resemblances with so precipitant and irregular a progress that the grandson shall be like his great grandfather, the nephew like his uncle? In the family of Lepidus at Rome "there were three, *not successively, but by intervals,* that were born with one and the same eye covered with a web." At Thebes there was a race that carried, from their mothers, the mark of the head of a lance, and those who were not born so were looked upon as illegitimate. And Aristotle says that, in a certain nation, where the wives were in common, they assigned the children to their fathers by their resemblance. It is to be believed that I derive this infirmity from my father; for he died wonderfully tormented with a *great stone.* He was never sensible of his disease till the sixty-seventh year of his age, and, before that, had never felt any symptoms of it, and had lived till then in a happy state of health, little subject to infirmities; and, having lived seven years in this disease, he died a very painful death. I was born about twenty-five years before this distemper seized him, and, in his most healthful state of body, was his third child in order of birth. Where could this malady lurk all that while? He himself being so far from the infirmity at my birth, how do

I carry away so great an impression of its share? And how was it so concealed that, till forty-five years after, I did not begin to be sensible of it; being the only one to this hour amongst so many brothers and sisters, and all of one mother, that was ever troubled with it? He that can satisfy me in this point I will believe him in as many miracles as he pleases; always provided that, as the manner is, he does not give me a doctrine much more intricate and fantastic than the thing itself. . . .

The youngest of the brothers, which were four, and by many years the youngest, The Sieur de Bussaget, was the only man of the family that made use of medicine; by reason, I suppose, of the commerce he had with the other arts, for he was a counsellor in the Court of Parliament, and it succeeded so ill with him that, being in outward appearance of the strongest constitution, he yet died before any of the rest, the Sieur St. Michael only excepted. It is possible I may have derived this natural antipathy to physic from them; but, had there been no other consideration in the case, I would have endeavored to have overcome it. For all conditions that spring in us without reason are vicious, and are a kind of disease that we are to wrestle with. It may be I had naturally this propension; but I have supported and fortified it by arguments and reasons, which have established in me the opinion I have of it. For I also hate the consideration of refusing physic for the nauseous taste. I should hardly be of their humor who find health worth purchasing by all the most painful cauteries and incisions that can be applied. And, according to Epicurus, I conceive that pleasures are to be avoided if greater pains be the consequence, and pains to be coveted that will terminate in greater pleasures. Health is a precious thing, and the only one, in truth, meriting that a man should lay out, not only his time, work, labor, and goods, but also his life itself to obtain it, forasmuch as without it life is a burden to us. Pleasure, wisdom, learning, and virtue, without it, wither and vanish; and to the most labored and solid discourses that philosophy would imprint in us to the contrary, we need no more but oppose the idea of Plato being struck with an epilepsy or apoplexy, and, in this presupposition, to defy him to call the rich faculties of his soul to his assistance. All means that conduce to health I can neither think painful nor dear. But I have some other appearances that make me strangely suspect all this merchandise. I do not deny but there may be some art in it; and that there are not, amongst so many works of nature, some things proper for the preservation of health, that is most certain. . . .

I do not disapprove the use we make of things the earth produces, nor doubt, in the least, of the power and fertility of Nature, and disapprove not the application of what she affords to our necessities. I very well see that pikes and swallows thrive by its laws; but I mistrust the inventions of our wit, knowledge, and art, to countenance which we have abandoned Nature and her rules, and wherein we keep no bounds nor moderation. As we call the modification of the first laws that fall into our hands Justice, and their practice and dispensation often very foolish and very unjust; and as those who scoff at and accuse it do not mean, nevertheless, to wrong that noble virtue, but only condemn the abuse and profanation of that sacred title; so in physic I very much honor that glorious name, and the end it is studied for, and what it promises to the service of mankind; but its prescriptions I neither honor nor esteem.

In the first place, experience makes me dread it; for, amongst all of my acquaintance, I see no race of people so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who are slaves to physic. Their very health is altered and corrupted by the regimen they are constrained to. Physicians are not content to deal only with the sick, but they change health into sickness, for fear men should at any time escape their authority. Do they not, from a continual and perfect health, infer an argument of some great sickness to ensue? I have been sick often enough, and have, without their aid, found my maladies as easy to be supported (though I have made trial of almost all sorts) and as short as those of any other, without swallowing their nauseous doses. The health I have is full and free, without other rule or discipline than my own custom and pleasure. I never disturb myself that I have no physician, no apothecary, nor any other assistance, which I see most men more afflicted at than they are with their disease. What do the physicians themselves, by the felicity and duration of their own lives, convince us of the apparent effect of their skill?

Questions·

1. Does this essay have any formal structure or is it merely haphazard? If it has a structure, what determines that structure?
2. What is Montaigne's real theme in this essay? Is it the theme stated in the title, or is it something else?
3. What is Montaigne's attitude toward his reader? Do you learn anything about his attitude from the first paragraph of the essay in which he states how he writes?

poet's little picture of him affords the poet an appropriate ending for his poem.

But this is not quite the whole story yet. In interpreting, in trying to get the *meaning* of an experience, the poet, being a human being writing for human beings, is certain to interpret in human terms. The eagle, even in this objective picture becomes something of a human being. He is, one might say, like a robber baron, exulting in his own liberty and fierceness and strength.

Unassailable in his own castle perched on the cliffs, he exacts toll at pleasure from the country around him. This is, as a matter of fact, what Tennyson does say about the eagle, though very wisely he does not say it in so many words, but merely suggests it to the reader who cares to find it. But it is implied in the fact that he gives his eagle *hands* and in that he has him watch from his mountain *walls*. *Walls* is a human word. A wall is a fabric built by men. And so the phrase, "his mountain walls," implies a connection between the eagle and his human counterparts who owned rocky fastnesses which were indeed often as inaccessible as an eagle's aerie. Not least important is the word, *his*. Animals do not properly own property. Tennyson's eagle owns his crag; and the bird becomes human enough for us, even in such a relatively objective poem, that we feel a sort of understanding of it, and therefore a sense of *meaning* to the whole. And in the poem one participates in the exhilaration of the eagle's distant view and the furious but controlled plunge downward Observe how the poet has made the word *falls* the climatic point of the poem, the word on which the whole effect of the poem is finally concentrated.

WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

(Song from *Love's Labor's Lost*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

When icicles hang by the wall,
  And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
  And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
  Tu-whit, to-who,
  A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
  And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
  And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
  Tu-whit, to-who,
  A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Questions:

1. Does this poem contain merely purely objective description?
2. If not, what else does it give to the reader?

WINTER

From *The Seasons*

JAMES THOMSON (1700–1748)

Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease.
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun-discolored flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook,
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First, joyless rains obscure
Drive through the mingling skies with vapor foul,
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.

Questions:

Compare this with "To Winter," by Blake, on the following grounds: (a) What comment, if any, does each of the poets make? (b) Which poem is the more realistic? (c) Which poem uses personification more fully? (d) Why did the poet in each case employ personification?

TO WINTER

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

O winter! bar thine adamantine doors:
The North is thine; there hast thou built thy dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy roofs,
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car.

pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the 'Lady Blanch'; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays, and all other fun, are gone now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go in and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now—when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which after all never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologizes, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves, in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion,

with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton,* as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor-hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked—live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fire-side, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe,* which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R—is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

Questions:

What is Lamb's real theme in this essay? What is the quality of his humor? What is the tone of the essay? What does the use of the allusions and quotations which Lamb makes indicate about Lamb's attitude toward his reader?

DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERIE

CHARLES LAMB

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great-hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John

smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry, too, of the neighborhood, for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, aye, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I could never be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red-berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings; I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slily deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out; and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven

long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately a[illegible]. I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side; but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

Question:

In the "Introduction to the Essay" it was stated that "Dream Children" as an essay is very close to fiction. The tone of the essay is therefore very important. What is this tone? Does Lamb ever become sentimental?

ON THE FEELING OF IMMORTALITY IN YOUTH

WILLIAM HAZLITT

NO YOUNG man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brother's, and a fine one. There is a feeling of Eternity in youth which makes us amends for everything. To be young is to be as one of the Immortals. One-half of time indeed is spent —the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures, for there is no line drawn, and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own—

The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us.

Death, old age, are words without a meaning, a dream, a fiction, with which we have nothing to do. Others may have undergone, or may still undergo them—we "bear a charmed life," which laughs to scorn all such idle fancies. As, in setting out on a delightful journey, we strain our eager sight forward,

Bidding the lovely scenes at distance hail,

and see no end to prospect after prospect, new objects presenting themselves as we advance, so in the outset of life we see no end to our desires nor to the opportunities of gratifying them. We have as yet found no obstacle, no disposition to flag, and it seems that we can go on so forever. We look round in a new world, full of life and motion, and ceaseless progress, and feel in ourselves all the vigor and spirit to keep pace with it, and do not foresee from any present signs how we shall be left behind in the race, decline into old age, and drop into the grave. It is the simplicity and, as it were, abstractedness of our feelings in youth that (so to speak) identifies us with nature and (our experience being weak and our passions strong) makes us fancy ourselves immortal like it. Our short-lived connection with being, we fondly flatter ourselves, is an indissoluble and lasting union. As infants smile and sleep, we are rocked in the cradle of our desires, and hushed into fancied security by the roar of the universe around us—we quaff the cup of life with eager thirst without draining it, and joy and hope seem ever mantling to the brim—objects press around us, filling the mind with their magnitude and with the throng of desires that wait upon them, so that there is no room for the thoughts of death. We are too much dazzled by the gorgeousness and novelty of the bright waking dream about us to discern the dim shadow lingering for us in the distance. Nor would the hold that life has taken of us permit us to detach our thoughts that way, even if we could. We are too much absorbed in present objects and pursuits. While the spirit of youth remains unimpaired, ere "the wine of life is drunk," we are like people intoxicated or in a fever, who are hurried away by the violence of their own sensations: it is only as present objects begin to pall upon the sense, as we have been disappointed in our favorite pursuits, cut off from our closest ties, that we by degrees become weaned from the world, that passion loosens its hold upon futurity, and that we begin to contemplate as in a glass darkly the possibility of parting with it for good. Till then, the example of others has no effect upon us. Casualties we avoid; the slow approaches of age we play at *hide and seek* with. Like the foolish fat scullion in Sterne, who hears that Master Bobby is dead, our only reflection is, "So am

not I!" The idea of death, instead of [illegible] our confidence, only seems to strengthen and enhance our sense of the possession and enjoyment of life. Others may fall around us like leaves, or be mowed down by the scythe of Time like grass: these are but metaphors to the unreflecting, buoyant ears and overweening presumption of youth. It is not till we see the flowers of Love, Hope, and Joy withering around us, that we give up the flattering delusions that before led us on, and that the emptiness and dreariness of the prospect before us reconciles us hypothetically to the silence of the grave.

Life is indeed a strange gift, and its privileges are most mysterious. No wonder when it is first granted to us, that our gratitude, our admiration, and our delight should prevent us from reflecting on our own nothingness, or from thinking it will ever be recalled. Our first and strongest impressions are borrowed from the mighty scene that is opened to us, and we unconsciously transfer its durability as well as its splendor to ourselves. So newly found, we cannot think of parting with it yet, or at least put off that consideration *sine die*. Like a rustic at a fair, we are full of amazement and rapture, and have no thought of going home, or that it will soon be night. We know our existence only by ourselves, and confound our knowledge with the objects of it. We and Nature are therefore one. Otherwise the illusion, the "feast of reason and the flow of soul," to which we are invited, is a mockery and a cruel insult We do not go from a play till the last act is ended, and the lights are about to be extinguished. But the fairy face of Nature still shines on: shall we be called away before the curtain falls, or ere we have scarce had a glimpse of what is going on? Like children, our stepmother Nature holds us up to see the raree-show of the universe, and then, as if we were a burden to her to support, lets us fall down again. Yet what brave sublunary things does not this pageant present, like a ball or *fête* of the universe!

To see the golden sun, the azure sky, the outstretched ocean; to walk upon the green earth, and be lord of a thousand creatures; to look down yawning precipices or over distant sunny vales; to see the world spread out under one's feet on a map; to bring the stars near; to view the smallest insects through a microscope; to read history, and consider the revolutions of empire and the successions of generations; to hear the glory of Tyre, of Sidon, of Babylon, and of Susa, and to say all these were before me and are now nothing; to say I exist in such a point of time, and in such a point of space; to be a spectator and a part of its ever-moving scene; to witness the change of season, of spring and autumn, of winter and summer; to feel hot and cold, pleasure and pain, beauty and deformity, right and wrong; to be sensible to the accidents of nature; to consider the mighty world of eye and ear; to listen to the stock-dove's notes amid the forest deep; to journey over moor and mountain; to hear the midnight sainted choir; to visit lighted halls, or the cathedral's gloom, or sit in crowded theaters and see life itself mocked; to study the works of art and refine the sense of beauty to agony; to worship fame, and to dream of immortality; to look upon the Vatican, and to read Shakespeare; to gather up the wisdom of the ancients, and to pry into the future; to listen to the trump of war, the shout of victory; to question history as to the movements of the human heart; to seek for truth; to plead the cause of humanity; to overlook the world as if time and nature poured their treasures at our feet—to be and to do all this, and then in a moment to be nothing—to have it all snatched from us as by a juggler's trick, or a phantasmagoria! There is something in this transition from all to nothing that shocks us and damps the enthusiasm of youth new flushed with hope and pleasure, and we cast the comfortless thought as far from us as we can. In the first enjoyment of the state of life we discard the fear of debts and duns, and never think of the final payment of our great debt to Nature. Art we know is long; life, we flatter ourselves, should be so too. We see no end of the difficulties and delays we have to encounter: perfection is slow of attainment, and we must have time to accomplish it in. The fame of the great names we look up to is immortal: and shall not we who contemplate it imbibe a portion of ethereal fire, the *divinæ particula auræ*, which nothing can extinguish? A wrinkle in Rembrandt or in Nature takes whole days to resolve itself into its component parts, its softenings and its sharpnesses; we refine upon our perfections, and unfold the intricacies of Nature. What a prospect for the future! What a task have we not begun! And shall we be arrested in the middle of it? We do not count our time thus employed lost, or our pains thrown away; we do not flag or grow tired, but gain new vigor at our endless task. Shall Time, then, grudge us to finish what we have begun, and have formed a compact with Nature to do? Why not fill up the blank that is left us in this manner? I have looked for hours at a Rembrandt without being conscious of the flight of time, but with ever new wonder and delight, have thought that not only my own but another existence I could pass in the same manner. This rarefied, refined existence seemed to have no end, nor stint, nor principle of decay in it. The print would remain long after I who looked on it had become the prey of worms. The thing seems in itself out of all reason: health, strength, appetite are opposed to the idea of death, and we are not ready to credit it till we have

found our illusions vanished, and our hopes grown cold. Objects in youth, from novelty, etc, are stamped upon the brain with such force and integrity that one thinks nothing can remove or obliterate them. They are riveted there, and appear to us as an element of our nature. It must be a mere violence that destroys them, not a natural decay. In the very strength of this persuasion we seem to enjoy an age by anticipation. We melt down years into a single moment of intense sympathy, and by anticipating the fruits defy the ravages of time. If, then, a single moment of our lives is worth years, shall we set any limits to its total value and extent? Again, does it not happen that so secure do we think ourselves of an indefinite period of existence, that at times, when left to ourselves, and impatient of novelty, we feel annoyed at what seems to us the slow and creeping progress of time, and argue that if it always moves at this tedious snail's pace it will never come to an end? How ready are we to sacrifice any space of time which separates us from a favorite object, little thinking that before long we shall find it move too fast.

For my part, I started in life with the French Revolution, and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. But I did not foresee this result. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. The new impulse to ardor given to men's minds imparted a congenial warmth and glow to mine; we were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that long before mine was set, the sun of liberty would turn to blood, or set once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell.

I have since turned my thoughts to gathering up some of the fragments of my early recollections, and putting them into a form to which I might occasionally revert. The future was barred to my progress, and I turned for consolation and encouragement to the past. It is thus that, while we find our personal and substantial identity vanishing from us, we strive to gain a reflected and vicarious one in our thoughts: we do not like to perish wholly, and wish to bequeath our names, at least, to posterity. As long as we can make our cherished thoughts and nearest interests live in the minds of others, we do not appear to have retired altogether from the stage. We still occupy the breasts of others, and exert an influence and power over them, and it is only our bodies that are reduced to dust and powder. Our favorite speculations still find encouragement, and we make as great a figure in the eye of the world, or perhaps a greater, than in our lifetime. The demands of our self-love are thus satisfied, and these are the most imperious and unremitting. Besides, if by our intellectual superiority we survive ourselves in this world, by our virtues and faith we may attain an interest in another, and a higher state of being, and may thus be recipients at the same time of men and of angels.

> E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
> E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

As we grow old, our sense of the value of time becomes vivid. Nothing else, indeed, seems of any consequence. We can never cease wondering that that which has ever been should cease to be. We find many things remain the same: why then should there be change in us. This adds a convulsive grasp of whatever is, a sense of a fallacious hollowness in all we see. Instead of the full, pulpy feeling of youth tasting existence and every object in it, all is flat and vapid,—a whited sepulcher, fair without but full of ravening and all uncleanness within. The world is a witch that puts us off with false shows and appearances. The simplicity of youth, the confiding expectation, the boundless raptures, are gone: we only think of getting out of it as well as we can, and without any great mischance or annoyance. The flush of illusion, even the complacent retrospect of past joys and hopes, is over: if we can slip out of life without indignity, can escape with little bodily infirmity, and frame our minds to the calm and respectable composure of *still-life* before we return to physical nothingness, it is as much as we can expect. We do not die wholly at our deaths: we have moldered away gradually long before. Faculty after faculty, interest after interest, attachment after attachment disappear: we are torn from ourselves while living, year after year sees us no longer the same, and death only consigns the last fragment of what we were to the grave. That we should wear out by slow stages, and dwindle at last into nothing, is not wonderful, when even in our prime our strongest impressions leave little trace but for the moment, and we are the creatures of petty circumstance. How little effect is made on us in our best days by the books we have read, the scenes we have witnessed, the sensations we have gone through! Think only of the feelings we experienced in reading a fine romance (one of Sir Walter's, for instance); what beauty, what sublimity, what interest, what heart-rending emotions! You would suppose the feelings you then experienced would last forever, or subdue the mind to their own harmony and tone: while we are reading it seems as if nothing could ever put us out of our way, or trouble us:—the first splash of mud that we get on entering the street, the first twopence we are cheated out of, the feeling vanishes clean out of our minds, and we become the prey of petty and annoying circumstance.

The mind soars to the lofty: it is at home in the groveling, the disagreeable, and the little. And yet we wonder that age should be feeble and querulous,—that the freshness of youth should fade away. Both worlds would hardly satisfy the extravagance of our desires and of our presumption.

Questions:

1. What is the theme of the essay?
2. What is the logical structure of the essay; that is, the development of the theme?
3. What are the author's attitudes toward the ideas?
4. How do the examples, comparisons, and rhythms work to suggest these attitudes?

THE ECSTATIC MOMENT

WALTER PATER

TO REGARD all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without —our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals, the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorus and lime and delicate fibers, are present not in the human body alone: we detect them in places most remote from it. Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them—the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain under every ray of light and sound —processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us: it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us those elements are broadcast, driven in many currents; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resultant combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours, under which we group them—a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it. This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces parting sooner or later on their ways.

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye, the gradual fading of color from the wall—movements of the shoreside, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest—but the race of the mid-stream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflection begins to play upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like some trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions—color, odor, texture—in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a group of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world. Analysis goes a step farther still, and assures us that those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

Philosophiren, says Novalis, *ist dephlegmatisiren vivificiren*. The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. Every

moment some form grown perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us,—for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colors, and curious odors, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the very brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendor of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte, or of Hegel, or of our own. Philosophical theories or ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "Philosophy is the microscope of thought." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

One of the most beautiful passages of Rousseau is that in the sixth book of the *Confessions*, where he describes the awakening in him of the literary sense. An undefinable taint of death had clung always about him, and now in early manhood he believed himself smitten by mortal disease. He asked himself how he might make as much as possible of the interval that remained; and he was not biased by anything in his previous life when he decided that it must be by intellectual excitement, which he found just then in the clear, fresh writings of Voltaire. Well! we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo says: we are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve —*les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis:* we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more. Some spend this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest, at least among "the children of this world," in art and song. For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality of your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

This essay undertakes to answer a question very similar to that put in Stevenson's essay Pater here, like Stevenson, takes into account the scientific picture of man as well as what he calls "the inward world of thought and feeling." But Pater deals not with the grounds for not despairing of good, but with this question: in view of the confusion and brevity of life, what is the most satisfactory goal for the individual to try to attain? That goal is, for Pater, to get "as many pulsations as possible into the given time," pulsations of intense experience which give a "quickened sense of life," a "multiplied consciousness." But to achieve this most fully a sense of subtle discrimination is necessary, a sense which art stimulates and feeds.

Questions.

1 How does Pater make his answer to the question seem plausible and inevitable? Discuss this in terms of his selections of images and comparisons.
2 There are two dominant images which appear in the essay, that of the flame and that of the prisoner in the dark cell. Work out the variations on these two images, and try to determine how other images are related, in their connotations, to these.
3. Compare Pater's view of the function of culture with Arnold's view.
4 Has Pater answered the objection that, after all, the surest way to attain "intensity" in life is by continual indulgence of the physical appetites? Does his view provide a place for moral judgments?

PULVIS ET UMBRA

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

WE LOOK for some reward for our endeavors 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 honored for a virtue and 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 to 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 familiarity 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 tumors 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 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 inconceivable 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 specter 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 [illegible]— and yet looked at nearher, 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 neighbor, 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 honor 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 labor.

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 stage 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 neighbors, 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 honor 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 health, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honor, 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 genius· 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 godlike 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 called 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.

In this essay Stevenson starts his discussion with a question. what is there in human life which reassures us when "we are tempted to despair of good"? The question is all the more difficult to answer when we realize that men cannot agree as to what goodness is; for standards vary from time to time, from place to place, from religion to religion, and from one set of social conventions to another set of social conventions.

Stevenson attempts to answer this question by looking at "the harsh face of life" itself. But this investigation leads to what is apparently a paradox from one point of view life seems to be a merely casual and meaningless development in the solar system, a mere "fungus" or "putrescence" upon the "rotatory island," which is the earth, from another point of view life offers the spectacle of courage, sacrifice, and aspiration The first view is based primarily on the picture of the cosmos which science gives, a description which is schematic, abstract, and mechanical, and which finds no place for courage, sacrifice, and aspiration, or, as Stevenson puts it, "affords no habitable city for the mind of man." For example, let us consider the definitions which various sciences might give of some person: chemistry would see that person as a chemical formula; biology would see the person in terms of anatomical structure and function, and so with the other sciences But to one who loved or hated that person these descriptions would seem woefully inadequate; they would provide "no habitable city" for his mind. But the second view takes into account matters which elude, necessarily, the scientific formulation, matters which concern values and standards of conduct, honor, heroism, courage, pity, generosity, sympathy, etc. Man, even in the degraded conditions described in some of Stevenson's examples, retains some wish, however feeble, to "do good," some standard of conduct which he will not violate, and even the lower animals sometimes behave in ways which do not seem to be dictated by their mere appetites In other words, all life seems to involve values beyond the merely materialistic interpretation. Stevenson's conclusion, therefore, does not imply a rejection of the first view (which within its own terms is perfectly sound), but it does involve a rejection of the idea that the first view exhausts the meaning of life

We have just inspected the framework of ideas in this essay, but it will have occurred to the student that the essay enforces these points, not merely abstractly, but with a strong emotional coloring, a coloring which sets up attitudes toward the ideas, and which makes the effect of the essay go beyond the mere statement of ideas How is this emotional coloring secured? Consider the section of the essay dealing with the "scientific" view of life. Stevenson, quite properly for his purposes, uses a very "unscientific" method of presenting the scientific view, that is, since he is anxious to appeal to our emotional attitudes, he is not content to offer an abstract description Instead, notice how concrete is the description, and how much figurative language is used. Examine, for example, these comparisons· "This stuff . . . rots uncleanly into something we call life . . . swelling in tumors that become independent, sometimes even . . locomotory. . . ." These comparisons ("rots uncleanly," "tumors") are not used merely to help us understand more clearly the process by which life may have arisen on the earth; that is, they are not merely descriptive and neutral. Rather, they are used to imply an attitude toward life, their connotations suggest an un-

healthy growth out of decay, the fouling of something clean, a disease; in other words, these comparisons imply a judgment, a judgment that life, if it does not transcend the purely materialistic level, is repulsive But the comparisons and examples used in the second section of the essay, although they involve scenes of poverty, shame, and degradation, work in exactly the opposite direction the savage passes his opinions "like a Roman senator." In general, it will be seen that the examples and the comparisons which Stevenson has used throughout the essay constantly suggest that the reader adopt certain attitudes toward the ideas which are being presented.

In the same way as Stevenson uses the comparisons and examples, Stevenson uses the rhythms of his sentences to suggest attitudes Notice, for example, the rhythms of the two long sentences which constitute the final paragraph, and notice the function of the repetitive structure; and in this regard compare Stevenson's style with the style of Gray in "The Cosmic Whirlpool," a style which uses rather flattened, unemphatic rhythms. This difference in style can be easily correlated with a difference in intention. A style, in fact, must always be judged by its contribution to the total effect of the piece of writing in question

Questions:

1. Investigate the paradoxes involved in the following comparisons: "to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls," "condemned to some nobility all their lives long," and "this hair-crowned bubble of the dust."
2. Compare the attitude toward science evidenced in this essay with that of Beard, Ayres, and Arnold.
3. Compare this essay on the grounds of style with "Old China" and "Michigan Magic."
4. Would Stevenson accept Hemingway's story, "The Killers," as an example of human value present in an unpromising context?

THE CHILL OF ENTHUSIASM

AGNES REPPLIER

THERE IS no aloofness so forlorn as our aloofness from an uncontagious enthusiasm, and there is no hostility so sharp as that aroused by a fervor which fails of response. Charles Lamb's "D—n him at a hazard," was the expression of a natural and reasonable frame of mind with which we are all familiar, and which, though admittedly unlovely, is in the nature of a safeguard. If we had no spiritual asbestos to protect our souls, we should be consumed to no purpose by every wanton flame. If our sincere and restful indifference to things which concern us not were shaken by every blast, we should have no available force for things which concern us deeply. If eloquence did not sometimes make us yawn, we should be besotted by oratory. And if we did not approach new acquaintances, new authors, and new points of view with life-saving reluctance, we should never feel that vital regard which, being strong enough to break down our barriers, is strong enough to hold us for life

The worth of admiration is, after all, in proportion to the value of the thing admired—a circumstance overlooked by the people who talk much pleasant nonsense about sympathy, and the courage of our emotions, and the open and generous mind. We know how Mr. Arnold felt when an American lady wrote to him, in praise of American authors, and said that it rejoiced her heart to think of such excellence as being "common and abundant." Mr. Arnold, who considered that excellence of any kind was very uncommon and beyond measure rare, expressed his views on this occasion with more fervor and publicity than the circumstances demanded; but his words are as balm to the irritation which some of us suffer and conceal when drained of our reluctant applause.

It is perhaps because women have been trained to a receptive attitude of mind, because for centuries they have been valued for their sympathy and appreciation rather than for their judgment, that they are so perilously prone to enthusiasm. It has come to all of us of late to hear much feminine eloquence, and to marvel at the nimbleness of woman's wit, at the speed with which she thinks, and the facility with which she expresses her thoughts. A woman who, until fifteen years ago, never addressed a larger audience than that afforded by a reading-club or a dinner-party, will now thrust and parry on a platform, wholly unembarrassed by timidity or by ignorance. Sentiment and satire are hers to command; and while neither is convincing, both are tremendously effective with people already convinced, with the partisans who throng unwearyingly to hear the voicing of their own opinions. The ease with which such a speaker brings forward the great central fact of the universe, maternity, as an argument for or against political activity (it works just as well either way); the glow with which she associates Jeanne d'Arc with federated clubs and social service; and the gay defiance she hurls at customs and prejudices so profoundly obsolete that the lantern of Diogenes could not find them lurking in a village street—these things may chill the unemotional listener into apathy, but they never fail to awaken the sensibilities of an audience. The simple process, so highly commended by debaters, of ignoring all that cannot be denied, makes demonstration easy. "A crowd," said Mr. Ruskin, "thinks

by infection." To be immune from infection is to stand outside the sacred circle of enthusiasts.

Yet if the experience of mankind teaches anything, it is that vital convictions are not at the mercy of eloquence. The "oratory of conviction," to borrow a phrase of Mr. Bagehot's, is so rare as to be hardly worth taking into account. Fox used to say that if a speech read well, it was "a damned bad speech," which is the final word of cynicism spoken by one who knew. It was the saving sense of England, that solid, prosaic, dependable common sense, the bulwark of every great nation, which, after Sheridan's famous speech, demanding the impeachment of Warren Hastings, made the House adjourn "to collect its reason"—obviously because its reason had been lost. Sir William Dolden, who moved the adjournment, frankly confessed that it is impossible to give a "determinate opinion" while under the spell of oratory. So the law-makers, who had been fired to white heat, retired to cool down again; and when Sheridan—always as deep in difficulties as Micawber—was offered a thousand pounds for the manuscript of the speech, he remembered Fox's verdict, and refused to risk his unballasted eloquence in print.

Enthusiasm is praised because it implies an unselfish concern for something outside our personal interest and advancement. It is reverenced because the great and wise amendments, which from time to time straighten the roads we walk, may always be traced back to somebody's zeal for reform. It is rich in prophetic attributes, banking largely on the unknown, and making up in nobility of design what it lacks in excellence of attainment. Like simplicity, and candor, and other much-commended qualities, enthusiasm is charming until we meet it face to face, and cannot escape from its charm. It is then that we begin to understand the attitude of Goethe, and Talleyrand, and Pitt, and Sir Robert Peel, who saved themselves from being consumed by resolutely refusing to ignite. "It is folly," observed Goethe, "to expect that other men will consent to believe as we do"; and, having reconciled himself to this elemental obstinacy of the human heart, it no longer troubled him that those whom he felt to be wrong should refuse to acknowledge their errors.

There are men and women—not many—who have the happy art of making their most fervent convictions endurable. Their hobbies do not spread desolation over the social world, their prejudices do not insult our intelligence. They may be so "abreast with the time" that we cannot keep track of them, or they may be basking serenely in some Early Victorian close. They may believe buoyantly in the Baconian cipher, or in thought transference, or in the serious purposes of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, or in anything else which invites credulity. They may even express these views, and still be loved and cherished by their friends.

How illuminating is the contrast which Hazlitt unconsciously draws between the enthusiasms of Lamb which everybody was able to bear, and the enthusiasms of Coleridge which nobody was able to bear. Lamb would parade his admiration for some favorite author, Donne, for example, whom the rest of the company probably abhorred. He would select the most crabbed passages to quote and defend; he would stammer out his piquant and masterful half sentences, his scalding jests, his controvertible assertions, he would skilfully hint at the defects which no one else was permitted to see; and if he made no converts (wanting none), he woke no weary wrath. But we all have a sneaking sympathy for Holcroft, who, when Coleridge was expatiating rapturously and oppressively upon the glories of German transcendental philosophy, and upon his own supreme command of the field, cried out suddenly and with exceeding bitterness: "Mr. Coleridge, you are the most eloquent man I ever met, and the most unbearable in your eloquence."

I am not without a lurking suspicion that George Borrow must have been at times unbearable in his eloquence. "We cannot refuse to meet a man on the ground that he is an enthusiast," observes Mr. George Street, obviously lamenting this circumstance; "but we should at least like to make sure that his enthusiasms are under control." He stood ready at a moment's notice to prove the superiority of the Welsh bards over the paltry poets of England, or to relate the marvellous Welsh prophecies, so vague as to be always safe. He was capable of inflicting Armenian verbs upon Isobel Berners when they sat at night over their gipsy kettle in the dingle (let us hope she fell asleep as sweetly as does Milton's Eve when Adam grows too garrulous); and he met the complaints of a poor farmer on the hardness of the times with jubilant praises of evangelicalism. "Better pay three pounds an acre, and live on crusts and water in the present enlightened days," he told the disheartened husbandman, "than pay two shillings an acre, and sit down to beef and ale three times a day in the old superstitious ages." This is *not* the oratory of conviction. There are unreasoning prejudices in favor of one's own stomach which eloquence cannot gainsay. "I defy the utmost power of language to digust me wi' a gude denner," observes the Ettrick Shepherd; thus putting on record the attitude of the bucolic mind, impassive, immutable, since earth's first harvests were gleaned.

The artificial emotions, which expand under provocation, and collapse when the provocation is withdrawn, must be held responsible for much mental confusion. Election oratory is an old and cherished institution. It

is designed to make candidates show their paces, and to give innocent amusement to the crowd. Properly reinforced by brass bands and bunting, graced by some sufficiently august presence, and enlivened by plenty of cheering and hat-flourishing, it presents a strong appeal. A political party is, moreover, a solid and self-sustaining affair. All sound and alliterative generalities about virile and vigorous manhood, honest and honorable labor, great and glorious causes, are understood, in this country at least, to refer to the virile and vigorous manhood of Republicans or Democrats, as the case may be; and to uphold the honest and honorable, great and glorious Republican or Democratic principles, upon which, it is also understood, depends the welfare of the nation.

Yet even this sense of security cannot always save us from the chill of collapsed enthusiasm. I was once at a great mass meeting, held in the interests of municipal reform, and at which the principal speaker was a candidate for office He was delayed for a full hour after the meeting had been opened, and this hour was filled with good platform oratory Speechmaker after speechmaker, all adepts in their art, laid bare before our eyes the evils which consumed us, and called upon us passionately to support the candidate who would lift us from our shame. The fervor of the house rose higher and higher Martial music stirred our blood, and made us feel that reform and patriotism were one. The atmosphere grew tense with expectancy, when suddenly there came a great shout, and the sound of cheering from the crowd in the streets, the crowd which could not force its way into the huge and closely packed opera house. Now there are few things more profoundly affecting than cheers heard from a distance, or muffled by intervening walls They have a fine dramatic quality unknown to the cheers which rend the air about us. When the chairman of the meeting announced that the candidate was outside the doors, speaking to the mob, the excitement reached fever heat. When some one cried, "He is here!" and the orchestra struck the first bars of "Hail Columbia," we rose to our feet, waving multitudinous flags, and shouting out the rapture of our hearts.

And then—and then there stepped upon the stage a plain, tired, bewildered man, betraying nervous exhaustion in every line. He spoke, and his voice was not the assured voice of a leader. His words were not the happy words which instantly command attention. It was evident to the discerning eye that he had been driven for days, perhaps for weeks, beyond his strength and endurance; that he had resorted to stimulants to help him in this emergency, and that they had failed; that he was striving with feeble desperation to do the impossible which was expected of him. I wondered even then if a few common words of explanation, a few sober words of promise, would not have satisfied the crowd, already sated with eloquence. I wondered if the unfortunate man could feel the chill settling down upon the house as he spoke his random and undignified sentences, whether he could see the first stragglers slipping down the aisles. What did his decent record, his honest purpose, avail him in an hour like this? He tried to lash himself to vigor, but it was spurring a broken-winded horse. The stragglers increased into a flying squadron, the house was emptying fast, when the chairman in sheer desperation made a sign to the leader of the orchestra, who waved his baton, and "The Star-Spangled Banner" drowned the candidate's last words, and brought what was left of the audience to its feet. I turned to a friend beside me, the wife of a local politician who had been the most fiery speaker of the evening. "Will it make any difference?" I asked, and she answered disconsolately: "The city is lost, but we may save the state."

Then we went out into the quiet streets, and I bethought me of Voltaire's driving in a blue coach powdered with gilt stars to see the first production of "Irène," and of his leaving the theater to find that enthusiasts had cut the traces of his horses, so that the shouting mob might drag him home in triumph. But the mob, having done its shouting, melted away after the irresponsible fashion of mobs, leaving the blue coach stranded in front of the Tuileries with Voltaire shivering inside of it, until the horses could be brought back, the traces patched up, and the driver recalled to his duty.

That "popular enthusiasm is but a fire of straw" has been amply demonstrated by all who have tried to keep it going. It can be fighted to some purpose, as when money is extracted from the enthusiasts before they have had time to cool; but even this process—so skilfully conducted by the initiated—seems unworthy of great and noble charities, or of great and noble causes. It is true also that the agitator—no matter what he may be agitating—is always sure of his market; a circumstance which made that most conservative of chancellors, Lord Eldon, swear with bitter oaths that, if he were to begin life over again, he would begin it as an agitator. Tom Moore tells a pleasant story (one of the many pleasant stories embalmed in his vast sarcophagus of a diary) about a street orator whom he heard address a crowd in Dublin. The man's eloquence was so stirring that Moore was ravished by it, and he expressed to Richard Sheil his admiration for the speaker. "Ah," said Sheil carelessly, "that was a brewer's patriot. Most of the great brewers have in their employ a regular patriot who goes about among the publicans, talking violent politics, which helps to sell the beer."

Honest enthusiasm, we are often told, is the power which moves the world. Therefore it is perhaps that honest enthusiasts seem to think that if they stopped pushing, the world would stop moving—as though it were a new world which didn't know its way. This belief inclines them to intolerance. The more keen they are, the more contemptuous they become. What Wordsworth admirably called "the self-applauding sincerity of a heated mind" leaves them no loophole for doubt, and no understanding of the doubter. In their volcanic progress they bowl over the non-partisan—a man and a brother—with splendid unconcern He, poor soul, stunned but not convinced, clings desperately to some convictions which he calls truth, and refuses a clearer vision. His habit of remembering what he believed yesterday clogs his mind, and makes it hard for him to believe something entirely new today. Much has been said about the inconvenience of keeping opinions, but much might be said about the serenity of the process. Old opinions are like old friends —we cease to question their worth because, after years of intimacy and the loss of some valuable illusions, we have grown to place our slow reliance on them. We know at least where we stand, and whither we are tending, and we refuse to bustle feverishly about the circumference of life, because, as Amiel warns us, we cannot reach its core.

The personal essay or the informal essay, as was pointed out in the "Introduction to the Essay" (p. 114), tends to emphasize attitudes and moods rather than a process of logical exposition; and consequently, it characteristically uses a great deal of concrete illustration, imagery, narrative, etc. In its extreme form, as a matter of fact, this type of the essay may seem to be little more than a presentation of the author's personal prejudices and whimsies. Often, writers of personal essays will prefer to approach their material by presenting some paradoxical situation or idea, or by an overinsistence on some aspect of an idea. For instance, the famous essayist Max Beerbohm writes in praise of the aesthetic quality of fires, and deplores the efforts of the fire departments. But Beerbohm's real object is to attack the dulness of a mechanical and routine way of life on account of which the spectacle of a fire is a welcome relief His method is consistently indirect and ironical He brazens out his perverse attitude to the very end. Lamb's essay "Old China," while not so extreme an example, exhibits something of the same method. The gallery, he says, is really a better place from which to see a play than the pit The gallery obviously has poorer seats, but Lamb's real point, that the youthful and eager play-goer in the gallery will enjoy the play more than the bored and sated spectator in the pit, is thoroughly defensible In other words, Lamb is saying that happiness does not depend on material things To sum up, the personal essay, even though it may seem very whimsical, wayward, and autobiographical, is really concerned with some positive idea; it uses an indirect method rather than the direct method characteristic of the more formal essay. But most essays fall between the two extremes, and an essay like "Pulvis et Umbra" involves elements of both methods.

Questions.

1. What is the positive core of "The Chill of Enthusiasm"? Is it ever completely stated in the essay?
2. What advantages does the author gain by indirection?

Introduction to the Novel

WE HAVE said that a novel is a long piece of fiction and that a novelette is a short novel. A great deal of criticism has been written about novels. Some of this criticism intends to distinguish the novel from other forms of narrative, such as the tale, or chronicle, or short story, and from other literary forms such as poetry or drama; some of this criticism is concerned with defining the various types and methods of novels; and some is occupied with relating the novels of an individual, period, or country to the social or philosophical background. Such distinctions and definitions are of great importance, but they are not, for the present purpose, at least, of primary importance in themselves. The thing of primary importance is to get as fully as possible the experience of a given novel—the "impression of life," which Henry James says makes a novel. But to get this impression as fully as possible, to get in the end the greatest amount of appreciation and enjoyment from a novel—or, as a matter of fact, from other forms of literature—it is often necessary to give some attention to the special kinds of criticism mentioned above.

The Scarlet Letter, the novel appearing in this collection, was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1849 and 1850 in the town of Salem, Massachusetts. That is, the novel belongs to a person, a place, and a time. The novel is a great novel because it can reach us, different people in a different time and place, and can by means of its presentation of human character, action, setting, and theme give us an "impression of life." A reader who had never heard of Hawthorne, and knew nothing about Puritan New England would probably be able to enjoy *The Scarlet Letter,* because any great work of the literary imagination presents certain aspects of human nature that remain more or less the same from time to time and place to place. For instance, the struggle between the individual and society, which is one of the important factors in *The Scarlet Letter,* still remains, in many different ways, a part of our experience. And guilt, hatred, repentance, and forgiveness, though they arise from a variety of causes and express themselves in many different ways remain, likewise, a part of our experience. That is, we can still understand what we might call the materials of human experience Hawthorne used in his novel.

But we may better understand and enjoy the use to which Hawthorne put those materials if we know something about the general background of the novel, about its inspiration, and about its feeling about that background, for we know how much Hawthorne concerned himself with the place and the people. He wrote:

> This long connection of a family with one spot as its place of birth and burial, creates a kindred between the human being and the locality, quite independent of any charm in the scenery or moral circumstances that surround him. It is not love, but instinct. The new inhabitant—who came himself from a foreign land, or whose father or grandfather came—has little claim to be called a Salemite; he has no conception of the oysterlike tenacity with which an old settler, over whom his third century is creeping, clings to the spot where his successive generations have been imbedded. It is no matter that the place is joyless for him; that he is weary of the old wooden houses, the mud and dust, the dead level of site and sentiment, the chill east wind, and the chillest of social atmospheres,—all these, and whatever faults besides he may see or imagine, are nothing to the purpose. The spell survives, and just as powerfully as if the natal spot were an earthly paradise. So has it been in my case. I felt it almost as a destiny to make Salem my home; so that the mould of features and cast of character which had all along been familiar here, —ever, as one representative of the race lay down in his grave, another assuming, as it were, his sentry-march along the main street,—might still in my little day be seen and recognized in the old town.

It is usually said that *The Scarlet Letter* is a novel about Puritanism. It helps us to understand Puritanism, because it does something no history or essay on the subject could do for us: it dramatizes and puts into a form which appeals to our emotions some of the most important ideas [illegible] Puritanism. But that appeal to our emotions may be stronger, if, conversely, we bring to bear on our reading of the novel some knowledge of the nature of Puritanism and the history of New England. We know how, in

the New England colonies, the church dominated the civil government. We know that the Puritan believed that human nature and human instinct were evil and that most of mankind were damned without hope. We know how the Puritan morality was, on the one hand, noble and dignified, and on the other, incomplete, uncharitable, and cruel. We know how the Puritan mind was sometimes obsessed with questions of guilt, the guilt of mankind because of the original Fall, and guilt of a more personal kind.

It is easy for us to see how these factors enter into the novel and give us the original situation and the details of its development. We might say that, from one point of view, the situation shows a conflict between things, both of which are important and valuable parts of human life, a code of conduct on one hand, and human instinct and emotion on the other. The situation might be stated like this: Hester has committed a sin but her act possesses, as she phrases it once, a "consecration of its own," because of the sincerity of her attachment for Dimmesdale. Or like this: She performs an evil act, but she *is* not evil. Therefore, in so far as a moral code brands her as "evil" in any absolute sense that code is incomplete. Hester is contrasted with her husband, who does not actually violate the Puritan code of conduct, and is highly respected in the community, but who approaches, in the pursuit of his revenge, an absolute evil.

The actual working out of the novel shows us three types, as it were, of guilt, that of Hester, of Dimmesdale, and of Chillingworth. It may be said, in fact, that the theme of guilt and repentance is at the very center of the novel. Hester's guilt is obvious to everyone, symbolized as it is by the letter on her bosom. She has no secret, and is able to attain in the end a condition of contentment: she admits the fact of her guilt, but the isolation forced by her guilt also frees her intellectually and makes her able to see, even as she accepts, the limitations of the code that has condemned her. And at the same time, her true goodness of nature and her charity expiate her sin. The guilt of Dimmesdale, however is secret, and because it is secret, even his goodness and spirituality cannot free him from torture until he confesses. Chillingworth only of the three is unable to overcome evil, because his sin is a sin of coldness, calculation, and inhumanity, while the sin of Hester and Dimmesdale is one of warmth and human weakness. When Dimmesdale has escaped him by confession, he is "like an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun." He made

> the very principle of his life to consist in the pursuit and systematic exercise of revenge; and when, by its completest triumph and consummation, that evil principle was left with no further material to support it, when, in short, there was no more Devil's work on earth for him to do, it only remained for the unhumanized mortal to betake himself whither his Master would find him tasks enough, and pay him wages duly.

As Dimmesdale may in a sense be taken as a type of Puritan conscience tormenting itself with guilt, so Chillingworth may be understood as a type of the Puritan morality when it becomes merely an instrument of punishment, or becomes, to use the word Hawthorne applies to Chillingworth, "unhumanized."

But Hawthorne not only takes a theme that grows with an especial directness out of Puritanism, but also gives us as much as possible of the actual way of Puritan life in early New England. That is, there is a historical as well as philosophical relation of the novel to Puritanism. Characters that really lived in Boston move in and out of the scenes of the novel, people like John Wilson and Governor Winthrop. But in addition to this, every step in the development of the story except the scene in the forest is connected to some definite detail of life in the colony of Boston. The first scene, the punishment of Hester and the sermon on that occasion, gives of course, an essential connection between the story and the life in Boston, but other steps which do not have this essential connection between the story and the life in Boston are nevertheless related to some social custom or event of general significance, so that we are constantly aware of the stream of ordinary life proceeding around the main characters in the story. For instance, Chillingworth is lodged in the prison while his ransom is being arranged with the Indians, and therefore has easy access to Hester; the death of Governor Winthrop is used to account for the presence of John Wilson, Hester, and Pearl on the street at midnight when Dimmesdale goes to the scaffold for his vigil; the holiday for the installation of the new governor and the Election Sermon are made the occasion for the concluding scene of Dimmesdale's confession. In short, not only by his theme but by his use of background Hawthorne, like all good novelists, is constantly making the reader feel a connection between the story, as such, and both the ideas and historical life of a certain place and people.

But another topic suggests itself as a corollary of the preceding one. How does the theme and material of the novel affect the method used to tell the story?

Perhaps we can approach the answer by considering the kind of interest Hawthorne brought to bear on his fiction. It has already been said that Hawthorne possessed, in the best sense of the word, a strong moralistic bent. He was not so much interested merely in peculiar, humorous, or pathetic details of human conduct, as was Dickens, for instance, as he was in the right and wrong of human conduct; not so much in the presentation and enjoyment of human nature for its own sake as in the moral manifestations of character. Sometimes, especially in his short stories, and perhaps to a degree in *The Scarlet Letter* in the presentation of Pearl, this type of interest means that the treatment of a character is unconvincing, for the general meaning is too obvious and the little details of personality that make us believe in the reality of a character of fiction are omitted. But this type of interest means also that when Hawthorne is at his best, as in *The Scarlet Letter,* the reader gets an impression of seriousness and logical power in the progress of the fiction.

This type of interest, finally, means that in his best work he is not merely concerned with giving persons and events as examples of certain moral ideas, as in much of his weaker work, but is concerned with the effect on a character of some situation or action. For instance, in *The Scarlet Letter* he gives us characters that are engaged in a moral struggle and, consequently, are in a process of change and development. Hester is struggling to make a new life for herself in Boston, to seek the intellectual and spiritual meaning of her experience, and to combat Chillingworth. Dimmesdale is struggling to find peace from his pangs of conscience and weakness. Chillingworth, too, changes, but from better to worse, from a learned and good man to a cold and inhuman being.

All of these qualities—the moral interest, the close logical presentation, the struggle and development of character—probably influence the tendency toward a dramatic type of construction for the novel. We can see from an analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* that it is built about a relatively small number of key scenes: the scene of Hester's punishment, of Chillingworth's visit to her in prison, of Hester's visit to the governor's house, of conversation between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, of Dimmesdale on the scaffold, of Hester's plea to Chillingworth, of Hester and Dimmesdale in the forest, and of the shipmaster's orders to Pearl, the Election Sermon and procession, and the confession and death of Dimmesdale. A skillful playwright could very easily dramatize the novel, for he would have no problem of constructing new scenes or selecting from among too many scenes.

This method of constructing the novel enabled Hawthorne to keep the action concentrated on his main idea and to make the moral conflict, and the development of character most real to us—for concentration of action, conflict, and character development are essentially dramatic. By contrast, we can see how difficult it would be to dramatize most of the novels of Dickens, *Vanity Fair,* by Thackeray, *War and Peace,* by Tolstoi, *Tom Jones,* by Fielding, or *The Old Wives' Tale,* by Arnold Bennett, for all of these novels, although they have very powerful scenes, do not have the close logical structure of *The Scarlet Letter.* They tend to present a great variety of characters, many details of the same character, and widely separated scenes, over long periods of time. (It is interesting to note that, although the action of *The Scarlet Letter* covers some years, as is indicated by the growth of Pearl, the action gives the impression of a continuous process, as does the action of a good play.) These novels might be said to be character novels or chronicle novels rather than dramatic novels. The first kind, the character novel, such as *Vanity Fair* or *Tom Jones,* presents a great variety of persons and many details about them, but is not usually concerned with the development of character by conflict as is the dramatic novel. The second type, the chronicle, presents people and events changing over a long period of time, as in *War and Peace* or *The Old Wives' Tale,* but these changes are given as a gradual process over a long period rather than as a consequence of a concentrated conflict. All of these distinctions represent matters of emphasis and not absolute differences. But, for example, we can see how *The Rescue,* by Conrad, or *The Return of the Native,* by Hardy, like *The Scarlet Letter,* is dramatic. The important thing, however, is not merely to classify novels according to this or any other scheme, but to try to see how the method of construction in a given novel is related to the material the novelist was using and to his attitude toward the material.

But let us turn at this point to a consideration of some of the technical details of *The Scarlet Letter.* How does Hawthorne convey to us the various meanings of his story, and how does he put his story together?

One of the most characteristic features of Hawthorne's method in fiction is his use of *symbol* and *allegory.* We may say that a symbol is something that stands for something else. For instance, the cross is the symbol of the Christian religion, or the stars and stripes is a symbol of the United States. A symbol concentrates a diffused and complicated meaning, it might be said, so that we can respond to it.

Symbolism plays a large part in our lives, more than we realize, in religious affairs, fraternities and societies, athletics, military activities, etc., with their ceremonies and rituals, pins, badges, flags, rings. Symbols such as these are understood as social symbols; they stand for certain experiences and relationships of men in society. But there are other symbols that are not generally accepted and already understood by all the persons of a certain group; that is, symbols that have *not* become conventionalized. A writer, for instance, will make some object, let us say a rose, into a symbol for an idea. Hawthorne frequently employs symbols in *The Scarlet Letter* and elsewhere. In the very first chapter of the present novel, after describing the prison of Boston, Hawthorne presents the wild rosebush that grew beside the door.

> But, on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.

Both the door of the prison, earlier described, and the wild rosebush have a symbolic force; they indicate something of the basic situation, a contrast between two forces that are working in the novel. Even if the writer had not added the last clause to the sentence, "in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him," the reader would still be able to grasp the idea behind the rose, for the two things, the prison and the rose, offer such a shocking contrast that a meaning emerges. Sometimes Hawthorne will state the symbolic meanings that appear in his work, but at other times he will merely hint at them, leaving the reader's imagination to discover the full content. But the book is full of symbols of various kinds, the scarlet letter itself, the mark on Dimmesdale's breast, little Pearl herself, the brook in the forest, etc.

There is also an element of allegory in *The Scarlet Letter*. Allegory is closely akin to symbolism and to the type of comparison called metaphor. A metaphor is a comparison that takes the form of an identification. For instance, a writer might say, "Love is a rose." Allegory is sometimes defined as an extended metaphor. Now suppose that one should take the metaphor "love is a rose," and begin to extend, or develop it by giving a little narrative about a rose in a garden, protected by thorns on the stem and by the high garden walls, until someone scales the walls and discovers its beauty, etc.—then the original metaphor would become a little allegory. Each of the elements involved in the narrative, the rose, the thorns, the wall, etc. would stand for something else, and the narrative would be an allegory about the difficulty and worth of love. In *The Scarlet Letter* there are many times when the reader is as much aware of the ideas or principles the characters and their actions represent as he is of the mere personal and direct content of the story itself. At those times the allegorical element is strongest. For instance, the meeting of Dimmesdale and Hester in the forest, the discarding of the scarlet letter, the relief both the lovers feel, Pearl's safety from the wolf, Pearl's refusal to accept the minister's kiss, the minister's strange impulses to hobnob with the wicked sailor, the recognition by the witch, old Mistress Hibbins—in all of this consecutive narrative we have not only a presentation in direct psychological terms of what several people said and did, but also the presentation of an idea about morality and nature. In fact, the whole book gives the impression of this treatment.

This was frequently Hawthorne's way of making the reader feel the universal or general application of the truth of what he was presenting as a single incident or scene. Such a method is not very common in fiction, for it runs the danger of becoming artificial; that is, the writer, for instance, Hawthorne himself in some of his other work, has the temptation of making his characters and incidents merely illustrate his preconceived idea for the allegory instead of trying to make them convincing on psychological grounds. But Hawthorne rarely falls into this danger in *The Scarlet Letter* because he does not make the allegorical interest more important than the psychological and personal interest. Some critics have further justified Hawthorne's use of allegory in *The Scarlet Letter* by pointing out that the attitude prompting the allegorical impulse is closely related to the religious attitude seeking for divine or moral significance in all the trivial details of life. The details of life for such a mind become what Hawthorne calls "living hieroglyphs" of a hidden meaning. We can see how such a treatment is appropriate to *The Scarlet Letter,* a story of New England Puritanism at the time of its fullest development.

The previous discussion does not by any means exhaust *The Scarlet Letter*. It has left many questions unanswered and has failed to raise other questions of considerable importance. For instance, the question of the actual construction of the story, the point of view, etc., has not been raised, even though *The Scarlet Letter* offers a very instructive example of these matters. The first three chapters are primarily

expository, but the reader may observe the skill with which Hawthorne has kept an interest in an immediate action at the same time. He may observe also in this section how Hawthorne gives the reader just enough information to provoke suspense and how he distributes this information from point to point. Then, in the body of the story the reader might find it illuminating to define the points of complication and the points at which the lives of the principal characters cross each other. In addition, the use Hawthorne makes of narrative, summary, comment, and scene in developing the story and the shifts he makes from the treatment of one character to another are important technical questions. But we may remember that this and all other matters here discussed are important in so far as they may lead us to a fuller grasp of the total effect of the novel itself.

(For further comment on Hawthorne see Vernon L. Parrington's essay on Hawthorne in the Essay Section of this text.)

THE SCARLET LETTER

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THE CUSTOM-HOUSE

INTRODUCTORY TO *The Scarlet Letter*

IT is a little remarkable, that—though disinclined to talk overmuch of myself and my affairs at the fireside, and to my personal friends—an autobiographic impulse should twice in my life have taken possession of me, in addressing the public. The first time was three or four years since, when I favored the reader—inexcusably, and for no earthly reason, that either the indulgent reader or the intrusive author could imagine—with a description of my way of life in the deep quietude of an Old Manse. And now—because, beyond my deserts, I was happy enough to find a listener or two on the former occasion—I again seize the public by the button, and talk of my three years' experience in a Custom-House. The example of the famous "P. P., Clerk of this Parish," was never more faithfully followed. The truth seems to be, however, that, when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates or lifemates. Some authors, indeed, do far more than this, and indulge themselves in such confidential depths of revelation as could fittingly be addressed, only and exclusively, to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy; as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer's own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him into communion with it. It is scarcely decorous, however, to speak all, even where we speak impersonally. But, as thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience, it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness, we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil. To this extent, and within these limits, an author, methinks, may be autobiographical, without violating either the reader's rights or his own.

It will be seen, likewise, that this Custom-House sketch has a certain propriety, of a kind always recognized in literature, as explaining how a large portion of the following pages came into my possession, and as offering proofs of the authenticity of a narrative therein contained. This, in fact,—a desire to put myself in my true position as editor, or very little more, of the most prolix among the tales that make up my volume,—this, and no other, is my true reason for assuming a personal relation with the public. In accomplishing the main purpose, it has appeared allowable, by a few extra touches, to give a faint representation of a mode of life not heretofore described, together with some of the characters that move in it, among whom the author happened to make one.

In my native town of Salem, at the head of what, half a century ago, in the days of old King Derby, was a bustling wharf,—but which is now burdened with decayed wooden warehouses, and exhibits few or no symptoms of commercial life; except, perhaps, a bark or brig, half-way down its melancholy length, discharging hides; or, nearer at hand, a Nova Scotia schooner, pitching out her cargo of firewood,—at the head, I say, of this dilapidated wharf, which the tide often overflows, and along which, at the base and in the rear of the row of buildings, the track of many languid years is seen in a border of unthrifty grass,—

here, with a view from its front windows adown this not very enlivening prospect, and thence across the harbor, stands a spacious edifice of brick. From the loftiest point of its roof, during precisely three and a half hours of each forenoon, floats or droops, in breeze or calm, the banner of the republic; but with the thirteen stripes turned vertically, instead of horizontally, and thus indicating that a civil, and not a military post of Uncle Sam's government is here established. Its front is ornamented with a portico of half a dozen wooden pillars, supporting a balcony, beneath which a flight of wide granite steps descends towards the street. Over the entrance hovers an enormous specimen of the American eagle, with outspread wings, a shield before her breast, and, if I recollect aright, a bunch of intermingled thunderbolts and barbed arrows in each claw. With the customary infirmity of temper that characterizes this unhappy fowl, she appears, by the fierceness of her beak and eye, and the general truculency of her attitude, to threaten mischief to the inoffensive community; and especially to warn all citizens, careful of their safety, against intruding on the premises which she overshadows with her wings. Nevertheless, vixenly as she looks, many people are seeking at this very moment, to shelter themselves under the wing of the federal eagle; imagining, I presume, that her bosom has all the softness and snugness of an eider-down pillow. But she has no great tenderness, even in her best of moods, and, sooner or later,—oftener soon than late, —is apt to fling off her nestlings, with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows.

The pavement round about the above-described edifice—which we may as well name at once as the Custom-House of the port—has grass enough growing in its chinks to show that it has not, of late days, been worn by any multitudinous resort of business. In some months of the year, however, there often chances a forenoon when affairs move onward with a livelier tread. Such occasions might remind the elderly citizen of that period before the last war with England, when Salem was a port by itself; not scorned, as she is now, by her own merchants and ship-owners, who permit her wharves to crumble to ruin, while their ventures go to swell, needlessly and imperceptibly, the mighty flood of commerce at New York or Boston. On some such morning, when three or four vessels happen to have arrived at once,—usually from Africa or South America,—or to be on the verge of their departure thitherward, there is a sound of frequent feet, passing briskly up and down the granite steps. Here, before his own wife has greeted him, you may greet the sea-flushed shipmaster, just in port, with his vessel's papers under his arm, in a tarnished tin box. Here, too, comes his owner, cheerful or sombre, gracious or in the sulks, accordingly as his scheme of the now accomplished voyage has been realized in merchandise that will readily be turned to gold, or has buried him under a bulk of incommodities, such as nobody will care to rid him of. Here, likewise,—the germ of the wrinkle-browed, grizzly-bearded, care-worn merchant,—we have the smart young clerk, who gets the taste of traffic as a wolf-cub does of blood, and already sends adventures in his master's ships, when he had better be sailing mimic-boats upon a mill-pond. Another figure in the scene is the outward-bound sailor in quest of a protection; or the recently arrived one, pale and feeble, seeking a passport to the hospital. Nor must we forget the captains of the rusty little schooners that bring firewood from the British provinces; a rough-looking set of tarpaulins, without the alertness of the Yankee aspect, but contributing an item of no slight importance to our decaying trade.

Cluster all these individuals together, as they sometimes were, with other miscellaneous ones to diversify the group, and, for the time being, it made the Custom-House a stirring scene. More frequently, however, on ascending the steps, you would discern—in the entry, if it were summer time, or in their appropriate rooms, if wintry or inclement weather—a row of venerable figures, sitting in old-fashioned chairs, which were tipped on their hind legs back against the wall. Oftentimes they were asleep, but occasionally might be heard talking together, in voices between speech and a snore, and with that lack of energy that distinguishes the occupants of almshouses and all other human beings who depend for subsistence on charity, on monopolized labor, or anything else, but their own independent exertions. These old gentlemen—seated, like Matthew, at the receipt of customs, but not very liable to be summoned thence, like him, for apostolic errands—were Custom-House officers.

Furthermore, on the left hand as you enter the front door, is a certain room or office, about fifteen feet square, and of a lofty height; with two of its arched windows commanding a view of the aforesaid dilapidated wharf, and the third looking across a narrow lane, and along a portion of Derby Street. All three give glimpses of the shops of grocers, blockmakers, slop-sellers, and ship-chandlers; around the doors of which are generally to be seen, laughing and gossiping, clusters of old salts, and such other wharf-rats as haunt the Wapping of a seaport. The room itself is cobwebbed, and dingy with old paint; its floor is strewn with gray sand, in a fashion that has

elsewhere fallen into long disuse; and it is easy to conclude, from the general slovenliness of the place, that this is a sanctuary into which womankind, with her tools of magic, the broom and mop, has very infrequent access. In the way of furniture, there is a stove with a voluminous funnel; an old pine desk, with a three-legged stool beside it; two or three wooden-bottom chairs, exceedingly decrepit and infirm; and—not to forget the library—on some shelves, a score or two of volumes of the Acts of Congress, and a bulky Digest of the Revenue Laws. A tin pipe ascends through the ceiling, and forms a medium of vocal communication with other parts of the edifice. And here, some six months ago, pacing from corner to corner, or lounging on the long-legged stool, with his elbow on the desk, and his eyes wandering up and down the columns of the morning newspaper, —you might have recognized, honored reader, the same individual who welcomed you into his cheery little study, where the sunshine glimmered so pleasantly through the willow branches, on the western side of the Old Manse. But now, should you go thither to seek him, you would inquire in vain for the Locofoco Surveyor. The besom of reform has swept him out of office; and a worthier successor wears his dignity, and pockets his emoluments.

This old town of Salem—my native place, though I have dwelt much away from it, both in boyhood and maturer years—possesses, or did possess, a hold on my affections, the force of which I have never realized during my seasons of actual residence here. Indeed, so far as its physical aspect is concerned, with its flat, unvaried surface, covered chiefly with wooden houses, few or none of which pretend to architectural beauty,—its irregularity, which is neither picturesque nor quaint, but only tame,—its long and lazy street, lounging wearisomely through the whole extent of the peninsula, with Gallows Hill and New Guinea at one end, and a view of the almshouse at the other, —such being the features of my native town, it would be quite as reasonable to form a sentimental attachment to a disarranged checker-board. And yet, though invariably happiest elsewhere, there is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase, I must be content to call affection. The sentiment is probably assignable to the deep and aged roots which my family has struck into the soil. It is now nearly two centuries and a quarter since the original Briton, the earliest emigrant of my name, made his appearance in the wild and forest-bordered settlement, which has since become a city. And here his descendants have been born and died, and have mingled their earthy substance with the soil; until no small portion of it must necessarily be akin to the mortal frame wherewith, for a little while, I walk the streets. In part, therefore, the attachment which I speak of is the mere sensuous sympathy of dust for dust. Few of my countrymen can know what it is; nor, as frequent transplantation is perhaps better for the stock, need they consider it desirable to know.

But the sentiment has likewise its moral quality. The figure of that first ancestor, invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination, as far back as I can remember. It still haunts me, and induces a sort of home-feeling with the past, which I scarcely claim in reference to the present phase of the town. I seem to have a stronger claim to a residence here on account of this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned progenitor,—who came so early, with his Bible and his sword, and trode the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure, as a man of war and peace,—a stronger claim than for myself, whose name is seldom heard and my face hardly known. He was a soldier, legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the Church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil. He was likewise a bitter persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate an incident of his hard severity towards a woman of their sect, which will last longer, it is feared, than any record of his better deeds, although these were many. His son, too, inherited the persecuting spirit, and made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him. So deep a stain, indeed, that his old dry bones, in the Charter Street burial-ground, must still retain it, if they have not crumbled utterly to dust! I know not whether these ancestors of mine bethought themselves to repent, and ask pardon of heaven for their cruelties; or whether they are now groaning under the heavy consequences of them, in another state of being. At all events, I, the present writer, as their representative, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes, and pray that any curse incurred by them—as I have heard and as the dreary and unprosperous condition of the race for many a long year back would argue to exist—may be now and henceforth removed.

Doubtless, however, either of these stern and black-browed Puritans would have thought it quite a sufficient retribution for his sins, that, after so long a lapse of years, the old trunk of the family tree, with so much venerable moss upon it, should have borne, as its topmost bough, an idler like myself. No aim that I have ever cherished, would they recognize as laudable; no success of mine—if my life, beyond its domestic scope, had ever been brightened by success—

would they deem otherwise than worthless, if not positively disgraceful. "What is he?" murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. "A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life,—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!" Such are the compliments bandied between my great-grandsires and myself, across the gulf of time! And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have intertwined themselves with mine.

Planted deep, in the town's earliest infancy and childhood, by these two earnest and energetic men, the race has ever since subsisted here; always, too, in respectability; never, so far as I have known, disgraced by a single unworthy member; but seldom or never, on the other hand, after the first two generations, performing any memorable deed, or so much as putting forward a claim to public notice. Gradually, they have sunk almost out of sight; as old houses, here and there about the streets, get covered half-way to the eaves by the accumulation of new soil. From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea; a gray-headed ship-master, in each generation, retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale, which had blustered against his sire and grandsire. The boy, also, in due time, passed from the forecastle to the cabin, spent a tempestuous manhood, and returned from his [illegible] to grow old, and die, and mingle his dust with the natal earth. This long connection of a family with one spot, as its place of birth and burial, creates a kindred between the human being and the locality, quite independent of any charm in the scenery or moral circumstances that surround him. It is not love, but instinct. The new inhabitant—who came himself from a foreign land, or whose father or grandfather came—has little claim to be called a Salemite; he has no conception of the oyster-like tenacity with which an old settler, over whom his third century is creeping, clings to the spot where his successive generations have been imbedded. It is no matter that the place is joyless for him; that he is weary of the old wooden houses, the mud and dust, the dead level of site and sentiment, the chill east wind, and the chillest of social atmospheres;—all these and whatever faults besides he may see or imagine, are nothing to the purpose. The spell survives, and just as powerfully as if the natal spot were an earthly paradise. So has it been in my case. I felt it almost as a destiny to make Salem my home; so that the mould of features and cast of character which had all along been familiar here,—ever, as one representative of the race lay down in his grave, another assuming, as it were, his sentry-march along the main street,—might still in my little day be seen and recognized in the old town. Nevertheless, this very sentiment is an evidence that the connection, which has become an unhealthy one, should at last be severed. Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth.

On emerging from the Old Manse, it was chiefly this strange, indolent, unjoyous attachment for my native town, that brought me to fill a place in Uncle Sam's brick edifice, when I might as well, or better, have gone somewhere else. My doom was on me. It was not the first time, nor the second, that I had gone away,—as it seemed, permanently,—but yet returned, like the bad half-penny; or as if Salem were for me the inevitable centre of the universe. So, one fine morning, I ascended the flight of granite steps, with the President's commission in my pocket, and was introduced to the corps of gentlemen who were to aid me in my weighty responsibility, as chief executive officer of the Custom-House.

I doubt greatly—or, rather, I do not doubt at all—whether any public functionary of the United States, either in the civil or military line, has ever had such a patriarchal body of veterans under his orders as myself. The whereabouts of the Oldest Inhabitant was at once settled, when I looked at them. For upwards of twenty years before this epoch, the independent position of the Collector had kept the Salem Custom-House out of the whirlpool of political vicissitude, which makes the tenure of office generally so fragile. A soldier,—New England's most distinguished soldier,—he stood firmly on the pedestal of his gallant services; and, himself secure in the wise liberality of the successive administrations through which he had held office, he had been the safety of his subordinates in many an hour of danger and heart-quake. General Miller was radically conservative; a man over whose kindly nature h[illegible] had no slight influence; attaching himself strongly to familiar faces, and with difficulty moved to change, even when change might have brought unquestionable improvement. Thus, on taking charge of my department, I found few but aged men. They were ancient sea-captains, for the most part, who, after being tost on every sea, and standing up sturdily against life's tempestuous blast, had finally drifted into this quiet nook; where, with little

to disturb them, except the periodical terrors of a Presidential election, they one and all acquired a new lease of existence. Though by no means less liable than their fellow-men to age and infirmity, they had evidently some talisman or other that kept death at bay. Two or three of their number, as I was assured, being gouty and rheumatic, or perhaps bedridden, never dreamed of making their appearance at the Custom-House, during a large part of the year; but, after a torpid winter, would creep out into the warm sunshine of May or June, go lazily about what they termed duty, and, at their own leisure and convenience, betake themselves to bed again. I must plead guilty to the charge of abbreviating the official breath of more than one of these venerable servants of the republic. They were allowed, on my representation, to rest from their arduous labors, and soon afterwards—as if their sole principle of life had been zeal for their country's service, as I verily believe it was—withdrew to a better world. It is a pious consolation to me, that, through my interference, a sufficient space was allowed them for repentance of the evil and corrupt practices into which, as a matter of course, every Custom-House officer must be supposed to fall. Neither the front nor the back entrance of the Custom-House opens on the road to Paradise.

The greater part of my officers were Whigs. It was well for their venerable brotherhood that the new Surveyor was not a politician, and though a faithful Democrat in principle, neither received nor held his office with any reference to political services. Had it been otherwise,—had an active politician been put into this influential post, to assume the easy task of making head against a Whig Collector, whose infirmities withheld him from the personal administration of his office;—hardly a man of the old corps would have drawn the breath of official life, within a month after the exterminating angel had come up the Custom-House steps. According to the received code in such matters, it would have been nothing short of duty, in a politician, to bring every one of those white heads under the axe of the guillotine. It was plain enough to discern, that the old fellows dreaded some such discourtesy at my hands. It pained, and at the same time amused me, to behold the terrors that attended my advent; to see a furrowed cheek, weather-beaten by half a century of storm, turn ashy pale at the glance of so harmless an individual as myself; to detect, as one or another addressed me, the tremor of a voice, which, in long-past days, had been wont to bellow through a speaking-trumpet, hoarsely enough to frighten Boreas himself to silence. They knew, these excellent old persons, that, by all established rule,—and, as regarded some of them, weighed by their own lack of efficiency for business,—they ought to have given place to younger men, more orthodox in politics, and altogether fitter than themselves to serve our common Uncle. I knew it too, but could never quite find in my heart to act upon the knowledge. Much and deservedly to my own discredit, therefore, and considerably to the detriment of my official conscience, they continued, during my incumbency, to creep about the wharves, and loiter up and down the Custom-House steps. They spent a good deal of time, also, asleep in their accustomed corners, with their chairs tilted back against the wall; awaking, however, once or twice in a forenoon, to bore one another with the several thousandth repetition of old sea-stories, and mouldy jokes, that had grown to be passwords and countersigns among them.

The discovery was soon made, I imagine, that the new Surveyor had no great harm in him. So, with lightsome hearts, and the happy consciousness of being usefully employed,—in their own behalf, at least, if not for our beloved country,—these good old gentlemen went through the various formalities of office. Sagaciously, under their spectacles, did they peep into the holds of vessels! Mighty was their fuss about little matters, and marvellous, sometimes, the obtuseness that allowed greater ones to slip between their fingers! Whenever such a mischance occurred,—when a wagon-load of valuable merchandise had been smuggled ashore, at noonday, perhaps, and directly beneath their unsuspicious noses, nothing could exceed the vigilance and alacrity with which they proceeded to lock, and double-lock, and secure with tape and sealing-wax, all the avenues of the delinquent vessel. Instead of a reprimand for the previous negligence, the case seemed rather to require an eulogium on their praiseworthy caution, after the mischief had happened; a grateful recognition of the promptitude of their zeal, the moment that there was no longer any remedy.

Unless people are more than commonly disagreeable, it is my foolish habit to contract a kindness for them. The better part of my companion's character, if it have a better part, is that which usually comes uppermost in my regard, and forms the type whereby I recognize the man. As most of these old Custom-House officers had good traits, and as my position in reference to them, being paternal and protective, was favorable to the growth of friendly sentiments, I soon grew to like them all. It was pleasant, in the summer forenoons,—when the fervent heat, that almost liquefied the rest of the human family, merely communicated a genial warmth to their half-torpid systems,—it was pleasant to hear them chatting in the back

entry, a row of them all tipped against the wall, as usual; while the frozen witticisms of past generations were thawed out, and came bubbling with laughter from their lips. Externally, the jollity of aged men has much in common with the mirth of children; the intellect, any more than a deep sense of humor, has little to do with the matter; it is, with both, a gleam that plays upon the surface, and imparts a sunny and cheery aspect alike to the green branch, and gray, mouldering trunk. In one case, however, it is real sunshine; in the other, it more resembles the phosphorescent glow of decaying wood.

It would be sad injustice, the reader must understand, to represent all my excellent old friends as in their dotage. In the first place, my coadjutors were not invariably old; there were men among them in their strength and prime, of marked ability and energy, and altogether superior to the sluggish and dependent mode of life on which their evil stars had cast them. Then, moreover, the white locks of age were sometimes found to be the thatch of an intellectual tenement in good repair. But, as respects the majority of my corps of veterans, there will be no wrong done, if I characterize them generally as a set of wearisome old souls, who had gathered nothing worth preservation from their varied experience of life. They seemed to have flung away all the golden grain of practical wisdom, which they had enjoyed so many opportunities of harvesting, and most carefully to have stored their memories with the husks. They spoke with far more interest and unction of their morning's breakfast, or yesterday's, today's, or tomorrow's dinner, than of the shipwreck of forty or fifty years ago, and all the world's wonders which they had witnessed with their youthful eyes.

The father of the Custom-House—the patriarch, not only of this little squad of officials, but, I am bold to say, of the respectable body of tide-waiters all over the United States—was a certain permanent Inspector. He might truly be termed a legitimate son of the revenue system, dyed in the wool, or, rather, born in the purple; since his sire, a Revolutionary colonel, and formerly collector of the port, had created an office for him, and appointed him to fill it, at a period of the early ages which few living men can now remember. This Inspector, when I first knew him, was a man of fourscore years, or thereabouts, and certainly one of the most wonderful specimens of winter-green that you would be likely to discover in a lifetime's search. With his florid cheek, his compact figure, smartly arrayed in a bright-buttoned blue coat, his brisk and vigorous step, and his hale and hearty aspect, altogether he seemed—not young, indeed—but a kind of new contrivance of Mother Nature in the shape of man, whom age and infirmity had no business to touch. His voice and laugh, which perpetually reëchoed through the Custom-House, had nothing of the tremulous quaver and cackle of an old man's utterance; they came strutting out of his lungs, like the crow of a cock, or the blast of a clarion. Looking at him merely as an animal,—and there was very little else to look at,—he was a most satisfactory object, from the thorough healthfulness and wholesomeness of his system, and his capacity, at that extreme age, to enjoy all, or nearly all, the delights which he had ever aimed at, or conceived of. The careless security of his life in the Custom-House, on a regular income, and with but slight and infrequent apprehensions of removal, had no doubt contributed to make time pass lightly over him. The original and more potent causes, however, lay in the rare perfection of his animal nature, the moderate proportion of intellect, and the very trifling admixture of moral and spiritual ingredients; these latter qualities, indeed, being in barely enough measure to keep the old gentleman from walking on all-fours. He possessed no power of thought, no depth of feeling, no troublesome sensibilities; nothing, in short, but a few commonplace instincts, which, aided by the cheerful temper that grew inevitably out of his physical well-being, did duty very respectably, and to general acceptance, in lieu of a heart. He had been the husband of three wives, all long since dead; the father of twenty children, most of whom, at every age of childhood or maturity, had likewise returned to dust. Here one would suppose, might have been sorrow enough to embue the sunniest disposition, through and through, with a sable tinge. Not so with our old Inspector! One brief sigh sufficed to carry off the entire burden of these dismal reminiscences. The next moment, he was as ready for sport as any unbreeched infant; far readier than the Collector's junior clerk, who, at nineteen years, was much the elder and graver man of the two.

I used to watch and study this patriarchal personage with, I think, livelier curiosity, than any other form of humanity there presented to my notice. He was, in truth, a rare phenomenon; so perfect, in one point of view; so shallow, so delusive, so impalpable, such an absolute nonentity, in every other. My conclusion was that he had no soul, no heart, no mind; nothing, as I have already said, but instincts: and yet, withal, so cunningly had the few materials of his character been put together, that there was no painful perception of deficiency, but, on my part, an entire contentment with what I found in him. It might be difficult—and it was so—to conceive how he should exist hereafter, so earthly and sensuous did he seem;

but surely his existence here, admitting that it was to terminate with his last breath, had been not unkindly given; with no higher moral responsibilities than the beasts of the field, but with a larger scope of enjoyment than theirs, and with all their blessed immunity from the dreariness and duskiness of age.

One point, in which he had vastly the advantage over his four-footed brethren, was his ability to recollect the good dinners which it had made no small portion of the happiness of his life to eat. His gourmandism was a highly agreeable trait; and to hear him talk of roast-meat was as appetizing as a pickle or an oyster. As he possessed no higher attribute, and neither sacrificed nor vitiated any spiritual endowment by devoting all his energies and ingenuities to subserve the delight and profit of his maw, it always pleased and satisfied me to hear him expatiate on fish, poultry, and butcher's meat, and the most eligible methods of preparing them for the table. His reminiscences of good cheer, however ancient the date of the actual banquet, seemed to bring the savor of pig or turkey under one's very nostrils. There were flavors on his palate, that had lingered there not less than sixty or seventy years, and were still apparently as fresh as that of the mutton-chop which he had just devoured for his breakfast. I have heard him smack his lips over dinners, every guest at which, except himself, had long been food for worms. It was marvellous to observe how the ghosts of bygone meals were continually rising up before him; not in anger or retribution, but as if grateful for his former appreciation and seeking to resuscitate an endless series of enjoyment, at once shadowy and sensual. A tenderloin of beef, a hind-quarter of veal, a spare-rib of pork, a particular chicken, or a remarkably praiseworthy turkey, which had perhaps adorned his board in the days of the elder Adams, would be remembered; while all the subsequent experience of our race, and all the events that brightened or darkened his individual career, had gone over him with as little permanent effect as the passing breeze. The chief tragic event of the old man's life, so far as I could judge, was his mishap with a certain goose which lived and died some twenty or forty years ago; a goose of most promising figure, but which, at table, proved so inveterately tough that the carving-knife would make no impression on its carcass, and it could only be divided with an axe and handsaw.

But it is time to quit this sketch; on which, however, I should be glad to dwell at considerably more length because, of all men whom I have ever known, this individual was fittest to be a Custom-House officer. Most persons, owing to causes which I may not have space to hint at, suffer moral detriment from this peculiar mode of life. The old Inspector was incapable of it, and, were he to continue in office to the end of time, would be just as good as he was then, and sit down to dinner with just as good an appetite.

There is one likeness, without which my gallery of Custom-House portraits would be strangely incomplete; but which my comparatively few opportunities for observation enable me to sketch only in the merest outline. It is that of the Collector, our gallant old General, who, after his brilliant military service, subsequently to which he had ruled over a wild Western territory, had come hither, twenty years before, to spend the decline of his varied and honorable life. The brave soldier had already numbered, nearly or quite, his threescore years and ten, and was pursuing the remainder of his earthly march, burdened with infirmities which even the martial music of his own spirit-stirring recollections could do little towards lightening. The step was palsied now, that had been foremost in the charge. It was only with the assistance of a servant, and by leaning his hand heavily on the iron balustrade, that he could slowly and painfully ascend the Custom-House steps, and, with a toilsome progress across the floor, attain his customary chair beside the fireplace. There he used to sit, gazing with a somewhat dim serenity of aspect at the figures that came and went; amid the rustle of papers, the administering of oaths, the discussion of business, and the casual talk of the office; all which sounds and circumstances seemed but indistinctly to impress his senses, and hardly to make their way into his inner sphere of contemplation. His countenance, in this repose, was mild and kindly. If his notice was sought, an expression of courtesy and interest gleamed out upon his features; proving that there was light within him, and that it was only the outward medium of the intellectual lamp that obstructed the rays in their passage. The closer you penetrated to the substance of his mind, the sounder it appeared. When no longer called upon to speak, or listen, either of which operations cost him an evident effort, his face would briefly subside into its former not uncheerful quietude. It was not painful to behold this look; for, though dim, it had not the imbecility of decaying age. The framework of his nature, originally strong and massive, was not yet crumbled into ruin.

To observe and define his character, however, under such disadvantages, was as difficult a task as to trace out and build up anew, in imagination, an old fortress, like Ticonderoga, from a view of its gray and broken ruins. Here and there, perchance, the walls may remain almost complete, but elsewhere may be only a shapeless mound, cumbrous with its

very strength, and over-grown, through long years of peace and neglect, with grass and alien weeds.

Nevertheless, looking at the old warrior with affection,—for, slight as was the communication between us, my feeling towards him, like that of all bipeds and quadrupeds who knew him, might not improperly be termed so,—I could discern the main points of his portrait. It was marked with the noble and heroic qualities which showed it to be not by a mere accident, but of good right, that he had won a distinguished name. His spirit could never, I conceive, have been characterized by an uneasy activity; it must, at any period of his life, have required an impulse to set him in motion; but, once stirred up, with obstacles to overcome, and an adequate object to be attained, it was not in the man to give out or fail. The heat that had formerly pervaded his nature, and which was not yet extinct, was never of the kind that flashes and flickers in a blaze; but, rather, a deep red glow, as of iron in a furnace. Weight, solidity, firmness; this was the expression of his repose, even in such decay as had crept untimely over him, at the period of which I speak. But I could imagine, even then, that, under some excitement which should go deeply into his consciousness,—roused by a trumpet-peal, loud enough to awaken all his energies that were not dead, but only slumbering,—he was yet capable of flinging off his infirmities like a sick man's gown, dropping the staff of age to seize a battle-sword, and starting up once more a warrior. And, in so intense a moment, his demeanor would have still been calm. Such an exhibition, however, was but to be pictured in fancy; not to be anticipated, nor desired. What I saw in him—as evidently as the indestructible ramparts of Old Ticonderoga already cited as the most appropriate simile—were the features of stubborn and ponderous endurance, which might well have amounted to obstinacy in his earlier days; of integrity, that, like most of his other endowments, lay in a somewhat heavy mass, and was just as unmalleable and unmanageable as a ton of iron ore; and of benevolence, which, fiercely as he led the bayonets on at Chippewa or Fort Erie, I take to be of quite as genuine a stamp as what actuates any or all the polemical philanthropists of the age. He had slain men with his own hand, for aught I know,—certainly, they had fallen, like blades of grass at the sweep of the scythe, before the charge to which his spirit imparted its triumphant energy;—but, be that as it might, there was never in his heart so much cruelty as would have brushed the down off a butterfly's wing. I have not known the man to whose innate kindliness I would more confidently make an appeal.

Many characteristics—and those, too, which contribute not the least forcibly to impart resemblance in a sketch—must have vanished, or been obscured, before I met the General. All merely graceful attributes are usually the most evanescent; nor does Nature adorn the human ruin with blossoms of new beauty, that have their roots and proper nutriment only in the chinks and crevices of decay, as she sows wall-flowers over the ruined fortress of Ticonderoga. Still, even in respect of grace and beauty, there were points well worth noting. A ray of humor, now and then, would make its way through the veil of dim obstruction, and glimmer pleasantly upon our faces. A trait of native elegance, seldom seen in the masculine character after childhood or early youth, was shown in the General's fondness for the sight and fragrance of flowers. An old soldier might be supposed to prize only the bloody laurel on his brow; but here was one who seemed to have a young girl's appreciation of the floral tribe.

There, beside the fireplace, the brave old General used to sit; while the Surveyor—though seldom, when it could be avoided, taking upon himself the difficult task of engaging him in conversation—was fond of standing at a distance, and watching his quiet and almost slumberous countenance. He seemed away from us, although we saw him but a few yards off; remote, though we passed close beside his chair; unattainable, though we might have stretched forth our hands and touched his own. It might be that he lived a more real life within his thoughts, than amid the unappropriate environment of the Collector's office. The evolutions of the parade; the tumult of the battle; the flourish of old, heroic music, heard thirty years before;—such scenes and sounds, perhaps, were all alive before his intellectual sense. Meanwhile, the merchants and shipmasters, the spruce clerks and uncouth sailors, entered and departed; the bustle of this commercial and Custom-House life kept up its little murmur round about him; and neither with the men nor their affairs did the General appear to sustain the most distant relation. He was as much out of place as an old sword—now rusty, but which had flashed once in the battle's front, and showed still a bright gleam along its blade—would have been, among the inkstands, paper-folders, and mahogany rulers, on the Deputy Collector's desk.

There was one thing that much aided me in renewing and re-creating the stalwart soldier of the Niagara frontier,—the man of true and simple energy. It was the recollection of those memorable words of his,—"I'll try, Sir!"—spoken on the very verge of a desperate and heroic enterprise, and breathing the soul and spirit of New England hardihood, comprehending all perils, and encountering all. If, in our

country, valor were rewarded by heraldic honor, this phrase—which it seems so easy to speak, but which only he, with such a task of danger and glory before him, has ever spoken—would be the best and fittest of all mottoes for the General's shield of arms.

It contributes greatly towards a man's moral and intellectual health, to be brought into habits of companionship with individuals unlike himself, who care little for his pursuits, and whose sphere and abilities he must go out of himself to appreciate. The accidents of my life have often afforded me this advantage, but never with more fulness and variety than during my continuance in office. There was one man, especially, the observation of whose character gave me a new idea of talent. His gifts were emphatically those of a man of business; prompt, acute, clear-minded; with an eye that saw through all perplexities, and a faculty of arrangement that made them vanish, as by the waving of an enchanter's wand. Bred up from boyhood in the Custom-House, it was his proper field of activity; and the many intricacies of business, so harassing to the interloper, presented themselves before him with the regularity of a perfectly comprehended system. In my contemplation, he stood as the ideal of his class. He was, indeed, the Custom-House in himself; or, at all events, the mainspring that kept its variously revolving wheels in motion; for, in an institution like this, where its officers are appointed to subserve their own profit and convenience, and seldom with a leading reference to their fitness for the duty to be performed, they must perforce seek elsewhere the dexterity which is not in them. Thus, by an inevitable necessity, as a magnet attracts steel-filings, so did our man of business draw to himself the difficulties which everybody met with. With an easy condescension, and kind forbearance towards our stupidity,—which, to his order of mind, must have seemed little short of crime,—would he forthwith, by the merest touch of his finger, make the incomprehensible as clear as daylight. The merchants valued him not less than we, his esoteric friends. His integrity was perfect: it was a law of nature with him, rather than a choice or a principle; nor can it be otherwise than the main condition of an intellect so remarkably clear and accurate as his, to be honest and regular in the administration of affairs. A stain on his conscience, as to anything that came within the range of his vocation, would trouble such a man very much in the same way, though to a far greater degree, than an error in the balance of an account, or an ink-blot on the fair page of a book of record. Here, in a word,—and it is a rare instance in my life,—I had met with a person thoroughly adapted to the situation which he held.

Such were some of the people with whom I now found myself connected. I took it in good part, at the hands of Providence, that I was thrown into a position so little akin to my past habits, and set myself seriously to gather from it whatever profit was to be had. After my fellowship of toil and impracticable schemes with the dreamy brethren of Brook Farm; after living for three years within the subtile influence of an intellect like Emerson's; after those wild, free days on the Assabeth, indulging fantastic speculations, beside our fire of fallen boughs, with Ellery Channing; after talking with Thoreau about pine-trees and Indian relics, in his hermitage at Walden; after growing fastidious by sympathy with the classic refinement of Hillard's culture; after becoming imbued with poetic sentiment at Longfellow's hearthstone;—it was time, at length, that I should exercise other faculties of my nature, and nourish myself with food for which I had hitherto had little appetite. Even the old Inspector was desirable, as a change of diet, to a man who had known Alcott. I look upon it as an evidence, in some measure, of a system naturally well balanced, and lacking no essential part of a thorough organization, that, with such associates to remember, I could mingle at once with men of altogether different qualities, and never murmur at the change.

Literature, its exertions and objects, were now of little moment in my regard. I cared not, at this period, for books; they were apart from me. Nature,—except it were human nature,—the nature that is developed in earth and sky, was, in one sense, hidden from me; and all the imaginative delight, wherewith it had been spiritualized, passed away out of my mind. A gift, a faculty, if it had not departed, was suspended and inanimate within me. There would have been something sad, unutterably dreary, in all this, had I not been conscious that it lay at my own option to recall whatever was valuable in the past. It might be true, indeed, that this was a life which could not with impunity be lived too long; else, it might have made me permanently other than I had been without transforming me into any shape which it would be worth my while to take. But I never considered it as other than a transitory life. There was always a prophetic instinct, a low whisper in my ear, that, within no long period, and whenever a new change of custom should be essential to my good, a change would come.

Meanwhile, there I was, a Surveyor of the Revenue, and, so far as I have been able to understand, as good a Surveyor as need be. A man of thought, fancy, and sensibility (had he ten times the Surveyor's proportion of those qualities) may, at any time, be a man of affairs, if he will only choose to

give himself the trouble. My fellow-officers, and the merchants and sea-captains with whom my official duties brought me into any manner of connection, viewed me in no other light, and probably knew me in no other character. None of them, I presume, had ever read a page of my inditing, or would have cared a fig the more for me, if they had read them all; nor would it have mended the matter, in the least, had those same unprofitable pages been written with a pen like that of Burns or of Chaucer, each of whom was a Custom-House officer in his day, as well as I. It is a good lesson, though it may often be a hard one—for a man who has dreamed of literary fame, and of making for himself a rank among the world's dignitaries by such means, to step aside out of the narrow circle in which his claims are recognized, and to find how utterly devoid of significance, beyond that circle, is all that he achieves, and all he aims at. I know not that I especially needed the lesson, either in the way of warning or rebuke; but, at any rate, I learned it thoroughly: nor, it gives me pleasure to reflect, did the truth, as it came home to my perception, ever cost me a pang, or require to be thrown off in a sigh. In the way of literary talk, it is true, the Naval Officer—an excellent fellow, who came into office with me and went out only a little later—would often engage me in a discussion about one of the other of his favorite topics, Napoleon or Shakespeare. The Collector's junior clerk, too,—a young gentleman who, it was whispered, occasionally covered a sheet of Uncle Sam's letter-paper with what (at the distance of a few yards) looked very much like poetry,—used now and then to speak to me of books, as matters with which I might possibly be conversant. This was my all of lettered intercourse; and it was quite sufficient for my necessities.

No longer seeking or caring that my name should be blazoned abroad on title-pages, I smiled to think that it had now another kind of vogue. The Custom-House marker imprinted it, with a stencil and black paint, on pepper-bags, and baskets of anatto, and cigar boxes, and bales of all kinds of dutiable merchandise, in testimony that these commodities had paid the impost, and gone regularly through the office. Borne on such queer vehicle of fame, a knowledge of my existence, so far as a name conveys it, was carried where it had never been before, and, I hope, will never go again.

But the past was not dead. Once in a great while, the thoughts, that had seemed so vital and so active, yet had been put to rest so quietly, revived again. One of the most remarkable occasions, when the habit of by-gone days awoke in me, was that which brings it within the law of literary propriety to offer the public the sketch which I am now writing.

In the second story of the Custom-House there is a large room, in which the brick-work and naked rafters have never been covered with panelling and plaster. The edifice—originally projected on a scale adapted to the old commercial enterprise of the port, and with an idea of subsequent prosperity destined never to be realized—contains far more space than its occupants know what to do with. This airy hall, therefore, over the Collector's apartments, remains unfinished to this day, and, in spite of the aged cobwebs that festoon its dusky beams, appears still to await the labor of the carpenter and mason. At one end of the room, in a recess, were a number of barrels, piled one upon another, containing bundles of official documents. Large quantities of similar rubbish lay lumbering the floor. It was sorrowful to think how many days and weeks and months and years of toil had been wasted on these musty papers, which were now only an encumbrance on earth, and were hidden away in this forgotten corner, never more to be glanced at by human eyes. But, then, what reams of other manuscripts—filled not with the dulness of official formalities, but with the thought of inventive brains and the rich effusion of deep hearts—had gone equally to oblivion; and that, moreover, without serving a purpose in their day, as these heaped-up papers had, and—saddest of all—without purchasing for their writers the comfortable livelihood which the clerks of the Custom-House had gained by these worthless scratchings of the pen! Yet not altogether worthless, perhaps, as materials of local history. Here, no doubt, statistics of the former commerce of Salem might be discovered, and memorials of her princely merchants,—old King Derby,—old Billy Gray,—old Simon Forrester,—and many another magnate in his day; whose powdered head, however, was scarcely in the tomb, before his mountain pile of wealth began to dwindle. The founders of the greater part of the families which now compose the aristocracy of Salem might here be traced, from the petty and obscure beginnings of their traffic, at periods generally much posterior to the Revolution, upward to what their children look upon as long-established rank.

Prior to the Revolution, there is a dearth of records; the earlier documents and archives of the Custom-House having, probably, been carried off to Halifax, when all the King's officials accompanied the British army in its flight from Boston. It has often been a matter of regret with me; for, going back, perhaps, to the days of the Protectorate, those papers must have contained many references to forgotten or remembered men, and to antique customs, which

would have affected me with the same pleasure as when I used to pick up Indian arrow-heads in the field near the Old Manse.

But, one idle and rainy day, it was my fortune to make a discovery of some little interest. Poking and burrowing into the heaped-up rubbish in the corner; unfolding one and another document, and reading the names of vessels that had long ago foundered at sea or rotted at the wharves, and those of merchants, never heard of now on 'Change, nor very readily decipherable on their mossy tombstones; glancing at such matters with the saddened, weary, half-reluctant interest which we bestow on the corpse of dead activity,—and exerting my fancy, sluggish with little use, to raise up from these dry bones an image of the old town's brighter aspect, when India was a new region, and only Salem knew the way thither,—I chanced to lay my hand on a small package, carefully done up in a piece of ancient yellow parchment. This envelope had the air of an official record of some period long past, when clerks engrossed their stiff and formal chirography on more substantial materials than at present. There was something about it that quickened an instinctive curiosity, and made me undo the faded red tape that tied up the package, with the sense that a treasure would here be brought to light. Unbending the rigid folds of the parchment cover, I found it to be a commission, under the hand and seal of Governor Shirley, in favor of one Jonathan Pue, as Surveyor of his Majesty's Customs for the port of Salem, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay. I remembered to have read (probably in Felt's Annals) a notice of the decease of Mr. Surveyor Pue, about fourscore years ago; and likewise, in a newspaper of recent times, an account of the digging up of his remains in the little graveyard of St. Peter's Church, during the renewal of that edifice. Nothing, if I rightly call to mind, was left of my respected predecessor, save an imperfect skeleton, and some fragments of apparel, and a wig of majestic frizzle; which, unlike the head that it once adorned, was in very satisfactory preservation. But, on examining the papers which the parchment commission served to envelop, I found more traces of Mr. Pue's mental part, and the internal operations of his head, than the frizzled wig had contained of the venerable skull itself.

They were documents, in short, not official, but of a private nature, or, at least, written in his private capacity, and apparently with his own hand. I could account for their being included in the heap of Custom-House lumber only by the fact that Mr. Pue's death had happened suddenly; and that these papers, which he probably kept in his official desk, had never come to the knowledge of his heirs, or were supposed to relate to the business of the revenue. On the transfer of the archives to Halifax, this package, proving to be of no public concern, was left behind, and had remained ever since unopened.

The ancient Surveyor—being little molested, I suppose, at that early day, with business pertaining to his office—seems to have devoted some of his many leisure hours to researches as a local antiquarian, and other inquisitions of a similar nature. These supplied material for petty activity to a mind that would otherwise have been eaten up with rust. A portion of his facts, by the by, did me good service in the preparation of the article entitled "Main Street," included in the present volume. The remainder may perhaps be applied to purposes equally valuable, hereafter; or not impossibly may be worked up, so far as they go, into a regular history of Salem, should my veneration for the natal soil ever impel me to so pious a task. Meanwhile, they shall be at the command of any gentleman, inclined, and competent, to take the unprofitable labor off my hands. As a final disposition, I contemplate depositing them with the Essex Historical Society.

But the object that most drew my attention in the mysterious package, was a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded. There were traces about it of gold embroidery, which, however, was greatly frayed and defaced; so that none, or very little, of the glitter was left. It had been wrought, as was easy to perceive, with wonderful skill of needlework; and the stitch (as I am assured by ladies conversant with such mysteries) gives evidence of a now forgotten art, not to be recovered even by the process of picking out the threads. This rag of scarlet cloth,—for time and wear and a sacrilegious moth had reduced it to little other than a rag,—on careful examination, assumed the shape of a letter. It was the capital letter A. By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length. It had been intended, there could be no doubt, as an ornamental article of dress; but how it was to be worn, or what rank, honor, and dignity, in by-past times, were signified by it, was a riddle which (so evanescent are the fashions of the world in these particulars) I saw little hope of solving. And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.

While thus perplexed,—and cogitating, among

other hypotheses, whether the letter might not have been one of those decorations which the white men used to contrive, in order to take the eyes of Indians, —I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to me,—the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word,—it seemed to me, then, that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat; and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor.

In the absorbing contemplation of the scarlet letter, I had hitherto neglected to examine a small roll of dingy paper, round which it had been twisted. This I now opened, and had the satisfaction to find, recorded by the old Surveyor's pen, a reasonably complete explanation of the whole affair. There were several foolscap sheets containing many particulars respecting the life and conversation of one Hester Prynne, who appeared to have been rather a noteworthy personage in the view of our ancestors. She had flourished during the period between the early days of Massachusetts and the close of the seventeenth century. Aged persons, alive in the time of Mr. Surveyor Pue, and from whose oral testimony he had made up his narrative, remembered her, in their youth, as a very old, but not decrepit woman, of a stately and solemn aspect. It had been her habit, from an almost immemorial date, to go about the country as a kind of voluntary nurse, and doing whatever miscellaneous good she might; taking upon herself, likewise, to give advice in all matters, especially those of the heart; by which means, as a person of such propensities inevitably must, she gained from many people the reverence due to an angel, but, I should imagine, was looked upon by others as an intruder and a nuisance. Prying further into the manuscript, I found the record of other doings and sufferings of this singular woman, for most of which the reader is referred to the story entitled *The Scarlet Letter,* and it should be borne carefully in mind, that the main facts of that story are authorized and authenticated by the document of Mr. Surveyor Pue. The original papers, together with the scarlet letter itself,—a most curious relic,—are still in my possession, and shall be freely exhibited to whomsoever, induced by the great interest of the narrative, may desire a sight of them. I must not be understood as affirming, that, in the dressing up of the tale, and imagining the motives and modes of passion that influenced the characters who figure in it, I have invariably confined myself within the limits of the old Surveyor's half a dozen sheets of foolscap. On the contrary, I have allowed myself, as to such points, nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of my own invention. What I contend for is the authenticity of the outline.

This incident recalled my mind, in some degree, to its old track. There seemed to be here the groundwork of a tale. It impressed me as if the ancient Surveyor, in his garb of a hundred years gone by, and wearing his immortal wig,—which was buried with him but did not perish in the grave,—had met me in the deserted chamber of the Custom-House. In his port was the dignity of one who had borne his Majesty's commission, and who was therefore illuminated by a ray of the splendor that shone so dazzlingly about the throne. How unlike, alas! the hang-dog look of a republican official, who, as the servant of the people, feels himself less than the least, and below the lowest, of his masters. With his own ghostly hand, the obscurely seen but majestic figure had imparted to me the scarlet symbol, and the little roll of explanatory manuscript. With his own ghostly voice, he had exhorted me, on the sacred consideration of my filial duty and reverence towards him,—who might reasonably regard himself as my official ancestor,—to bring his mouldy and moth-eaten lucubrations before the public. "Do this," said the ghost of Mr. Surveyor Pue, emphatically nodding the head that looked so imposing within its memorable wig, —"do this, and the profit shall be all your own! You will shortly need it; for it is not in your days as it was mine, when a man's office was a life-lease, and oftentimes an heirloom. But, I charge you, in this matter of old Mistress Prynne, give to your predecessor's memory the credit which will be rightfully due!" And I said to the ghost of Mr. Surveyor Pue, "I will!"

On Hester Prynne's story, therefore, I bestowed much thought. It was the subject of my meditations for many an hour, while pacing to and fro across my room, or traversing, with a hundred-fold repetition, the long extent from the front-door of the Custom-House to the side-entrance, and back again. Great were the weariness and annoyance of the old Inspector and the Weighers and Gaugers, whose slumbers were disturbed by the unmercifully lengthened tramp of my passing and returning footsteps. Remembering their own former habits, they used to say that the Surveyor was walking the quarter-deck. They probably fancied that my sole object—and, indeed, the sole object for which a sane man could ever put himself into voluntary motion—was to get an appetite for dinner. And to say the truth, an appetite, sharpened by the east wind that generally blew along the passage, was the only valuable result of so much indefatigable exercise. So little adapted is the atmosphere of a Custom-House to the delicate harvest of

fancy and sensibility, that, had I remained there through ten Presidencies yet to come, I doubt whether the tale of *The Scarlet Letter* would ever have been brought before the public eye. My imagination was a tarnished mirror. It would not reflect, or only with miserable dimness, the figures with which I did my best to people it. The characters of the narrative would not be warmed and rendered malleable by any heat that I could kindle at my intellectual forge. They would take neither the glow of passion nor the tenderness of sentiment, but retained all the rigidity of dead corpses, and stared me in the face with a fixed and ghastly grin of contemptuous defiance. "What have you to do with us?" that expression seemed to say. "The little power you might once have possessed over the tribe of unrealities is gone! You have bartered it for a pittance of the public gold. Go, then, and earn your wages!" In short, the almost torpid creatures of my own fancy twitted me with imbecility, and not without fair occasion.

It was not merely during the three hours and a half which Uncle Sam claimed as his share of my daily life, that this wretched numbness held possession of me. It went with me on my sea-shore walks and rambles into the country, whenever—which was seldom and reluctantly—I bestirred myself to seek that invigorating charm of Nature, which used to give me such freshness and activity of thought, the moment that I stepped across the threshold of the Old Manse. The same torpor, as regarded the capacity for intellectual effort, accompanied me home, and weighed upon me in the chamber which I most absurdly termed my study. Nor did it quit me, when, late at night, I sat in the deserted parlor, lighted only by the glimmering coal-fire and the moon, striving to picture forth imaginary scenes, which, the next day, might flow out on the brightening page in many-hued description.

If the imaginative faculty refused to act at such an hour, it might well be deemed a hopeless case. Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly,—making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visibility,—is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests. There is the little domestic scenery of the well-known apartment; the chairs, with each its separate individuality; the centre-table, sustaining a work-basket, a volume or two, and an extinguished lamp; the sofa; the bookcase; the picture on the wall;—all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or too trifling to undergo this change, and acquire dignity thereby. A child's shoe; the doll, seated in her little wicker carriage; the hobby-horse;—whatever, in a word, has been used or played with, during the day, is now invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other. Ghosts might enter here, without affrighting us. It would be too much in keeping with the scene to excite surprise, were we to look about us and discover a form beloved, but gone hence, now sitting quietly in a streak of this magic moonshine, with an aspect that would make us doubt whether it had returned from afar, or had never once stirred from our fireside.

The somewhat dim coal-fire has an essential influence in producing the effect which I would describe. It throws its unobtrusive tinge throughout the room, with a faint ruddiness upon the walls and ceiling, and a reflected gleam from the polish of the furniture. This warmer light mingles itself with the cold spirituality of the moonbeams, and communicates, as it were, a heart and sensibilities of human tenderness to the forms which fancy summons up. It converts them from snow images into men and women. Glancing at the looking-glass, we behold—deep within its haunted verge—the smouldering glow of the half-extinguished anthracite, the white moonbeams on the floor, and a repetition of all the gleam and shadow of the picture, with one remove further from the actual, and nearer to the imaginative. Then, at such an hour, and with this scene before him, if a man, sitting all alone, cannot dream strange things, and make them look like truth, he need never try to write romances.

But, for myself, during the whole of my Custom-House experience, moonlight and sunshine, and the glow of firelight, were just alike in my regard; and neither of them was of one whit more avail than the twinkle of a tallow-candle. An entire class of susceptibilities, and a gift connected with them,—of no great richness or value, but the best I had,—was gone from me.

It is my belief, however, that, had I attempted a different order of composition, my faculties would not have been found so pointless and inefficacious. I might, for instance, have contented myself with writing out the narratives of a veteran shipmaster, one of the Inspectors, whom I should be most ungrateful not to mention, since scarcely a day passed that he did not stir me to laughter and admiration by his

marvellous gifts as a story-teller. Could I have preserved the picturesque force of his style, and the humorous coloring which nature taught him how to throw over his descriptions, the result, I honestly believe, would have been something new in literature. Or I might readily have found a more serious task. It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age; or to insist on creating the semblance of a world out of airy matter, when, at every moment, the impalpable beauty of my soap-bubble was broken by the rude contact of some actual circumstance. The wiser effort would have been, to diffuse thought and imagination through the opaque substance of today, and thus to make it a bright transparency; to spiritualize the burden that began to weigh so heavily; to seek, resolutely, the true and indestructible value that lay hidden in the petty and wearisome incidents, and ordinary characters, with which I was now conversant. The fault was mine. The page of life that was spread out before me seemed dull and commonplace, only because I had not fathomed its deeper import. A better book than I shall ever write was there; leaf after leaf presenting itself to me, just as it was written out by the reality of the flitting hour, and vanishing as fast as written, only because my brain wanted the insight and my hand the cunning to transcribe it. At some future day, it may be, I shall remember a few scattered fragments and broken paragraphs, and write them down, and find the letters turn to gold upon the page.

These perceptions have come too late. At the instant, I was only conscious that what would have been a pleasure once was now a hopeless toil. There was no occasion to make much moan about this state of affairs. I had ceased to be a writer of tolerably poor tales and essays, and had become a tolerably good Surveyor of the Customs. That was all. But, nevertheless, it is anything but agreeable to be haunted by a suspicion that one's intellect is dwindling away; or exhaling, without your consciousness, like ether out of a phial; so that, at every glance, you find a smaller and less volatile residuum. Of the fact, there could be no doubt; and, examining myself and others, I was led to conclusions, in reference to the effect of public office on the character, not very favorable to the mode of life in question. In some other form, perhaps, I may hereafter develop these effects. Suffice it here to say, that a Custom-House officer, of long continuance, can hardly be a very praise-worthy or respectable personage, for many reasons; one of them, the tenure by which he holds his situation, and another, the very nature of his business, which—though, I trust, an honest one—is of such a sort that he does not share in the united effort of mankind.

An effect—which I believe to be observable, more or less, in every individual who has occupied the position—is, that, while he leans on the mighty arm of the Republic, his own proper strength departs from him. He loses, in an extent proportioned to the weakness or force of his original nature, the capability of self-support. If he possess an unusual share of native energy, or the enervating magic of place do not operate too long upon him, his forfeited powers may be redeemable. The ejected officer—fortunate in the unkindly shove that sends him forth betimes, to struggle amid a [illegible] world—may return to himself, and become all that he has ever been. But this seldom happens. He usually keeps his ground just long enough for his own ruin, and is then thrust out, with sinews all unstrung, to totter along the difficult footpath of life as he best may. Conscious of his own infirmity,—that his tempered steel and elasticity are lost,—he forever afterwards looks wistfully about him in quest of support external to himself. His pervading and continual hope—a hallucination which, in the face of all discouragement, and making light of impossibilities, haunts him while he lives, and, I fancy, like the convulsive throes of the cholera, torments him for a brief space after death—is, that finally, and in no long time, by some happy coincidence of circumstances, he shall be restored to office. This faith, more than anything else, steals the pith and availability out of whatever enterprise he may dream of undertaking. Why should he toil and moil, and be at so much trouble to pick himself up out of the mud, when, in a little while hence, the strong arm of his Uncle will raise and support him? Why should he work for his living here, or go to dig gold in California, when he is so soon to be made happy, at monthly intervals, with a little pile of glittering coin out of his Uncle's pocket? It is sadly curious to observe how slight a taste of office suffices to infect a poor fellow with this singular disease. Uncle Sam's gold—meaning no disrespect to the worthy old gentleman—has, in this respect, a quality of enchantment like that of the Devil's wages. Whoever touches it should look well to himself, or he may find the bargain to go hard against him, involving, if not his soul, yet many of its better attributes; its sturdy force, its courage and constancy, its truth, its self-reliance, and all that gives the emphasis to manly character.

Here was a fine prospect in the distance! Not that the Surveyor brought the lesson home to himself, or admitted that he could be so utterly undone, either by continuance in office, or ejectment. Yet my reflections were not the most comfortable. I began to grow

melancholy and restless; continually prying into my mind, to discover which of its poor properties were gone, and what degree of detriment had already accrued to the remainder. I endeavored to calculate how much longer I could stay in the Custom-House, and yet go forth a man. To confess the truth, it was my greatest apprehension,—as it would never be a measure of policy to turn out so quiet an individual as myself, and it being hardly in the nature of a public officer to resign,—it was my chief trouble, therefore, that I was likely to grow gray and decrepit in the Surveyorship, and become much such another animal as the old Inspector. Might it not, in the tedious lapse of official life that lay before me, finally be with me as it was with this venerable friend,—to make the dinner-hour the nucleus of the day, and to spend the rest of it, as an old dog spends it, asleep in the sunshine or in the shade? A dreary look-forward this, for a man who felt it to be the best definition of happiness to live throughout the whole range of his faculties and sensibilities! But, all this while, I was giving myself very unnecessary alarm. Providence had meditated better things for me than I could possibly imagine for myself.

A remarkable event of the third year of my Surveyorship—to adopt the tone of "P. P."—was the election of General Taylor to the Presidency. It is essential, in order to a complete estimate of the advantages of official life, to view the incumbent at the incoming of a hostile administration. His position is then one of the most singularly irksome, and, in every contingency, disagreeable, that a wretched mortal can possibly occupy; with seldom an alternative of good, on either hand, although what presents itself to him as the worst event may very probably be the best. But it is a strange experience, to a man of pride and sensibility, to know that his interests are within the control of individuals who neither love nor understand him, and by whom, since one or the other must needs happen, he would rather be injured than obliged. Strange, too, for one who has kept his calmness throughout the contest, to observe the bloodthirstiness that is developed in the hour of triumph, and to be conscious that he is himself among its objects! There are few uglier traits of human nature than this tendency—which I now witnessed in men no worse than their neighbors—to grow cruel, merely because they possessed the power of inflicting harm. If the guillotine, as applied to office-holders, were a literal fact instead of one of the most apt of metaphors, it is my sincere belief that the active members of the victorious party were sufficiently excited to have chopped off all our heads, and have thanked Heaven for the opportunity! It appears to me—who have been a calm and curious observer, as well in victory as defeat—that this fierce and bitter spirit of malice and revenge has never distinguished the many triumphs of my own party as it now did that of the Whigs. The Democrats take the offices, as a general rule, because they need them, and because the practice of many years has made it the law of political warfare, which, unless a different system be proclaimed, it were weakness and cowardice to murmur at. But the long habit of victory has made them generous. They know how to spare, when they see occasion; and when they strike, the axe may be sharp, indeed, but its edge is seldom poisoned with ill-will; nor is it their custom ungenerously to kick the head which they have just struck off.

In short, unpleasant as was my predicament, at best, I saw much reason to congratulate myself that I was on the losing side, rather than the triumphant one. If, heretofore, I had been none of the warmest of partisans, I began now, at this season of peril and adversity, to be pretty acutely sensible with which party my predilections lay; nor was it without something like regret and shame, that, according to a reasonable calculation of chances, I saw my own prospect of retaining office to be better than those of my Democratic brethren. But who can see an inch into futurity, beyond his nose? My own head was the first that fell!

The moment when a man's head drops off is seldom or never, I am inclined to think, precisely the most agreeable of his life. Nevertheless, like the greater part of our misfortunes, even so serious a contingency brings its remedy and consolation with it, if the sufferer will but make the best, rather than the worst, of the accident which has befallen him. In my particular case, the consolatory topics were close at hand, and, indeed, had suggested themselves to my meditations a considerable time before it was requisite to use them. In view of my previous weariness of office, and vague thoughts of resignation, my fortune somewhat resembled that of a person who should entertain an idea of committing suicide, and, although beyond his hopes, meet with the good hap to be murdered. In the Custom-House, as before in the Old Manse, I had spent three years; a term long enough to rest a weary brain; long enough to break off old intellectual habits, and make room for new ones; long enough, and too long, to have lived in an unnatural state, doing what was really of no advantage nor delight to any human being, and withholding myself from toil that would, at least, have stilled an unquiet impulse in me. Then, moreover, as regarded his unceremonious ejectment, the late Surveyor was not altogether ill-pleased to be recognized by the

Whigs as an enemy; since his inactivity in political affairs—his tendency to roam, at will, in that broad and quiet field where all mankind may meet, rather than confine himself to those narrow paths where brethren of the same household must diverge from one another—had sometimes made it questionable with his brother Democrats whether he was a friend. Now, after he had won the crown of martyrdom (though with no longer a head to wear it on), the point might be looked upon as settled. Finally, little heroic as he was, it seemed more decorous to be overthrown in the downfall of the party with which he had been content to stand, than to remain a forlorn survivor, when so many worthier men were falling; and, at last, after subsisting for four years on the mercy of a hostile administration, to be compelled then to define his position anew, and claim the yet more humiliating mercy of a friendly one.

Meanwhile the press had taken up my affair, and kept me, for a week or two, careering through the public prints, in my decapitated state, like Irving's Headless Horseman; ghastly and grim, and longing to be buried, as a politically dead man ought. So much for my figurative self. The real human being, all this time, with his head safely on his shoulders, had brought himself to the comfortable conclusion that everything was for the best; and, making an investment in ink, paper, and steel-pens, had opened his long-disused writing-desk, and was again a literary man.

Now it was that the lucubrations of my ancient predecessor, Mr. Surveyor Pue, came into play. Rusty through long idleness, some little space was requisite before my intellectual machinery could be brought to work upon the tale, with an effect in any degree satisfactory. Even yet, though my thoughts were ultimately much absorbed in the task, it wears, to my eye, a stern and sombre aspect; too much ungladdened by genial sunshine; too little relieved by the tender and familiar influences which soften almost every scene of nature and real life, and, undoubtedly, should soften every picture of them. This uncaptivating effect is perhaps due to the period of hardly accomplished revolution, and still seething turmoil, in which the story shaped itself. It is no indication, however, of a lack of cheerfulness in the writer's mind; for he was happier, while straying through the gloom of these sunless fantasies, than at any time since he had quitted the Old Manse. Some of the briefer articles, which contribute to make up the volume, have likewise been written since my involuntary withdrawal from the toils and honors of public life, and the remainder are gleaned from annuals and magazines of such antique date that they have gone round the circle, and come back to novelty again. Keeping up the metaphor of the political guillotine, the whole may be considered as the *Posthumous Papers of a Decapitated Surveyor;* and the sketch which I am now bringing to a close, if too autobiographical for a modest person to publish in his lifetime, will readily be excused in a gentleman who writes from beyond the grave. Peace be with all the world! My blessing on my friends! My forgiveness to my enemies! For I am in the realm of quiet!

The life of the Custom-House lies like a dream behind me. The old Inspector,—who, by the by, I regret to say, was overthrown and killed by a horse, some time ago; else he would certainly have lived forever,—he, and all those other venerable personages who sat with him at the receipt of custom, are but shadows in my view; white-headed and wrinkled images, which my fancy used to sport with, and has now flung aside forever. The merchants,—Pingree, Phillips, Shepard, Upton, Kimball, Bertram, Hunt,—these, and many other names, which had such a classic familiarity for my ear six months ago,—these men of traffic, who seemed to occupy so important a position in the world,—how little time has it required to disconnect me from them all, not merely in act, but recollection! It is with an effort that I recall the figures and appellations of these few. Soon, likewise, my old native town will loom upon me through the haze of memory, a mist brooding over and around it; as if it were no portion of the real earth, but an overgrown village in cloud-land, with only imaginary inhabitants to people its wooden houses, and walk its homely lanes, and the unpicturesque prolixity of its main street. Henceforth it ceases to be a reality of my life. I am a citizen of somewhere else. My good townspeople will not much regret me; for—though it has been as dear an object as any, in my literary efforts, to be of some importance in their eyes, and to win myself a pleasant memory in this abode and burial-place of so many of my forefathers, *there* has never been, for me, the genial atmosphere which a literary man requires, in order to ripen the best harvest of his mind. I shall do better amongst other faces; and these familiar ones, it need hardly be said, will do just as well without me.

It may be, however,—O, transporting and triumphant thought!—that the great-grandchildren of the present race may sometimes think kindly of the scribbler of bygone days, when the antiquary of days to come, among the sites memorable in the town's history, shall point out the locality of THE TOWN PUMP!

The Scarlet Letter

I

The Prison-Door

A THRONG of bearded men, in sad-colored garments, and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.

The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison. In accordance with this rule, it may safely be assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the vicinity of Cornhill, almost as seasonably as they marked out the first burial-ground, on Isaac Johnson's lot, and round about his grave, which subsequently became the nucleus of all the congregated sepulchres in the old churchyard of King's Chapel. Certain it is, that, some fifteen or twenty years after the settlement of the town, the wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pigweed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison. But, on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.

This rose-bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stern old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it,—or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door,—we shall not take upon us to determine. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers, and present it to the reader. It may serve, let us hope, to symbolize some sweet moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.

II

The Market-Place

THE grass-plot before the jail, in Prison Lane, on a certain summer morning, not less than two centuries ago, was occupied by a pretty large number of the inhabitants of Boston; all with their eyes intently fastened on the iron-clamped oaken door. Amongst any other population, or at a later period in the history of New England, the grim rigidity that petrified the bearded physiognomies of these good people would have augured some awful business in hand. It could have betokened nothing short of the anticipated execution of some noted culprit, on whom the sentence of a legal tribunal had but confirmed the verdict of public sentiment. But, in that early severity of the Puritan character, an inference of this kind could not so indubitably be drawn. It might be that a sluggish bond-servant, or an undutiful child, whom his parents had given over to the civil authority, was to be corrected at the whipping-post. It might be, that an Antinomian, a Quaker, or other heterodox religionist was to be scourged out of the town, or an idle and vagrant Indian, whom the white man's fire-water had made riotous about the streets, was to be driven with stripes into the shadow of the forest. It might be, too, that a witch, like old Mistress Hibbins, the bitter-tempered widow of the magistrate, was to die upon the gallows. In either case, there was very much the same solemnity of demeanor on the part of the spectators; as befitted a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical, and in whose character both were so thoroughly interfused, that the mildest and the severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful. Meagre, indeed, and cold was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders, at the scaffold. On the other hand, a penalty, which, in our days, would infer a degree of mocking infamy and ridicule, might then be invested with almost as stern a dignity as the punishment of death itself.

It was a circumstance to be noted, on the summer morning when our story begins its course, that the

women, of whom there were several in the crowd, appeared to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue. The age had not so much refinement, that any sense of impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale from stepping forth into the public ways, and wedging their not unsubstantial persons, if occasion were, into the throng nearest to the scaffold at an execution. Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding, than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations; for, throughout that chain of ancestry, every successive mother has transmitted to her child a fainter bloom, a more delicate and briefer beauty, and a slighter physical frame, if not a character of less force and solidity, than her own. The women who were now standing about the prison-door stood within less than half a century of the period when the man-like Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex. They were her countrywomen; and the beef and ale of their native land, with a moral diet not a whit more refined, entered largely into their composition. The bright morning sun, therefore, shone on broad shoulders and well-developed busts, and on round and ruddy cheeks, that had ripened in the far-off island, and had hardly yet grown paler or thinner in the atmosphere of New England. There was, moreover, a boldness and rotundity of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone.

"Goodwives," said a hard-featured dame of fifty, "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I trow not!"

"People say," said another, "that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation."

"The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch,—that is a truth," added a third autumnal matron. "At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. Madam Hester would have winced at that, I warrant me. But she,—the naughty baggage,—little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever!"

"Ah, but," interposed, more softly, a young wife, holding a child by the hand, "let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart."

"What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown, or the flesh of her forehead?" cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly, there is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book. Then let the magistrates, who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray!"

"Mercy on us, goodwife," exclaimed a man in the crowd, "is there no virtue in woman, save what springs from a wholesome fear of the gallows? That is the hardest word yet! Hush, now, gossips! for the lock is turning in the prison-door, and here comes Mistress Prynne herself."

The door of the jail being flung open from within, there appeared, in the first place, like a black shadow emerging into sunshine, the grim and grisly presence of the town-beadle, with a sword by his side, and his staff of office in his hand. This personage prefigured and represented in his aspect the whole dismal severity of the Puritanic code of law, which it was his business to administer in its final and closest application to the offender. Stretching forth the official staff in his left hand, he laid his right upon the shoulder of a young woman, whom he thus drew forward; until, on the threshold of the prison-door, she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will. She bore in her arms a child, a baby of some three months old, who winked and turned aside its little face from the too vivid light of day; because its existence, heretofore, had brought it acquainted only with the gray twilight of a dungeon, or other darksome apartment of the prison.

When the young woman—the mother of this child—stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom; not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress. In a moment, however, wisely judging that one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another, she took the baby on her arm, and, with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbors. On the breast of her gown, in

fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold-thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony.

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognized as its indication. And never had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison. Those who had before known her, and had expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud, were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped. It may be true, that, to a sensitive observer, there was something exquisitely painful in it. Her attire, which, indeed, she had wrought for the occasion, in prison, and had modelled much after her own fancy, seemed to express the attitude of her spirit, the desperate recklessness of her mood, by its wild and picturesque peculiarity. But the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, transfigured the wearer,—so that both men and women, who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne, were now impressed as if they beheld her for the first time,—was that SCARLET LETTER, so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom. It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself.

"She hath good skill at her needle, that's certain," remarked one of her female spectators; "but did ever a woman, before this brazen huzzy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?"

"It were well," muttered the most iron-visaged of the old dames, "if we stripped Madam Hester's rich gown off her dainty shoulders; and as for the red letter, which she hath stitched so curiously, I'll bestow a rag of mine own rheumatic flannel, to make a fitter one!"

"O, peace, neighbors, peace!" whispered their youngest companion; "do not let her hear you! Not a stitch in that embroidered letter, but she has felt it in her heart."

The grim beadle now made a gesture with his staff.

"Make way, good people, make way, in the King's name!" cried he. "Open a passage; and, I promise ye, Mistress Prynne shall be set where man, woman, and child may have a fair sight of her brave apparel, from this time till an hour past meridian. A blessing on the righteous Colony of the Massachusetts, where iniquity is dragged out into the sunshine! Come along, Madam Hester, and show your scarlet letter in the market-place!"

A lane was forthwith opened through the crowd of spectators. Preceded by the beadle, and attended by an irregular procession of stern-browed men and unkindly visaged women, Hester Prynne set forth towards the place appointed for her punishment. A crowd of eager and curious school-boys, understanding little of the matter in hand, except that it gave them a half-holiday, ran before her progress, turning their heads continually to stare into her face, and at the winking baby in her arms, and at the ignominious letter on her breast. It was no great distance, in those days, from the prison-door to the market-place. Measured by the prisoner's experience, however, it might be reckoned a journey of some length; for, haughty as her demeanor was, she perchance underwent an agony from every footstep of those that thronged to see her, as if her heart had been flung into the street for them all to spurn and trample upon. In our nature, however, there is a provision, alike marvellous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pang that rankles after it. With almost a serene deportment, therefore, Hester Prynne passed through this portion of her ordeal, and came to a sort of scaffold, at the western extremity of the market-place. It stood nearly beneath the eaves of Boston's earliest church, and appeared to be a fixture there.

In fact, this scaffold constituted a portion of a penal machine, which now, for two or three generations past, has been merely historical and traditionary among us, but was held, in the old time, to be as effectual an agent, in the promotion of good citizenship, as ever was the guillotine among the terrorists of France. It was, in short, the platform of the pillory; and above it rose the framework of that instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human

head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to the public gaze. The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron. There can be no outrage, methinks, against our common nature,—whatever be the delinquencies of the individual,—no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence of this punishment to do. In Hester Prynne's instance, however, as not unfrequently in other cases, her sentence bore, that she should stand a certain time upon the platform, but without undergoing that gripe about the neck and confinement of the head, the proneness to which was the most devilish characteristic of this ugly engine. Knowing well her part, she ascended a flight of wooden steps, and was thus displayed to the surrounding multitude, at about the height of a man's shoulders above the street.

Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity, which so many illustrious painters have vied with one another to represent; something which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem the world. Here, there was the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman's beauty, and the more lost for the infant that she had borne.

The scene was not without a mixture of awe, such as must always invest the spectacle of guilt and shame in a fellow-creature, before society shall have grown corrupt enough to smile, instead of shuddering at it. The witnesses of Hester Prynne's disgrace had not yet passed beyond their simplicity. They were stern enough to look upon her death, had that been the sentence, without a murmur at its severity, but had none of the heartlessness of another social state, which would find only a theme for jest in an exhibition like the present. Even had there been a disposition to turn the matter into ridicule, it must have been repressed and overpowered by the solemn presence of men no less dignified than the Governor, and several of his counsellors, a judge, a general, and the ministers of the town; all of whom sat or stood in a balcony of the meeting-house, looking down upon the platform. When such personages could constitute a part of the spectacle, without risking the majesty or reverence of rank and office, it was safely to be inferred that the infliction of a legal sentence would have an earnest and effectual meaning. Accordingly, the crowd was sombre and grave. The unhappy culprit sustained herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom. It was almost intolerable to be borne. Of an impulsive and passionate nature, she had fortified herself to encounter the stings and venomous stabs of public contumely, wreaking itself in every variety of insult; but there was a quality so much more terrible in the solemn mood of the popular mind, that she longed rather to behold all those rigid countenances contorted with scornful merriment, and herself the object. Had a roar of laughter burst from the multitude,—each man, each woman, each little shrill-voiced child, contributing their individual parts,—Hester Prynne might have repaid them all with a bitter and disdainful smile. But, under the leaden infliction which it was her doom to endure, she felt, at moments, as if she must needs shriek out with the full power of her lungs, and cast herself from the scaffold down upon the ground, or else go mad at once.

Yet there were intervals when the whole scene, in which she was the most conspicuous object, seemed to vanish from her eyes, or, at least, glimmered indistinctly before them, like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images. Her mind, and especially her memory, was preternaturally active, and kept bringing up other scenes than this roughly hewn street of a little town, on the edge of the Western wilderness; other faces than were lowering upon her from beneath the brims of those steeple-crowned hats. Reminiscences the most trifling and immaterial, passages of infancy and school-days, sports, childish quarrels, and the little domestic traits of her maiden years, came swarming back upon her, intermingled with recollections of whatever was gravest in her subsequent life; one picture precisely as vivid as another; as if all were of similar importance, or all alike a play. Possibly, it was an instinctive device of her spirit, to relieve itself, by the exhibition of these phantasmagoric forms, from the cruel weight and hardness of the reality.

Be that as it might, the scaffold of the pillory was a point of view that revealed to Hester Prynne the entire track along which she had been treading, since her happy infancy. Standing on that miserable eminence, she saw again her native village, in Old England, and her paternal home; a decayed house of gray stone, with a poverty-stricken aspect, but retaining a half-obliterated shield of arms over the portal, in token of antique gentility. She saw her father's face, with its bald brow, and reverend white beard, that flowed over the old-fashioned Elizabethan ruff; her mother's, too, with the look of heedful and

anxious love which it always wore in her remembrance, and which, even since her death, had so often laid the impediment of a gentle remonstrance in her daughter's pathway. She saw her own face, glowing with girlish beauty, and illuminating all the interior of the dusky mirror in which she had been wont to gaze at it. There she beheld another countenance, of a man well stricken in years, a pale, thin, scholar-like visage, with eyes dim and bleared by the lamplight that had served them to pore over many ponderous books. Yet those same bleared optics had a strange, penetrating power, when it was their owner's purpose to read the human soul. This figure of the study and the cloister, as Hester Prynne's womanly fancy failed not to recall, was slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right. Next rose before her, in memory's picture-gallery, the intricate and narrow thoroughfares, the tall, gray houses, the huge cathedrals, and the public edifices, ancient in date and quaint in architecture, of a Continental city; where a new life had awaited her, still in connection with the misshapen scholar; a new life, but feeding itself on time-worn materials, like a tuft of green moss on a crumbling wall. Lastly, in lieu of these shifting scenes, came back the rude market-place of the Puritan settlement, with all the townspeople assembled and levelling their stern regards at Hester Prynne,—yes, at herself,—who stood on the scaffold of the pillory, an infant on her arm, and the letter A, in scarlet, fantastically embroidered with gold-thread, upon her bosom!

Could it be true? She clutched the child so fiercely to her breast, that it sent forth a cry; she turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter and even touched it with her finger to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes!—these were her realities,—all else had vanished!

III

The Recognition

FROM this intense consciousness of being the object of severe and universal observation, the wearer of the scarlet letter was at length relieved, by [illegible] on the outskirts of the crowd, a figure which irresistibly took possession of her thoughts. An Indian, in his native garb, was standing there; but the red men were not so infrequent visitors of the English settlements, that one of them would have attracted any notice from Hester Prynne, at such a time; much less would he have excluded all other objects and ideas from her mind. By the Indian's side, and evidently sustaining a companionship with him, stood a white man, clad in a strange disarray of civilized and savage costume.

He was small in stature, with a furrowed visage, which, as yet, could hardly be termed aged. There was a remarkable intelligence in his features, as of a person who had so cultivated his mental part that it could not fail to mould the physical to itself, and become manifest by unmistakable tokens. Although, by a seemingly careless arrangement of his heterogeneous garb, he had endeavored to conceal or abate the peculiarity, it was sufficiently evident to Hester Prynne, that one of this man's shoulders rose higher than the other. Again, at the first instant of perceiving that thin visage, and the slight deformity of the figure, she pressed her infant to her bosom with so convulsive a force that the poor babe uttered another cry of pain. But the mother did not seem to hear it.

At his arrival in the market-place, and some time before she saw him, the stranger had bent his eyes on Hester Prynne. It was carelessly, at first, like a man chiefly accustomed to look inward, and to whom external matters are of little value and import, unless they bear relation to something within his mind. Very soon, however, his look became keen and penetrative. A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open sight. His face darkened with some powerful emotion, which, nevertheless, he so instantaneously controlled by an effort of his will, that, save at a single moment, its expression might have passed for calmness. After a brief space, the convulsion grew almost imperceptible, and finally subsided into the depths of his nature. When he found the eyes of Hester Prynne fastened on his own, and saw that she appeared to recognize him, he slowly and calmly raised his finger, made a gesture with it in the air, and laid it on his lips.

Then, touching the shoulder of a townsman who stood next to him, he addressed him, in a formal and courteous manner.

"I pray you, good sir," said he, "who is this woman?—and wherefore is she here set up to public shame?"

"You must needs be a stranger in this region, friend," answered the townsman, looking curiously at the questioner and his savage companion, "else you would surely have heard of Mistress Hester Prynne, and her evil doings. She hath raised a great scandal, I promise you, in godly Master Dimmesdale's church."

"You say truly," replied the other. "I am a stranger, and have been a wanderer, sorely against my will. I have met with grievous mishaps by sea and

land, and have been long held in bonds among the heathen-folk, to the southward; and am now brought hither by this Indian, to be redeemed out of my captivity. Will it please you, therefore, to tell me of Hester Prynne's,—have I her name rightly?—of this woman's offences, and what has brought her to yonder scaffold?"

"Truly, friend; and methinks it must gladden your heart, after your troubles and sojourn in the wilderness," said the townsman, "to find yourself, at length, in a land where iniquity is searched out, and punished in the sight of rulers and people; as here in our godly New England. Yonder woman, Sir, you must know, was the wife of a certain learned man, English by birth, but who had long dwelt in Amsterdam, whence, some good time agone, he was minded to cross over and cast in his lot with us of the Massachusetts. To this purpose, he sent his wife before him, remaining himself to look after some necessary affairs. Marry, good Sir, in some two years, or less, that the woman has been a dweller here in Boston, no tidings have come of this learned gentleman, Master Prynne; and his young wife, look you, being left to her own misguidance—"

"Ah!—aha!—I conceive you," said the stranger, with a bitter smile. "So learned a man as you speak of should have learned this too in his books. And who, by your favor, Sir, may be the father of yonder babe—it is some three or four months old, I should judge—which Mistress Prynne is holding in her arms?"

"Of a truth, friend, that matter remaineth a riddle; and the Daniel who shall expound it is yet a-wanting," answered the townsman. "Madam Hester absolutely refuseth to speak, and the magistrates have laid their heads together in vain. Peradventure the guilty one stands looking on at this sad spectacle, unknown of man, and forgetting that God sees him."

"The learned man," observed the stranger, with another smile, "should come himself, to look into the mystery."

"It behooves him well, if he be still in life," responded the townsman. "Now, good Sir, our Massachusetts magistracy, bethinking themselves that this woman is youthful and fair, and doubtless was strongly tempted to her fall,—and that, moreover, as is most likely, her husband may be at the bottom of the sea,—they have not been bold to put in force the extremity of our righteous law against her. The penalty thereof is death. But in their great mercy and tenderness of heart, they have doomed Mistress Prynne to stand only a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory, and then and thereafter, for the remainder of her natural life, to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom."

"A wise sentence!" remarked the stranger, gravely bowing his head. "Thus she will be a living sermon against sin, until the ignominious letter be engraved upon her tombstone. It irks me, nevertheless, that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the scaffold by her side. But he will be known!—he will be known!—he will be known!"

He bowed courteously to the communicative townsman, and, whispering a few words to his Indian attendant, they both made their way through the crowd.

While this passed, Hester Prynne had been standing on her pedestal, still with a fixed gaze towards the stranger; so fixed a gaze, that, at moments of intense absorption, all other objects in the visible world seemed to vanish, leaving only him and her. Such an interview, perhaps, would have been more terrible than even to meet him as she now did, with the hot, midday sun burning down upon her face, and lighting up its shame; with the scarlet token of infamy on her breast; with the sin-born infant in her arms; with a whole people, drawn forth as to a festival, staring at the features that should have been seen only in the quiet gleam of the fireside, in the happy shadow of a home, or beneath a matronly veil, at church. Dreadful as it was, she was conscious of a shelter in the presence of these thousand witnesses. It was better to stand thus, with so many betwixt him and her, than to greet him, face to face, they two alone. She fled for refuge, as it were, to the public exposure, and dreaded the moment when its protection should be withdrawn from her. Involved in these thoughts, she scarcely heard a voice behind her, until it had repeated her name more than once, in a loud and solemn tone, audible to the whole multitude.

"Hearken unto me, Hester Prynne!" said the voice.

It has already been noticed, that directly over the platform on which Hester Prynne stood was a kind of balcony, or open gallery, appended to the meeting-house. It was the place whence proclamations were wont to be made, amidst an assemblage of the magistracy, with all the ceremonial that attended such public observances in those days. Here, to witness the scene which we are describing, sat Governor Bellingham himself, with four sergeants about his chair, bearing halberds, as a guard of honor. He wore a dark feather in his hat, a border of embroidery on his cloak, and a black velvet tunic beneath; a gentleman advanced in years, with a hard experience written in his wrinkles. He was not ill fitted to be

the head and representative of a community, which owed its origin and progress, and its present state of development, not to the impulses of youth, but to the stern and tempered energies of manhood, and the sombre sagacity of age; accomplishing so much, precisely because it imagined and hoped so little. The other eminent characters, by whom the chief ruler was surrounded, were distinguished by a dignity of mien, belonging to a period when the forms of authority were felt to possess the sacredness of Divine institutions. They were, doubtless, good men, just, and sage. But, out of the whole human family, it would not have been easy to select the same number of wise and virtuous persons, who should be less capable of sitting in judgment on an erring woman's heart, and disentangling its mesh of good and evil, than the sages of rigid aspect towards whom Hester Prynne now turned her face. She seemed conscious, indeed, that whatever sympathy she might expect lay in the larger and warmer heart of the multitude; for, as she lifted her eyes towards the balcony, the unhappy woman grew pale and trembled.

The voice which had called her attention was that of the reverend and famous John Wilson, the eldest clergyman of Boston, a great scholar, like most of his contemporaries in the profession, and withal a man of kind and genial spirit. This last attribute, however, had been less carefully developed than his intellectual gifts, and was, in truth, rather a matter of shame than self-congratulation with him. There he stood, with a border of grizzled locks beneath his skull-cap; while his gray eyes, accustomed to the shaded light of his study, were winking, like those of Hester's infant, in the unadulterated sunshine. He looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volumes of sermons; and had no more right than one of those portraits would have, to step forth, as he now did, and meddle with a question of human guilt, passion, and anguish.

"Hester Prynne," said the clergyman, "I have striven with my young brother here, under whose preaching of the word you have been privileged to sit,"—here Mr. Wilson laid his hand on the shoulder of a pale young man beside him,—"I have sought, I say, to persuade this godly youth, that he should deal with you, here in the face of Heaven, and before these wise and upright rulers, and in hearing of all the people, as touching the vileness and blackness of your sin. Knowing your natural temper better than I, he could the better judge what arguments to use, whether of tenderness or terror, such as might prevail over your hardness and obstinacy; insomuch that you should no longer hide the name of him who tempted you to this grievous fall. But he opposes to me (with a young man's over-softness, albeit wise beyond his years), that it were wronging the very nature of woman to force her to lay open her heart's secrets in such broad daylight, and in presence of so great a multitude. Truly, as I sought to convince him, the shame lay in the commission of the sin, and not in the showing of it forth. What say you to it, once again, Brother Dimmesdale? Must it be thou, or I, that shall deal with this poor sinner's soul?"

There was a murmur among the dignified and reverend occupants of the balcony; and Governor Bellingham gave expression to its purport, speaking in an authoritative voice, although tempered with respect towards the youthful clergyman whom he addressed.

"Good Master Dimmesdale," said he, "the responsibility of this woman's soul lies greatly with you. It behooves you, therefore, to exhort her to repentance, and to confession, as a proof and consequence thereof."

The directness of this appeal drew the eyes of the whole crowd upon the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale; a young clergyman, who had come from one of the great English universities, bringing all the learning of the age into our wild forest-land. His eloquence and religious fervor had already given the earnest of high eminence in his profession. He was a person of very striking aspect, with a white, lofty, and impending brow, large, brown, melancholy eyes, and a mouth which, unless when he forcibly compressed it, was apt to be tremulous, expressing both nervous sensibility and a vast power of self-restraint. Notwithstanding his high native gifts and scholar-like attainments, there was an air about this young minister,—an apprehensive, a startled, a half-frightened look,—as of a being who felt himself quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence, and could only be at ease in some seclusion of his own. Therefore, so far as his duties would permit, he trod in the shadowy by-paths, and thus kept himself simple and childlike; coming forth, when occasion was, with a freshness, and fragrance, and dewy purity of thought, which, as many people said, affected them like the speech of an angel.

Such was the young man whom the Reverend Mr. Wilson and the Governor had introduced so openly to the public notice, bidding him to speak, in the hearing of all men, to that mystery of a woman's soul, so sacred even in its pollution. The trying nature of his position drove the blood from his cheek, and made his lips tremulous.

"Speak to the woman, my brother," said Mr. Wilson. "It is of moment to her soul, and therefore, as the worshipful Governor says, momentous to thine

own, in whose charge hers is. Exhort her to confess the truth!"

The Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale bent his head, in silent prayer, as it seemed, and then came forward.

"Hester Prynne," said he, leaning over the balcony and looking down steadfastly into her eyes, "thou hearest what this good man says, and seest the accountability under which I labor. If thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace, and that thy earthly punishment will thereby be made more effectual to salvation, I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so, than to hide a guilty heart through life. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him—yea, compel him, as it were—to add hypocrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee, and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest to him—who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself—the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips!"

The young pastor's voice was tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken. The feeling that it so evidently manifested, rather than the direct purport of the words, caused it to vibrate within all hearts, and brought the listeners into one accord of sympathy. Even the poor baby, at Hester's bosom, was affected by the same influence; for it directed its hitherto vacant gaze towards Mr. Dimmesdale, and held up its little arms, with a half-pleased, half-plaintive murmur. So powerful seemed the minister's appeal, that the people could not believe but that Hester Prynne would speak out the guilty name; or else that the guilty one himself, in whatever high or lowly place he stood, would be drawn forth by an inward and inevitable necessity, and compelled to ascend the scaffold.

Hester shook her head.

"Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy!" cried the Reverend Mr. Wilson, more harshly than before. "That little babe hath been gifted with a voice, to second and confirm the counsel which thou hast heard. Speak out the name! That, and thy repentance, may avail to take the scarlet letter off thy breast."

"Never!" replied Hester Prynne, looking, not at Mr. Wilson, but into the deep and troubled eyes of the younger clergyman. "It is too deeply branded. Ye cannot take it off. And would that I might endure his agony, as well as mine!"

"Speak, woman!" said another voice, coldly and sternly, proceeding from the crowd about the scaffold. "Speak; and give your child a father!"

"I will not speak!" answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognized. "And my child must seek a heavenly Father; she shall never know an earthly one!"

"She will not speak!" murmured Mr. Dimmesdale, who, leaning over the balcony, with his hand upon his heart, had awaited the result of his appeal. He now drew back, with a long respiration. "Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!"

Discerning the impracticable state of the poor culprit's mind, the elder clergyman, who had carefully prepared himself for the occasion, addressed to the multitude a discourse on sin, in all its branches, but with continual reference to the ignominious letter. So forcibly did he dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which his periods were rolling over the people's heads, that it assumed new terrors in their imagination, and seemed to derive its scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit. Hester Prynne, meanwhile, kept her place upon the pedestal of shame, with glazed eyes, and an air of weary indifference. She had borne, that morning, all that nature could endure; and as her temperament was not of the order that escapes from too intense suffering by a swoon, her spirit could only shelter itself beneath a stony crust of insensibility, while the faculties of animal life remained entire. In this state, the voice of the preacher thundered remorselessly, but unavailingly, upon her ears. The infant, during the latter portion of her ordeal, pierced the air with its wailings and screams; she strove to hush it, mechanically, but seemed scarcely to sympathize with its trouble. With the same hard demeanor, she was led back to prison, and vanished from the public gaze within its iron-clamped portal. It was whispered, by those who peered after her, that the scarlet letter threw a lurid gleam along the dark passage-way of the interior.

IV

The Interview

After her return to the prison, Hester Prynne was found to be in a state of nervous excitement that demanded constant watchfulness, lest she should perpetrate violence on herself, or do some half-frenzied mischief to the poor babe. As night approached, it proving impossible to quell her insubordination by rebuke or threats of punish-

ment, Master Brackett, the jailer, thought fit to introduce a physician. He described him as a man of skill in all Christian modes of physical science, and likewise familiar with whatever the savage people could teach, in respect to medicinal herbs and roots that grew in the forest. To say the truth, there was much need of professional assistance, not merely for Hester herself, but still more urgently for the child; who, drawing its sustenance from the maternal bosom, seemed to have drank in with it all the turmoil, the anguish and despair, which pervaded the mother's system. It now writhed in convulsions of pain, and was a forcible type, in its little frame, of the moral agony which Hester Prynne had borne throughout the day.

Closely following the jailer into the dismal apartment appeared that individual, of singular aspect, whose presence in the crowd had been of such deep interest to the wearer of the scarlet letter. He was lodged in the prison, not as suspected of any offence, but as the most convenient and suitable mode of disposing of him, until the magistrates should have conferred with the Indian sagamores respecting his ransom. His name was announced as Roger Chillingworth. The jailer, after ushering him into the room, remained a moment, marvelling at the comparative quiet that followed his entrance; for Hester Prynne had immediately become as still as death, although the child continued to moan.

"Prithee, friend, leave me alone with my patient," said the practitioner. "Trust me, good jailer, you shall briefly have peace in your house; and, I promise you, Mistress Prynne shall hereafter be more amenable to just authority than you may have found her heretofore."

"Nay, if your worship can accomplish that," answered Master Brackett, "I shall own you for a man of skill indeed! Verily, the woman hath been like a possessed one; and there lacks little, that I should take in hand to drive Satan out of her with stripes."

The stranger had entered the room with the characteristic quietude of the profession to which he announced himself as belonging. Nor did his demeanor change, when the withdrawal of the prison-keeper left him face to face with the woman, whose absorbed notice of him, in the crowd, had intimated so close a relation between himself and her. His first care was given to the child; whose cries, indeed, as she lay writhing on the trundle-bed, made it of peremptory necessity to postpone all other business to the task of soothing her. He examined the infant carefully, and then proceeded to unclasp a leathern case, which he took from beneath his dress. It appeared to contain medical preparations, one of which he mingled with a cup of water.

"My old studies in alchemy," observed he, "and my sojourn, for above a year past, among a people well versed in the kindly properties of simples, have made a better physician of me than many that claim the medical degree. Here, woman! The child is yours,—she is none of mine,—neither will she recognize my voice or aspect as a father's. Administer this draught, therefore, with thine own hand."

Hester repelled the offered medicine, at the same time gazing with strongly marked apprehension into his face.

"Wouldst thou avenge thyself on the innocent babe?" whispered she.

"Foolish woman!" responded the physician, half-coldly, half soothingly. "What should ail me, to harm this misbegotten and miserable babe? The medicine is potent for good; and were it my child,—yea, mine own, as well as thine!—I could do no better for it."

As she still hesitated, being, in fact, in no reasonable state of mind, he took the infant in his arms, and himself administered the draught. It soon proved its efficacy, and redeemed the leech's pledge. The moans of the little patient subsided; its convulsive tossings gradually ceased; and, in a few moments, as is custom of young children after relief from pain, it sank into a profound and dewy slumber. The physician, as he had a fair right to be termed, next bestowed his attention on the mother. With calm and intent scrutiny, he felt her pulse, looked into her eyes,—a gaze that made her heart shrink and shudder, because so familiar, and yet so strange and cold,—and, finally, satisfied with his investigation, proceeded to mingle another draught.

"I know not Lethe nor Nepenthe," remarked he; "but I have learned many new secrets in the wilderness, and here is one of them,—a recipe that an Indian taught me, in requital of some lessons of my own, that were as old as Paracelsus. Drink it! It may be less soothing than a sinless conscience. That I cannot give thee. But it will calm the swell and heaving of thy passion, like oil thrown on the waves of a tempestuous sea."

He presented the cup to Hester, who received it with a slow, earnest look into his face; not precisely a look of fear, yet full of doubt and questioning, as to what his purposes might be. She looked also at her slumbering child.

"I have thought of death," said she,—"have wished for it,—would even have prayed for it, were it fit that such as I should pray for anything. Yet, if death be in this cup, I bid thee think again, ere thou beholdest me quaff it. See! It is even now at my lips."

"Drink, then," replied he, still with the same cold composure. "Dost thou know me so little, Hester Prynne? Are my purposes wont to be so shallow? Even if I imagine a scheme of vengeance, what could I do better for my object than to let thee live,—than to give thee medicines against all harm and peril of life,—so that this burning shame may still blaze upon thy bosom?" As he spoke, he laid his long forefinger on the scarlet letter, which forthwith seemed to scorch into Hester's breast, as if it had been red-hot. He noticed her involuntary gesture, and smiled. "Live, therefore, and bear about thy doom with thee, in the eyes of men and women,—in the eyes of him whom thou didst call thy husband,—in the eyes of yonder child! And, that thou mayest live, take off this draught."

Without further expostulation or delay, Hester Prynne drained the cup, and, at the motion of the man of skill, seated herself on the bed where the child was sleeping; while he drew the only chair which the room afforded, and took his own seat beside her. She could not but tremble at these preparations; for she felt that—having now done all that humanity, or principle, or, if so it were, a refined cruelty, impelled him to do, for the relief of physical suffering—he was next to treat with her as the man whom she had most deeply and irreparably injured.

"Hester," said he, "I ask not wherefore, nor how, thou hast fallen into the pit, or say, rather, thou hast ascended to the pedestal of infamy, on which I found thee. The reason is not far to seek. It was my folly, and thy weakness. I,—a man of thought,—the bookworm of great libraries,—a man already in decay, having given my best years to feed the hungry dream of knowledge,—what had I to do with youth and beauty like thine own! Misshapen from my birthhour, how could I delude myself with the idea that intellectual gifts might veil physical deformity in a young girl's fantasy! Men call me wise. If sages were ever wise in their own behoof, I might have foreseen all this. I might have known that, as I came out of the vast and dismal forest, and entered this settlement of Christian men, the very first object to meet my eyes would be thyself, Hester Prynne, standing up, a statue of ignominy, before the people. Nay, from the moment when we came down the old church steps together, a married pair, I might have beheld the bale-fire of that scarlet letter blazing at the end of our path!"

"Thou knowest," said Hester,—for, depressed as she was, she could not endure this last quiet stab at the token of her shame,—"thou knowest that I was frank with thee. I felt no love, nor feigned any."

"True," replied he. "It was my folly! I have said it. But, up to that epoch of my life, I had lived in vain. The world had been so cheerless! My heart was a habitation large enough for many guests, but lonely and chill, and without a household fire. I longed to kindle one! It seemed not so wild a dream,—old as I was, and sombre as I was, and misshapen as I was,—that the simple bliss, which is scattered far and wide, for all mankind to gather up, might yet be mine. And so, Hester, I drew thee into my heart, into its innermost chamber, and sought to warm thee by the warmth which thy presence made there!"

"I have greatly wronged thee," murmured Hester.

"We have wronged each other," answered he. "Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay. Therefore, as a man who has not thought and philosophized in vain, I seek no vengeance, plot no evil against thee. Between thee and me, the scale hangs fairly balanced. But, Hester, the man lives who has wronged us both! Who is he?"

"Ask me not!" replied Hester Prynne, looking firmly into his face. "That thou shalt never know!"

"Never, sayest thou?" rejoined he, with a smile of dark and self-relying intelligence. "Never know him! Believe me, Hester, there are few things,—whether in the outward world, or, to a certain depth, in the invisible sphere of thought,—few things hidden from the man who devotes himself earnestly and unreservedly to the solution of a mystery. Thou mayest cover up thy secret from the prying multitude. Thou mayest conceal it, too, from the ministers and magistrates, even as thou didst this day, when they sought to wrench the name out of thy heart, and give thee a partner on thy pedestal. But, as for me, I come to the inquest with other senses than they possess. I shall seek this man, as I have sought truth in books; as I have sought gold in alchemy. There is a sympathy that will make me conscious of him. I shall see him tremble. I shall feel myself shudder, suddenly and unawares. Sooner or later, he must needs be mine!"

The eyes of the wrinkled scholar glowed so intensely upon her, that Hester Prynne clasped her hands over her heart, dreading lest he should read the secret there at once.

"Thou wilt not reveal his name? Not the less he is mine," resumed he, with a look of confidence, as if destiny were at one with him. "He bears no letter of infamy wrought into his garment, as thou dost; but I shall read it on his heart. Yet fear not for him! Think not that I shall interfere with Heaven's own method of retribution, or, to my own loss, betray

him to the gripe of human law. Neither do thou imagine that I shall contrive aught against his life; no, nor against his fame, if, as I judge, he be a man of fair repute. Let him live! Let him hide himself in outward honor, if he may! Not the less he shall be mine!"

"Thy acts are like mercy," said Hester, bewildered and appalled. "But thy words interpret thee as a terror!"

"One thing, thou that wast my wife, I would enjoin upon thee," continued the scholar. "Thou hast kept the secret of thy paramour. Keep, likewise, mine. There are none in this land that know me. Breathe not, to any human soul, that thou didst ever call me husband! Here, on this wild outskirt of the earth, I shall pitch my tent; for, elsewhere a wanderer, and isolated from human interests, I find here a woman, a man, a child, amongst whom and myself there exist the closest ligaments. No matter whether of love or hate; no matter whether of right or wrong! Thou and thine, Hester Prynne, belong to me. My home is where thou art, and where he is. But betray me not!"

"Wherefore dost thou desire it?" inquired Hester, shrinking, she hardly knew why, from this secret bond. "Why not announce thyself openly, and cast me off at once?"

"It may be," he replied, "because I will not encounter the dishonor that besmirches the husband of a faithless woman. It may be for other reasons. Enough, it is my purpose to live and die unknown. Let, therefore, thy husband be to the world as one already dead, and of whom no tidings shall ever come. Recognize me not, by word, by sign, by look! Breathe not the secret, above all, to the man thou wottest of. Shouldst thou fail me in this, beware! His fame, his position, his life, will be in my hands. Beware!"

"I will keep thy secret, as I have his," said Hester.

"Swear it!" rejoined he.

And she took the oath.

"And now, Mistress Prynne," said old Roger Chillingworth, as he was hereafter to be named, "I leave thee alone; alone with thy infant, and the scarlet letter! How is it, Hester? Doth thy sentence bind thee to wear the token in thy sleep? Art thou not afraid of nightmares and hideous dreams?"

"Why dost thou smile so at me?" inquired Hester troubled at the expression of his eyes. "Art thou like the Black Man that haunts the forest round about us? Hast thou enticed me into a bond that will prove the ruin of my soul?"

"Not thy soul," he answered, with another smile. "No, not thine!"

V

Hester at Her Needle

HESTER PRYNNE'S term of confinement was now at an end. Her prison-door was thrown open, and she came forth into the sunshine, which, falling on all alike, seemed, to her sick and morbid heart, as if meant for no other purpose than to reveal the scarlet letter on her breast. Perhaps there was a more real torture in her first unattended footsteps from the threshold of the prison, than even in the procession and spectacle that have been described, where she was made the common infamy, at which all mankind was summoned to point its finger. Then, she was supported by an unnatural tension of the nerves, and by all the combative energy of her character, which enabled her to convert the scene into a kind of lurid triumph. It was, moreover, a separate and insulated event, to occur but once in her lifetime, and to meet which, therefore, reckless of economy, she might call up the vital strength that would have sufficed for many quiet years. The very law that condemned her—a giant of stern features, but with vigor to support, as well as to annihilate, in his iron arm—had held her up, through the terrible ordeal of her ignominy. But now, with this unattended walk from her prison-door, began the daily custom; and she must either sustain and carry it forward by the ordinary resources of her nature, or sink beneath it. She could no longer borrow from the future to help her through the present grief. To-morrow would bring its own trial with it; so would the next day, and so would the next; each its own trial, and yet the very same that was now so unutterably grievous to be borne. The days of the far-off future would toil onward, still with the same burden for her to take up, and bear along with her, but never to fling down; for the accumulating days, and added years, would pile up their misery upon the heap of shame. Throughout them all, giving up her individuality, she would become the general symbol at which the preacher and moralist might point, and in which they might vivify and embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion. Thus the young and pure would be taught to look at her, with the scarlet letter flaming on her breast,—at her, the child of honorable parents,—at her, the mother of a babe, that would hereafter be a woman,—at her, who had once been innocent,—as the figure, the body, the reality of sin. And over her grave, the infamy that she must carry thither would be her only monument.

It may seem marvellous, that, with the world before her,—kept by no restrictive clause of her condemnation within the limits of the Puritan settle-

ment, so remote and so obscure,—free to return to her birthplace, or to any other European land, and there hide her character and identity under a new exterior, as completely as if emerging into another state of being,—and having also the passes of the dark, inscrutable forest open to her, where the wildness of her nature might assimilate itself with a people whose customs and life were alien from the law that had condemned her,—it may seem marvellous, that this woman should still call that place her home, where, and where only, she must needs be the type of shame. But there is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghost-like, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime; and still the more irresistibly, the darker the tinge that saddens it. Her sin, her ignominy, were the roots which she had struck into the soil. It was as if a new birth, with stronger assimilations than the first, had converted the forest-land, still so uncongenial to every other pilgrim and wanderer, into Hester Prynne's wild and dreary, but life-long home. All other scenes of earth—even that village of rural England, where happy infancy and stainless maidenhood seemed yet to be in her mother's keeping, like garments put off long ago—were foreign to her, in comparison. The chain that bound her here was of iron links, and galling to her inmost soul, but could never be broken.

It might be, too,—doubtless it was so, although she hid the secret from herself, and grew pale whenever it struggled out of her heart, like a serpent from its hole,—it might be that another feeling kept her within the scene and pathway that had been so fatal. There dwelt, there trode the feet of one with whom she deemed herself connected in a union, that, unrecognized on earth, would bring them together before the bar of final judgment, and make that their marriage-altar, for a joint futurity of endless retribution. Over and over again, the tempter of souls had thrust this idea upon Hester's contemplation, and laughed at the passionate and desperate joy with which she seized, and then strove to cast it from her. She barely looked the idea in the face, and hastened to bar it in its dungeon. What she compelled herself to believe—what, finally, she reasoned upon, as her motive for continuing a resident of New England—was half a truth, and half a self-delusion. Here, she said to herself, had been the scene of her guilt, and here should be the scene of her earthly punishment; and so, perchance, the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom.

Hester Prynne, therefore, did not flee. On the outskirts of the town, within the verge of the peninsula, but not in close vicinity to any other habitation, there was a small thatched cottage. It had been built by an earlier settler, and abandoned, because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation, while its comparative remoteness put it out of the sphere of that social activity which already marked the habits of the emigrants. It stood on the shore, looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills, towards the west. A clump of scrubby trees, such as alone grew on the peninsula, did not so much conceal the cottage from view, as seem to denote that here was some object which would fain have been, or at least ought to be, concealed. In this little, lonesome dwelling, with some slender means that she possessed, and by the license of the magistrates, who still kept an inquisitorial watch over her, Hester established herself, with her infant child. A mystic shadow of suspicion immediately attached itself to the spot. Children, too young to comprehend wherefore this woman should be shut out from the sphere of human charities, would creep nigh enough to behold her plying her needle at the cottage-window, or standing in the doorway, or laboring in her little garden, or coming forth along the pathway that led townward; and, discerning the scarlet letter on her breast, would scamper off with a strange, contagious fear.

Lonely as was Hester's situation, and without a friend on earth who dared to show himself, she, however, incurred no risk of want. She possessed an art that sufficed, even in a land that afforded comparatively little scope for its exercise, to supply food for her thriving infant and herself. It was the art—then, as now, almost the only one within a woman's grasp—of needlework. She bore on her breast, in the curiously embroidered letter, a specimen of her delicate and imaginative skill, of which the dames of a court might gladly have availed themselves, to add the richer and more spiritual adornment of human ingenuity to their fabrics of silk and gold. Here, indeed, in the sable simplicity that generally characterized the Puritanic mode of dress, there might be an infrequent call for the finer productions of her handiwork. Yet the taste of the age, demanding whatever was elaborate in compositions of this kind, did not fail to extend its influence over our stern progenitors, who had cast behind them so many fashions which it might seem harder to dispense with. Public ceremonies, such as ordinations, the installation of magistrates, and all that could give majesty to the forms in which a new government manifested itself to the

people, were, as a matter of policy, marked by a stately and well-conducted ceremonial, and a sombre, but yet a studied magnificence. Deep ruffs, painfully wrought bands, and gorgeously embroidered gloves, were all deemed necessary to the official state of men assuming the reins of power; and were readily allowed to individuals dignified by rank or wealth, even while sumptuary laws forbade these and similar extravagances to the plebeian order. In the array of funerals, too,—whether for the apparel of the dead body, or to typify, by manifold emblematic devices of sable cloth and snowy lawn, the sorrow of the survivors,—there was a frequent and characteristic demand for such labor as Hester Prynne could supply. Baby-linen—for babies then wore robes of state—afforded still another possibility of toil and emolument.

By degrees, nor very slowly, her handiwork became what would now be termed the fashion. Whether from commiseration for a woman of so miserable a destiny; or from the morbid curiosity that gives a fictitious value even to common or worthless things; or by whatever other intangible circumstance was then, as now, sufficient to bestow, on some persons, what others might seek in vain; or because Hester really filled a gap which must otherwise have remained vacant; it is certain that she had ready and fairly requited employment for as many hours as she saw fit to occupy with her needle. Vanity, it may be, chose to mortify itself, by putting on, for ceremonials of pomp and state, the garments that had been wrought by her sinful hands. Her needlework was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the baby's little cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead. But it is not recorded that, in a single instance, her skill was called in aid to embroider the white veil which was to cover the pure blushes of a bride. The exception indicated the ever-relentless rigor with which society frowned upon her sin.

Hester sought not to acquire anything beyond a subsistence, of the plainest and most ascetic description, for herself, and a simple abundance for her child. Her own dress was of the coarsest materials and the most sombre hue; with only that one ornament,—the scarlet letter,—which it was her doom to wear. The child's attire, on the other hand, was distinguished by a fanciful, or, we might rather say, a fantastic ingenuity, which served, indeed, to heighten the airy charm that early began to develop itself in the little girl, but which appeared to have also a deeper meaning. We may speak further of it hereafter. Except for that small expenditure in the decoration of her infant, Hester bestowed all her superfluous means in charity, on wretches less miserable than herself, and who not unfrequently insulted the hand that fed them. Much of the time, which she might readily have applied to the better efforts of her art, she employed in making coarse garments for the poor. It is probable that there was an idea of penance in this mode of occupation, and that she offered up a real sacrifice of enjoyment, in devoting so many hours to such rude handiwork. She had in her nature a rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic,—a taste for the gorgeous, beautiful, which, save in the exquisite productions of her needle, found nothing else, in all the possibilities of her life, to exercise itself upon. Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle. To Hester Prynne it might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life. Like all other joys, she rejected it as sin. This morbid meddling of conscience with an immaterial matter betokened, it is to be feared, no genuine and steadfast penitence, but something doubtful, something that might be deeply wrong, beneath.

In this manner, Hester Prynne came to have a part to perform in the world. With her native energy of character, and rare capacity, it could not entirely cast her off, although it had set a mark upon her, more intolerable to a woman's heart than that which branded the brow of Cain. In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. She stood apart from moral interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside, and can no longer make itself seen or felt; no more smile with the household joy, nor mourn with the kindred sorrow; or, should it succeed in manifesting its forbidden sympathy, awakening only terror and horrible repugnance. These emotions, in fact, and its bitterest scorn besides, seemed to be the sole portion that she retained in the universal heart. It was not an age of delicacy; and her position, although she understood it well, and was in little danger of forgetting it, was often brought before her vivid self-perception, like a new anguish, by the rudest touch upon the tenderest spot. The poor, as we have already said, whom she sought out to be the objects of her bounty, often reviled the hand that was stretched forth to succor them. Dames

of elevated rank, likewise, whose doors she entered in the way of her occupation, were accustomed to distil drops of bitterness into her heart; sometimes through that alchemy of quiet malice, by which women can concoct a subtle poison from ordinary trifles; and sometimes, also, by a coarser expression, that fell upon the sufferer's defenceless breast like a rough blow upon an ulcerated wound. Hester had schooled herself long and well; she never responded to these attacks, save by a flush of crimson that rose irrepressibly over her pale cheek, and again subsided into the depths of her bosom. She was patient,—a martyr, indeed,—but she forbore to pray for her enemies; lest, in spite of her forgiving aspirations, the words of the blessing should stubbornly twist themselves into a curse.

Continually, and in a thousand other ways, did she feel the innumerable throbs of anguish that had been so cunningly contrived for her by the undying, the ever-active sentence of the Puritan tribunal. Clergymen paused in the street to address words of exhortation, that brought a crowd, with its mingled grin and frown, around the poor, sinful woman. If she entered a church, trusting to share the Sabbath smile of the Universal Father, it was often her mishap to find herself the text of the discourse. She grew to have a dread of children; for they had imbibed from their parents a vague idea of something horrible in this dreary woman, gliding silently through the town, with never any companion but one only child. Therefore, first allowing her to pass, they pursued her at a distance with shrill cries, and the utterance of a word that had no distinct purport to their own minds, but was none the less terrible to her, as proceeding from lips that babbled it unconsciously. It seemed to argue so wide a diffusion of her shame, that all nature knew of it; it could have caused her no deeper pang, had the leaves of the trees whispered the dark story among themselves,—had the summer breeze murmured about it,—had the wintry blast shrieked it aloud! Another peculiar torture was felt in the gaze of a new eye. When strangers looked curiously at the scarlet letter,—and none ever failed to do so,—they branded it afresh into Hester's soul; so that, oftentimes, she could scarcely refrain, yet always did refrain, from covering the symbol with her hand. But then, again, an accustomed eye had likewise its own anguish to inflict. Its cool stare of familiarity was intolerable. From first to last, in short, Hester Prynne had always this dreadful agony in feeling a human eye upon the token; the spot never grew callous; it seemed, on the contrary, to grow more sensitive with daily torture.

But sometimes, once in many days, or perchance in many months, she felt an eye—a human eye—upon the ignominious brand, that seemed to give a momentary relief, as if half of her agony were shared. The next instant, back it all rushed again, with still a deeper throb of pain; for, in that brief interval, she had sinned anew. Had Hester sinned alone?

Her imagination was somewhat affected, and, had she been of a softer moral and intellectual fibre, would have been still more so, by the strange and solitary anguish of her life. Walking to and fro, with those lonely footsteps, in the little world with which she was outwardly connected, it now and then appeared to Hester,—if altogether fancy, it was nevertheless too potent to be resisted,—she felt or fancied, then, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense. She shuddered to believe, yet could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts. She was terror-stricken by the revelations that were thus made. What were they? Could they be other than the insidious whispers of the bad angel, who would fain have persuaded the . . . woman, as yet only half his victim, that the outward guise of purity was but a lie, and that, if truth were everywhere to be shown, a scarlet letter would blaze forth on many a bosom besides Hester Prynne's? Or, must she receive those intimations—so obscure, yet so distinct—as truth? In all her miserable experience, there was nothing else so awful and so loathsome as this sense. It perplexed, as well as shocked her, by the irreverent inopportuneness of the occasions that brought it into vivid action. Sometimes the red infamy upon her breast would give a sympathetic throb, as she passed near a venerable minister or magistrate, the model of piety and justice, to whom that age of antique reverence looked up, as to a mortal man in fellowship with angels. "What evil thing is at hand?" would Hester say to herself. Lifting her reluctant eyes, there would be nothing human within the scope of view, save the form of this earthly saint! Again, a mystic sisterhood would contumaciously assert itself, as she met the sanctified frown of some matron, who, according to the rumor of all tongues, had kept cold snow within her bosom throughout life. That unsunned snow in the matron's bosom, and the burning shame on Hester Prynne's,—what had the two in common? Or, once more, the electric thrill would give her warning,—"Behold, Hester, here is a companion!"—and, looking up, she would detect the eyes of a young maiden glancing at the scarlet letter, shyly and aside, and quickly averted with a faint, chill crimson in her cheeks; as if her purity were somewhat sullied by that momentary glance. O Fiend, whose talisman was that fatal symbol, wouldst thou

leave nothing, whether in youth or age, for this poor sinner to revere?—such loss of faith is ever one of the saddest results of sin. Be it accepted as a proof that all was not corrupt in this poor victim of her own frailty, and man's hard law, that Hester Prynne yet struggled to believe that no fellow-mortal was guilty like herself.

The vulgar, who, in those dreary old times, were always contributing a grotesque horror to what interested their imaginations, had a story about the scarlet letter which we might readily work up into a terrific legend. They averred, that the symbol was not mere scarlet cloth, tinged in an earthly dye-pot, but was red-hot with infernal fire, and could be seen glowing all alight, whenever Hester Prynne walked about in the night-time. And we must needs say, it seared Hester's bosom so deeply, that perhaps there was more truth in the rumor than our modern incredulity may be inclined to admit.

VI

Pearl

WE have as yet hardly spoken of the infant; that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion. How strange it seemed to the sad woman, as she watched the growth, and the beauty that became every day more brilliant, and the intelligence that threw its quivering sunshine over the tiny features of this child! Her Pearl! —For so had Hester called her; not as a name expressive of her aspect, which had nothing of the calm, white, unimpassioned lustre that would be indicated by the comparison. But she named the infant "Pearl," as being of great price,—purchased with all she had, —her mother's only treasure! How strange, indeed! Man had marked this woman's sin by a scarlet letter, which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her, save it were sinful like herself. God, as a direct consequence of the sin which man thus punished, had given her a lovely child, whose place was on that same dishonored bosom, to connect her parent forever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven! Yet these thoughts affected Hester Prynne less with hope than apprehension. She knew that her deed had been evil; she could have no faith, therefore, that its result would be good. Day after day, she looked fearfully into the child's expanding nature, ever dreading to detect some dark and wild peculiarity, that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being.

Certainly, there was no physical defect. By its perfect shape, its vigor, and its natural dexterity in the use of all its untried limbs, the infant was worthy to have been brought forth in Eden; worthy to have been left there, to be the plaything of the angels, after the world's first parents were driven out. The child had a native grace which does not invariably coexist with faultless beauty; its attire, however simple, always impressed the beholder as if it were the very garb that precisely became it best. But little Pearl was not clad in rustic weeds. Her mother, with a morbid purpose that may be better understood hereafter, had bought the richest tissues that could be procured, and allowed her imaginative faculty its full play in the arrangement and decoration of the dresses which the child wore, before the public eye. So magnificent was the small figure, when thus arrayed, and such was the splendor of Pearl's own proper beauty, shining through the gorgeous robes which might have extinguished a paler loveliness, that there was an absolute circle of radiance around her, on the darksome cottage floor. And yet a russet gown, torn and soiled with the child's rude play, made a picture of her just as perfect. Pearl's aspect was imbued with a spell of infinite variety; in this one child there were many children, comprehending the full scope between the wild-flower prettiness of a peasant baby, and the pomp, in little, of an infant princess. T' ' all, however, there was a trait of passion, a certain depth of hue, which she never lost; and if, in any of her changes, she had grown fainter or paler, she would have ceased to be herself,—it would have been no longer Pearl!

This outward mutability indicated, and did not more than fairly express the various properties of her inner life. Her nature appeared to possess depth, too, as well as variety; but—or else Hester's fears deceived her—it lacked reference and adaptation to the world into which she was born. The child could not be made amenable to rules. In giving her existence, a great law had been broken; and the result was a being whose elements were perhaps beautiful and brilliant, but all in disorder; or with an order peculiar to themselves, amidst which the point of variety and arrangement was difficult or impossible to be discovered. Hester could only account for the child's character—and even then most vaguely and imperfectly—by recalling what she herself had been, during that momentous period while Pearl was imbibing her soul from the spiritual world, and her bodily frame from its material of earth. The mother's impassioned state had been the medium through which were transmitted to the unborn infant the rays of its moral life; and, however white and clear originally,

they had taken the deep stains of crimson and gold, the fiery lustre, the black shadow, and the untempered light of the intervening substance. Above all, the warfare of Hester's spirit, at that epoch, was perpetuated in Pearl. She could recognize her wild, desperate, defiant mood, the flightiness of her temper, and even some of the very cloud-shapes of gloom and despondency that had brooded in her heart. They were now illuminated by the morning radiance of a young child's disposition, but later in the day of earthly existence might be prolific of the storm and whirlwind.

The discipline of the family, in those days, was of a far more rigid kind than now. The frown, the harsh rebuke, the frequent application of the rod, enjoined by Scriptural authority, were used, not merely in the way of punishment for actual offences, but as a wholesome regimen for the growth and promotion of all childish virtues. Hester Prynne, nevertheless, the lonely mother of this one child, ran little risk of erring on the side of undue severity. Mindful, however, of her own errors and misfortunes, she early sought to impose a tender, but strict control over the infant immortality that was committed to her charge. But the task was beyond her skill. After testing both smiles and frowns, and proving that neither mode of treatment possessed any calculable influence, Hester was ultimately compelled to stand aside, and permit the child to be swayed by her own impulses. Physical compulsion or restraint was effectual, of course, while it lasted. As to any other kind of discipline, whether addressed to her mind or heart, little Pearl might or might not be within its reach, in accordance with the caprice that ruled the moment. Her mother, while Pearl was yet an infant, grew acquainted with a certain peculiar look, that warned her when it would be labor thrown away to insist, persuade, or plead. It was a look so intelligent, yet inexplicable, so perverse, sometimes so malicious, but generally accompanied by a wild flow of spirits, that Hester could not help questioning, at such moments, whether Pearl were a human child. She seemed rather an airy sprite, which, after playing its fantastic sports for a little while upon the cottage floor, would flit away with a mocking smile. Whenever that look appeared in her wild, bright, deeply black eyes, it invested her with a strange remoteness and intangibility; it was as if she were hovering in the air and might vanish, like a glimmering light, that comes we know not whence, and goes we know not whither. Beholding it, Hester was constrained to rush towards the child,—to pursue the little elf in the flight which she invariably began,—to snatch her to her bosom, with a close pressure and earnest kisses,—not so much from overflowing love, as to assure herself that Pearl was flesh and blood, and not utterly delusive. But Pearl's laugh, when she was caught, though full of merriment and music, made her mother more doubtful than before.

Heart-smitten at this [illegible] and baffling spell, that so often came between herself and her sole treasure, whom she had bought so dear, and who was all her world, Hester sometimes burst into passionate tears. Then, perhaps,—for there was no foreseeing how it might affect her,—Pearl would frown, and clench her little fist, and harden her small features into a stern, unsympathizing look of discontent. Not seldom, she would laugh anew, and louder than before, like a thing incapable and unintelligent of human sorrow. Or—but this more rarely happened—she would be convulsed with a rage of grief, and sob out her love for her mother, in broken words, and seem intent on proving that she had a heart, by breaking it. Yet Hester was hardly safe in confiding herself to that gusty tenderness; it passed, as suddenly as it came. Brooding over all these matters, the mother felt like one who has evoked a spirit, but, by some irregularity in the process of conjuration, has failed to win the master-word that should control this new and incomprehensible intelligence. Her only real comfort was when the child lay in the placidity of sleep. Then she was sure of her, and tasted hours of quiet, sad, delicious happiness; until—perhaps with that perverse expression glimmering from beneath her opening lids—little Pearl awoke!

How soon—with what strange rapidity, indeed!—did Pearl arrive at an age that was capable of social intercourse, beyond the mother's ever-ready smile and nonsense-words! And then what a happiness would it have been, could Hester Prynne have heard her clear, bird-like voice mingling with the uproar of other childish voices, and have distinguished and unravelled her own darling's tones, amid all the entangled outcry of a group of sportive children! But this could never be. Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world. An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants. Nothing was more remarkable than the instinct, as it seemed, with which the child comprehended her loneliness; the destiny that had drawn an inviolable circle round about her; the whole peculiarity, in short, of her position in respect to other children. Never, since her release from prison, had Hester met the public gaze without her. In all her walks about the town, Pearl, too, was there; first as the babe in arms, and afterwards as the little girl, small companion of her mother, holding a forefinger with her

whole grasp, and tripping along at the rate of three or four footsteps to one of Hester's. She saw the children of the settlement, on the grassy margin of the street, or at the domestic thresholds, [illegible] themselves in such grim fashion as the Puritanic nurture would permit; playing at going to church, per chance; or at scourging Quakers; or taking scalps in a sham-fight with the Indians; or scaring one another with freaks of imitative witchcraft. Pearl saw, and gazed intently, but never sought to make acquaintance. If spoken to, she would not speak again. If the children gathered about her, as they sometimes did, Pearl would grow positively terrible in her puny wrath, snatching up stones to fling at them, with shrill, incoherent exclamations, that made her mother tremble, because they had so much the sound of a witch's anathemas in some unknown tongue.

The truth was, that the little Puritans, being of the most intolerant brood that ever lived, had got a vague idea of something outlandish, unearthly, or at variance with ordinary fashions, in the mother and child; and therefore scorned them in their hearts, and not unfrequently reviled them with their tongues. Pearl felt the sentiment, and requited it with the bitterest hatred that can be supposed to rankle in a childish bosom. These outbreaks of a fierce temper had a kind of value, and even comfort, for her mother; because there was at least an intelligible earnestness in the mood, instead of the fitful caprice that so often thwarted her in the child's manifestations. It appalled her, nevertheless, to discern here, again, a shadowy reflection of the evil that had existed in herself. All this enmity and passion had Pearl inherited by inalienable right, out of Hester's heart. Mother and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society; and in the nature of the child seemed to be perpetuated those unquiet elements that had distracted Hester Prynne before Pearl's birth, but had since begun to be soothed away by the softening influences of maternity.

At home, within and around her mother's cottage, Pearl wanted not a wide and various circle of acquaintance. The spell of life went forth from her ever-creative spirit, and communicated itself to a thousand objects, as a torch kindles a flame wherever it may be applied. The unlikeliest materials—a stick, a bunch of rags, a flower—were the puppets of Pearl's witchcraft, and, without [illegible] any outward change, became spiritually adapted to whatever drama occupied the stage of her inner world. Her one baby-voice served a multitude of imaginary personages, old and young, to talk withal. The pine-trees, aged, black and solemn, and flinging groans and other melancholy utterances on the breeze, needed little transformation to figure as Puritan elders; the ugliest weeds of the garden were their children, whom Pearl smote down and uprooted, most unmercifully. It was wonderful, the vast variety of forms into which she threw her intellect, with no continuity, indeed, but darting up and dancing, always in a state of preternatural activity,—soon sinking down, as if exhausted by so rapid and feverish a tide of life,—and succeeded by other shapes of a similar wild energy. It was like nothing so much as the phantasmagoric play of the northern lights. In the mere exercise of the fancy, however, and the sportiveness of a growing mind, there might be little more than was observable in other children of bright faculties; except as Pearl, in the dearth of human playmates, was thrown more upon the visionary throng which she created. The singularity lay in the hostile feelings with which the child regarded all these offspring of her own heart and mind. She never created a friend, but seemed always to be sowing broad cast the dragon's teeth, whence sprung a harvest of armed enemies, against whom she rushed to battle. It was inexpressibly sad—then what depth of sorrow to a mother, who felt in her own heart the cause!—to observe, in one so young, this constant recognition of an adverse world, and so fierce a training of the energies that were to make good her cause, in the contest that must ensue.

Gazing at Pearl, Hester Prynne often dropped her work upon her knees, and cried out with an agony which she would fain have hidden, but which made utterance for itself, betwixt speech and a groan,—"O Father in Heaven,—if Thou art still my Father, —what is this being which I have brought into the world!" And Pearl, overhearing the ejaculation, or aware, through some more subtile channel, of those throbs of anguish, would turn her vivid and beautiful little face upon her mother, smile with sprite-like intelligence, and resume her play.

One peculiarity of the child's deportment remains yet to be told. The very first thing which she had noticed in her life was—what?—not the mother's smile, responding to it, as other babies do, by that faint, embryo smile of the little mouth, remembered so doubtfully afterwards, and with such fond discussion whether it were indeed a smile. By no means! But that first object of which Pearl seemed to become aware was—shall we say it?—the scarlet letter on Hester's bosom! One day, as her mother stooped over the cradle, the infant's eyes had been caught by the glimmering of the gold embroidery about the

letter; and, putting up her little hand, she grasped at it, smiling, not doubtfully, but with a decided gleam, that gave her face the look of a much older child. Then, gasping for breath, did Hester Prynne clutch the fatal token, instinctively endeavoring to tear it away; so infinite was the torture inflicted by the intelligent touch of Pearl's baby-hand. Again, as if her mother's agonized gesture were meant only to make sport for her, did little Pearl look into her eyes, and smile! From that epoch, except when the child was asleep, Hester had never felt a moment's safety; not a moment's calm enjoyment of her. Weeks, it is true, would sometimes elapse, during which Pearl's gaze might never once be fixed upon the scarlet letter; but then, again, it would come at unawares, like the stroke of sudden death, and always with that peculiar smile, and odd expression of the eyes.

Once, this freakish, elfish cast came into the child's eyes, while Hester was looking at her own image in them, as mothers are fond of doing; and, suddenly,—for women in solitude, and with troubled hearts, are pestered with unaccountable delusions,—she fancied that she beheld, not her own miniature portrait, but another face, in the small black mirror of Pearl's eye. It was a face, fiend-like, full of smiling malice, yet bearing the semblance of features that she had known full well, though seldom with a smile, and never with malice in them. It was as if an evil spirit possessed the child, and had just then peeped forth in mockery. Many a time afterwards had Hester been tortured, though less vividly, by the same illusion.

In the afternoon of a certain summer's day, after Pearl grew big enough to run about, she amused herself with gathering handfuls of wild-flowers, and flinging them, one by one, at her mother's bosom; dancing up and down, like a little elf, whenever she hit the scarlet letter. Hester's first motion had been to cover her bosom with her clasped hands. But, whether from pride or resignation, or a feeling that her penance might best be wrought out by this unutterable pain, she resisted the impulse, and sat erect, pale as death, looking sadly into little Pearl's wild eyes. Still came the battery of flowers, almost invariably hitting the mark, and covering the mother's breast with hurts for which she could find no balm in this world, nor knew how to seek it in another. At last, her shot being all expended, the child stood still and gazed at Hester, with that little, laughing image of a fiend peeping out—or, whether it peeped or no, her mother so imagined it—from the unsearchable abyss of her black eyes.

"Child, what art thou?" cried the mother.

"Oh, I am your little Pearl!" answered the child.

But, while she said it, Pearl laughed, and began to dance up and down, with the humorsome gesticulation of a little imp, whose next freak might be to fly up the chimney.

"Art thou my child, in very truth?" asked Hester.

Nor did she put the question altogether idly, but, for the moment, with a portion of genuine earnestness; for, such was Pearl's wonderful intelligence, that her mother half doubted whether she were not acquainted with the secret spell of her existence, and might not now reveal herself.

"Yes; I am little Pearl!" repeated the child, continuing her antics.

"Thou art not my child! Thou art no Pearl of mine!" said the mother, half playfully; for it was often the case that a sportive impulse came over her, in the midst of her deepest suffering. "Tell me, then, what thou art, and who sent thee hither."

"Tell me, mother!" said the child, seriously, coming up to Hester, and pressing herself close to her knees. "Do thou tell me!"

"Thy Heavenly Father sent thee!" answered Hester Prynne.

But she said it with a hesitation that did not escape the acuteness of the child. Whether moved only by her ordinary freakishness, or because an evil spirit prompted her, she put up her small forefinger, and touched the scarlet letter.

"He did not send me!" cried she, positively. "I have no Heavenly Father!"

"Hush, Pearl, hush! Thou must not talk so!" answered the mother, suppressing a groan. "He sent us all into this world. He sent even me, thy mother. Then, much more, thee! Or, if not, thou strange and elfish child, whence didst thou come?"

"Tell me! Tell me!" repeated Pearl, no longer seriously, but laughing, and capering about the floor. "It is thou that must tell me!"

But Hester could not resolve the query, being herself in a dismal labyrinth of doubt. She remembered —betwixt a smile and a shudder—the talk of the neighboring townspeople; who, seeking vainly elsewhere for the child's paternity, and observing some of her odd attributes, had given out that poor little Pearl was a demon offspring; such as, ever since old Catholic times, had occasionally been seen on earth, through the agency of their mother's sin, and to promote some foul and wicked purpose. Luther, according to the scandal of his monkish enemies, was a brat of that hellish breed; nor was Pearl the only child to whom this inauspicious origin was assigned, among the New England Puritans.

VII

The Governor's Hall

HESTER PRYNNE went, one day, to the mansion of Governor Bellingham, with a pair of gloves, which she had fringed and embroidered to his order, and which were to be worn on some great occasion of state; for, though the chances of a popular election had caused this former ruler to descend a step or two from the highest rank, he still held an honorable and influential place among the colonial magistracy.

Another and far more important reason than the delivery of a pair of embroidered gloves impelled Hester, at this time, to seek an interview with a personage of so much power and activity in the affairs of the settlement. It had reached her ears, that there was a design on the part of some of the leading inhabitants, cherishing the more rigid order of principles in religion and government, to deprive her of her child. On the supposition that Pearl, as already hinted, was of demon origin, these good people not unreasonably argued that a Christian interest in the mother's soul required them to remove such a stumbling-block from her path. If the child, on the other hand, were really capable of moral and religious growth, and possessed the elements of ultimate salvation, then, surely, it would enjoy all the fairer prospect of these advantages, by being transferred to wiser and better guardianship than Hester Prynne's. Among those who promoted the design, Governor Bellingham was said to be one of the most busy. It may appear singular, and indeed, not a little ludicrous, that an affair of this kind, which, in later days, would have been referred to no higher jurisdiction than that of the selectmen of the town, should then have been a question publicly discussed, and on which statesmen of eminence took sides. At that epoch of pristine simplicity, however, matters of even slighter public interest, and of far less intrinsic weight, than the welfare of Hester and her child, were strangely mixed up with the deliberations of legislators and acts of state. The period was hardly, if at all, earlier than that of our story, when a dispute concerning the right of property in a pig, not only caused a fierce and bitter contest in the legislative body of the colony, but resulted in an important modification of the framework itself of the legislature.

Full of concern, therefore,—but so conscious of her own right that it seemed scarcely an unequal match between the public, on the one side, and a lonely woman, backed by the sympathies of nature, on the other,—Hester Prynne set forth from her solitary cottage. Little Pearl, of course, was her companion. She was now of an age to run lightly along by her mother's side, and, constantly in motion, from morn till sunset, could have accomplished a much longer journey than that before her. Often, nevertheless, more from caprice than necessity, she demanded to be taken up in arms; but was soon as imperious to be set down again, and frisked onward before Hester on the grassy pathway, with many a harmless trip and tumble. We have spoken of Pearl's rich and luxuriant beauty; a beauty that shone with deep and vivid tints; a bright complexion, eyes possessing intensity both of depth and glow, and hair already of a deep, glossy brown, and which, in after years, would be nearly akin to black. There was fire in her and throughout her; she seemed the unpremeditated offshoot of a passionate moment. Her mother, in contriving the child's garb, had allowed the gorgeous tendencies of her imagination their full play; arraying her in a crimson velvet tunic, of a peculiar cut, abundantly embroidered with fantasies and flourishes of gold-thread. So much strength of coloring, which must have given a wan and pallid aspect to cheeks of a fainter bloom, was admirably adapted to Pearl's beauty, and made her the very brightest little jet of flame that ever danced upon the earth.

But it was a remarkable attribute of this garb, and, indeed, of the child's whole appearance, that it irresistibly and inevitably reminded the beholder of the token which Hester Prynne was doomed to wear upon her bosom. It was the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life! The mother herself—as if the red ignominy were so deeply scorched into her brain that all her conceptions assumed its form—had carefully wrought out the similitude; lavishing many hours of morbid ingenuity, to create an analogy between the object of her affection and the emblem of her guilt and torture. But, in truth, Pearl was the one, as well as the other; and only in consequence of that identity had Hester contrived so perfectly to represent the scarlet letter in her appearance.

As the two wayfarers came within the precincts of the town, the children of the Puritans looked up from their play,—or what passed for play with those sombre little urchins,—and spake gravely one to another:—

"Behold, verily, there is the woman of the scarlet letter; and, of a truth, moreover, there is the likeness of the scarlet letter running along by her side! Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them!"

But Pearl, who was a dauntless child, after frowning, stamping her foot, and shaking her little hand with a variety of threatening gestures, suddenly made a rush at the knot of her enemies, and put them all to flight. She resembled, in her fierce pursuit of them, an

infant pestilence,—the scarlet fever, or some such half-fledged angel of judgment,—whose mission was to punish the sins of the rising generation. She screamed and shouted, too, with a terrific volume of sound, which, doubtless, caused the hearts of the fugitives to quake within them. The victory accomplished, Pearl returned quietly to her mother, and looked up, smiling, into her face.

Without further adventure, they reached the dwelling of Governor Bellingham. This was a large wooden house, built in a fashion of which there are specimens still extant in the streets of our older towns; now moss-grown, crumbling to decay, and melancholy at heart with the many sorrowful or joyful occurrences, remembered or forgotten, that have happened, and passed away, within their dusky chambers. Then, however, there was the freshness of the passing year on its exterior, and the cheerfulness, gleaming forth from the sunny windows, of a human habitation, into which death had never entered. It had, indeed, a very cheery aspect; the walls being overspread with a kind of stucco, in which fragments of broken glass were plentifully intermixed; so that, when the sunshine fell aslant-wise over the front of the edifice, it glittered and sparkled as if diamonds had been flung against it by the double handful. The brilliancy might have befitted Aladdin's palace, rather than the mansion of a grave old Puritan ruler. It was further decorated with strange and seemingly cabalistic figures and diagrams, suitable to the quaint taste of the age, which had been drawn in the stucco when newly laid on, and had now grown hard and durable, for the admiration of after times.

Pearl, looking at this bright wonder of a house, began to caper and dance, and imperatively required that the whole breadth of sunshine should be stripped off its front, and given her to play with.

"No, my little Pearl!" said her mother. "Thou must gather thine own sunshine. I have none to give thee!"

They approached the door; which was of an arched form, and flanked on each side by a narrow tower or projection of the edifice, in both of which were lattice-windows, with wooden shutters to close over them at need. Lifting the iron hammer that hung at the portal, Hester Prynne gave a summons, which was answered by one of the Governor's bond-servants; a free-born Englishman, but now a seven years' slave. During that term he was to be the property of his master, and as much a commodity of bargain and sale as an ox, or a joint-stool. The serf wore the blue coat, which was the customary garb of serving-men of that period, and long before, in the old hereditary halls of England.

"Is the worshipful Governor Bellingham within?" inquired Hester.

"Yea, forsooth," replied the bond-servant, staring with wide-open eyes at the scarlet letter, which, being a new-comer in the country, he had never before seen. "Yea, his honorable worship is within. But he hath a godly minister or two with him, and likewise a leech. Ye may not see his worship now."

"Nevertheless, I will enter," answered Hester Prynne, and the bond-servant, perhaps judging from the decision of her air, and the glittering symbol in her bosom, that she was a great lady in the land, offered no opposition.

So the mother and little Pearl were admitted into the hall of entrance. With many variations, suggested by the nature of his [illegible] diversity of climate, and a different mode of social life, Governor Bellingham had planned his new habitation after the residences of gentlemen of fair estate in his native land. Here, then, was a wide and reasonably lofty hall, extending through the whole depth of the house, and forming a medium of general communication, more or less directly, with all the other apartments. At one extremity, this spacious room was lighted by the windows of the two towers, which formed a small recess on either side of the portal. At the other end, though partly muffled by a curtain, it was more powerfully illuminated by one of those embowed hall-windows, which we read of in old books, and which was provided with a deep and cushioned seat. Here, on the cushion, lay a folio tome, probably of the Chronicles of England, or other such substantial literature; even as, in our own days, we scatter gilded volumes on the centre-table, to be turned over by the casual guest. The furniture of the hall consisted of some ponderous chairs, the backs of which were elaborately carved with wreaths of oaken flowers; and likewise a table in the same taste; the whole being of Elizabethan age, or perhaps earlier, and heirlooms, transferred hither from the Governor's paternal home. On the table—in token that the sentiment of old English hospitality had not been left behind—stood a large pewter tankard, at the bottom of which, had Hester or Pearl peeped into it, they might have seen the frothy remnant of a recent draught of ale.

On the wall hung a row of portraits, representing the forefathers of the Bellingham lineage, some with armor on their breasts, and others with stately ruffs and robes of peace. All were characterized by the sternness and severity which old portraits so invariably put on; as if they were the ghosts, rather than the pictures, of departed worthies, and were gazing with harsh and intolerant criticism at the pursuits and enjoyments of living men.

At about the centre of the oaken panels, that lined the hall, was suspended a suit of mail, not, like the pictures, an ancestral relic, but of the most modern date; for it had been manufactured by a skilful armorer in London, the same year in which Governor Bellingham came over to New England. There was a steel head-piece, a cuirass, a gorget, and greaves, with a pair of gauntlets and a sword hanging beneath; all, and especially the helmet and breastplate, so highly burnished as to glow with white radiance, and scatter an illumination everywhere about upon the floor. This bright panoply was not meant for mere idle show, but had been worn by the Governor on many a solemn muster and training field, and had glittered, moreover, at the head of a regiment in the Pequod war. For, though bred a lawyer, and accustomed to speak of Bacon, Coke, Noye, and Finch as his professional associates, the exigencies of this new country had transformed Governor Bellingham into a soldier, as well as a statesman and ruler.

Little Pearl—who was as greatly pleased with the gleaming armor as she had been with the glittering frontispiece of the house—spent some time looking into the polished mirror of the breastplate.

"Mother," cried she, "I see you here. Look! Look!"

Hester looked, by way of humoring the child; and she saw that, owing to the peculiar effect of this convex mirror, the scarlet letter was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance. In truth, she seemed absolutely hidden behind it. Pearl pointed upward, also, at a similar picture in the head-piece; smiling at her mother, with the elfish intelligence that was so familiar an expression on her small physiognomy. That look of naughty merriment was likewise reflected in the mirror, with so much breadth and intensity of effect, that it made Hester Prynne feel as if it could not be the image of her own child, but of an imp who was seeking to mould itself into Pearl's shape.

"Come along, Pearl," said she, drawing her away. "Come and look into this fair garden. It may be we shall see flowers there; more beautiful ones than we find in the woods."

Pearl, accordingly, ran to the bow-window, at the farther end of the hall, and looked along the vista of a garden-walk, carpeted with closely shaven grass, and bordered with some rude and immature attempt at shrubbery. But the proprietor appeared already to have relinquished, as hopeless, the effort to perpetuate on this side of the Atlantic, in a hard soil and amid the close struggle for subsistence, the native English taste for ornamental gardening. Cabbages grew in plain sight; and a pumpkin-vine, rooted at some distance, had run across the intervening space, and deposited one of its gigantic products directly beneath the hall-window, as if to warn the Governor that this great lump of vegetable gold was as rich an ornament as New England earth would offer him. There were a few rose-bushes, however, and a number of apple-trees, probably the descendants of those planted by the Reverend Mr. Blackstone, the first settler of the peninsula; that half-mythological personage, who rides through our early annals, seated on the back of a bull.

Pearl, seeing the rose-bushes, began to cry for a red rose, and would not be pacified.

"Hush, child, hush!" said her mother, earnestly. "Do not cry, dear little Pearl! I hear voices in the garden. The Governor is coming, and gentlemen along with him!"

In fact, adown the vista of the garden avenue a number of persons were seen approaching towards the house. Pearl, in utter scorn of her mother's attempt to quiet her, gave an eldritch scream, and then became silent; not from any notion of obedience, but because the quick and mobile curiosity of her disposition was excited by the appearance of these new personages.

VIII

The Elf-Child and the Minister

GOVERNOR BELLINGHAM, in a loose gown and easy cap,—such as elderly gentlemen love to endue themselves with, in their domestic privacy,—walked foremost, and appeared to be showing off his estate, and expatiating on his projected improvements. The wide circumference of an elaborate ruff, beneath his gray beard, in the antiquated fashion of King James's reign, caused his head to look not a little like that of John the Baptist in a charger. The impression made by his aspect, so rigid and severe, and frost-bitten with more than autumnal age, was hardly in keeping with the appliances of worldly enjoyment wherewith he had evidently done his utmost to surround himself. But it is an error to suppose that our grave forefathers—though accustomed to speak and think of human existence as a state merely of trial and warfare, and though unfeignedly prepared to sacrifice goods and life at the behest of duty—made it a matter of conscience to reject such means of comfort, or even luxury, as lay fairly within their grasp.This creed was never taught, for instance, by the venerable pastor, John Wilson, whose beard, white as a snow-drift, was seen over Governor Bellingham's shoulder; while its wearer suggested that pears and peaches might yet be naturalized in the New

England climate, and that purple grapes might possibly be compelled to flourish, against the sunny garden-wall. The old clergyman, nurtured at the rich bosom of the English Church, had a long-established and legitimate taste for all good and comfortable things; and however stern he might show himself in the pulpit, or in his public reproof of such transgressions as that of Hester Prynne, still, the genial benevolence of his private life had won him warmer affection than was accorded to any of his professional contemporaries.

Behind the Governor and Mr. Wilson came two other guests: one the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, whom the reader may remember as having taken a brief and reluctant part in the scene of Hester Prynne's disgrace; and, in close companionship with him, old Roger Chillingworth, a person of great skill in physic, who, for two or three years past, had been settled in the town. It was understood that this learned man was the physician as well as friend of the young minister, whose health had severely suffered, of late, by his too unreserved self-sacrifice to the labors and duties of the pastoral relation.

The Governor, in advance of his visitors, ascended one or two steps, and, throwing open the leaves of the great hall-window, found himself close to little Pearl. The shadow of the curtain fell on Hester Prynne, and partially concealed her.

"What have we here?" said Governor Bellingham, looking with surprise at the scarlet little figure before him. "I profess, I have never seen the like, since my days of vanity, in old King James's time, when I was wont to esteem it a high favor to be admitted to a court mask! There used to be a swarm of these small apparitions, in holiday time; and we called them children of the Lord of Misrule. But how gat such a guest into my hall?"

"Aye, indeed!" cried good old Mr. Wilson. "What little bird of scarlet plumage may this be? Methinks I have seen just such figures, when the sun has been shining through a richly painted window, and tracing out the golden and crimson images across the floor. But that was in the old land. Prithee, young one, who art thou, and what has ailed thy mother to bedizen thee in this strange fashion? Art thou a Christian child,—ha? Dost know thy catechism? Or art thou one of those naughty elfs or fairies, whom we thought to have left behind us, with other relics of Papistry, in merry old England?"

"I am mother's child," answered the scarlet vision, "and my name is Pearl!"

"Pearl?—Ruby, rather!—or Coral!—or Red Rose, at the very least, judging from thy hue!" responded the old minister, putting forth his hand in a vain attempt to pat little Pearl on the cheek. "But where is this mother of thine? Ah! I see," he added; and, turning to Governor Bellingham, whispered, "This is the self-same child of whom we have held speech together; and behold here the unhappy woman, Hester Prynne, her mother!"

"Sayest thou so?" cried the Governor. "Nay, we might have judged that such a child's mother must needs be a scarlet woman, and a worthy type of her of Babylon! But she comes at a good time; and we will look into this matter forthwith."

Governor Bellingham stepped through the window into the hall, followed by his three guests.

"Hester Prynne," said he, fixing his naturally stern regard on the wearer of the scarlet letter, "there hath been much question concerning thee, of late. The point hath been weightily discussed, whether we, that are of authority and influence, do well discharge our consciences by trusting an immortal soul, such as there is in yonder child, to the guidance of one who hath stumbled and fallen, amid the pitfalls of this world. Speak thou, the child's own mother! Were it not, thinkest thou, for thy little one's temporal and eternal welfare that she be taken out of thy charge, and clad soberly, and disciplined strictly, and instructed in the truths of heaven and earth? What canst thou do for the child, in this kind?"

"I can teach my little Pearl what I have learned from this!" answered Hester Prynne, laying her finger on the red token.

"Woman, it is thy badge of shame!" replied the stern magistrate. "It is because of the stain which that letter indicates, that we would transfer thy child to other hands."

"Nevertheless," said the mother, calmly, though growing more pale, "this badge hath taught me—it daily teaches me—it is teaching me at this moment—lessons whereof my child may be the wiser and better, albeit they can profit nothing to myself."

"We will judge warily," said Bellingham, "and look well what we are about to do. Good Master Wilson, I pray you, examine this Pearl,—since that is her name,—and see whether she hath had such Christian nurture as befits a child of her age."

The old minister seated himself in an arm-chair, and made an effort to draw Pearl betwixt his knees. But the child, unaccustomed to the touch or familiarity of any but her mother, escaped through the open window, and stood on the upper step, looking like a wild tropical bird, of rich plumage, ready to take flight into the upper air. Mr. Wilson, not a little astonished at this outbreak,—for he was a grandfatherly sort of personage, and usually a vast favorite with

children,—essayed, however, to proceed with the examination.

"Pearl," said he, with great solemnity, "thou must take heed to instruction, that so, in due season, thou mayest wear in thy bosom the pearl of great price. Canst thou tell me, my child, who made thee?"

Now Pearl knew well enough who made her; for Hester Prynne, the daughter of a pious home, very soon after her talk with the child about her Heavenly Father, had begun to inform her of those truths which the human spirit, at whatever stage of immaturity, imbibes with such eager interest. Pearl, therefore, so large were the attainments of her three years' lifetime, could have borne a fair examination in the New England Primer, or the first column of the Westminster Catechisms, although unacquainted with the outward form of either of those celebrated works. But that perversity which all children have more or less of, and of which little Pearl had a tenfold portion, now, at the most inopportune moment, took thorough possession of her, and closed her lips, or impelled her to speak words amiss. After putting her finger in her mouth, with many [illegible] refusals to answer good Mr. Wilson's question, the child finally announced that she had not been made at all, but had been plucked by her mother off the bush of wild roses that grew by the prison-door.

This phantasy was probably suggested by the near proximity of the Governor's red roses, as Pearl stood outside of the window; together with her recollection of the prison rose-bush, which she had passed in coming hither.

Old Roger Chillingworth, with a smile on his face, whispered something in the young clergyman's ear. Hester Prynne looked at the man of skill, and even then, with her fate hanging in the balance, was startled to perceive what a change had come over his features,—how much uglier they were,—how his dark complexion seemed to have grown duskier, and his figure more misshapen,—since the days when she had familiarly known him. She met his eyes for an instant, but was immediately constrained to give all her attention to the scene now going forward.

"This is awful!" cried the Governor, slowly recovering from the astonishment into which Pearl's response had thrown him. "Here is a child of three years old, and she cannot tell who made her! Without question, she is equally in the dark as to her soul, its present depravity, and future destiny! Methinks, gentlemen, we need inquire no further."

Hester caught hold of Pearl, and drew her forcibly into her arms, confronting the old Puritan magistrate with almost a fierce expression. Alone in the world, cast off by it, and with this sole treasure to keep her heart alive, she felt that she possessed indefeasible rights against the world, and was ready to defend them to the death.

"God gave me the child!" cried she. "He gave her in requital of all things else, which ye had taken from me. She is my happiness!—she is my torture, none the less! Pearl keeps me here in life! Pearl punishes me too! See ye not, she is the scarlet letter, only capable of being loved, and so endowed with a millionfold the power of retribution for my sin? Ye shall not take her! I will die first!"

"My poor woman," said the not unkind old minister, "the child shall be well cared for!—far better than thou canst do it."

"God gave her into my keeping," repeated Hester Prynne, raising her voice almost to a shriek. "I will not give her up!"—And here, by a sudden impulse, she turned to the young clergyman, Mr. Dimmesdale, at whom, up to this moment, she had seemed hardly so much as once to direct her eyes.—"Speak thou for me!" cried she. "Thou wast my pastor, and hadst charge of my soul, and knowest me better than these men can. I will not lose the child! Speak for me! Thou knowest—for thou hast sympathies which these men lack!—thou knowest what is in my heart, and what are a mother's rights, and how much the stronger they are, when that mother has but her child and the scarlet letter! Look thou to it! I will not lose the child! Look to it!"

At this wild and singular appeal, which indicated that Hester Prynne's situation had provoked her to little less than madness, the young minister at once came forward, pale, and holding his hand over his heart, as was his custom whenever his peculiarly nervous temperament was thrown into agitation. He looked now more careworn and emaciated than as we described him at the scene of Hester's public ignominy; and whether it were his failing health, or whatever the cause might be, his large dark eyes had a world of pain in their troubled and melancholy depth.

"There is truth in what she says," began the minister, with a voice sweet, tremulous, but powerful, insomuch that the hall re-echoed, and the hollow armor rang with it,—"truth in what Hester says, and in the feeling which inspires her! God gave her the child, and gave her, too, an instinctive knowledge of its nature and requirements,—both seemingly so peculiar,—which no other mortal being can possess. And, moreover, is there not a quality of awful sacredness in the relation between this mother and this child?"

"Aye!—how is that, good Master Dimmesdale?" interrupted the Governor. "Make that plain, I pray you"

"It must be even so," resumed the minister. "For, if we deem it otherwise, do we not thereby say that the Heavenly Father, the Creator of all flesh, hath lightly recognized a deed of sin, and made of no account the distinction between unhallowed lust and holy love? This child of its father's guilt and its mother's shame hath come from the hand of God, to work in many ways upon her heart, who pleads so earnestly, and with such bitterness of spirit, the right to keep her. It was meant for a blessing; for the one blessing of her life! It was meant, doubtless, as the mother herself hath told us, for a retribution too; a torture to be felt at many an unthought-of moment; a pang, a sting, an ever-recurring agony, in the midst of a troubled joy! Hath she not expressed this thought in the garb of the poor child, so forcibly reminding us of that red symbol which scars her bosom?"

"Well said, again!" cried good Mr. Wilson. "I feared the woman had no better thought than to make a mountebank of her child!"

"Oh, not so!—not so!" continued Mr. Dimmesdale. "She recognizes, believe me, the solemn miracle which God hath wrought, in the existence of that child. And may she feel, too,—what, methinks, is the very truth,—that this boon was meant, above all things else, to keep the mother's soul alive, and to preserve her from blacker depths of sin into which Satan might else have sought to plunge her! Therefore it is good for this poor, sinful woman that she hath an infant immortality, a being capable of eternal joy or sorrow, confided to her care,—to be trained up by her to righteousness,—to remind her, at every moment, of her fall,—but yet to teach her, as it were by the Creator's sacred pledge, that, if she bring the child to heaven, the child also will bring its parent thither! Herein is the sinful mother happier than the sinful father. For Hester Prynne's sake, then, and no less for the poor child's sake, let us leave them as Providence hath seen fit to place them!"

"You speak, my friend, with a strange earnestness," said old Roger Chillingworth, smiling at him.

"And there is a weighty import in what my young brother hath spoken," added the Reverend Mr. Wilson. "What say you, worshipful Master Bellingham? Hath he not pleaded well for the poor woman?"

"Indeed hath he," answered the magistrate, "and hath adduced such arguments, that we will even leave the matter as it now stands; so long, at least, as there shall be no further scandal in the woman. Care must be had, nevertheless, to put the child to due and stated examination in the catechism, at thy hands or Master Dimmesdale's. Moreover, at a proper season, the tithing-men must take heed that she go both to school and to meeting."

The young minister, on ceasing to speak, had withdrawn a few steps from the group, and stood with his face partially concealed in the heavy folds of the window-curtain; while the shadow of his figure, which the sunlight cast upon the floor, was tremulous with the vehemence of his appeal. Pearl, that wild and flighty little elf, stole softly towards him, and taking his hand in the grasp of both her own, laid her cheek against it; a caress so tender, and withal so unobtrusive, that her mother, who was looking on, asked herself,—"Is that my Pearl?" Yet she knew that there was love in the child's heart, although it mostly revealed itself in passion, and hardly twice in her lifetime had been softened by such gentleness as now. The minister,—for, save the long-sought regards of woman, nothing is sweeter than these marks of childish preference, accorded spontaneously by a spiritual instinct, and therefore seeming to imply in us something truly worthy to be loved,—the minister looked round, laid his hand on the child's head, hesitated an instant, and then kissed her brow. Little Pearl's unwonted mood of sentiment lasted no longer; she laughed, and went capering down the hall, so airily, that old Mr. Wilson raised a question whether even her tiptoes touched the floor.

"The little baggage hath witchcraft in her, I profess," said he to Mr. Dimmesdale. "She needs no old woman's broomstick to fly withal!"

"A strange child!" remarked old Roger Chillingworth. "It is easy to see the mother's part in her. Would it be beyond a philosopher's research, think ye, gentlemen, to analyze that child's nature, and, from its make and mould, to give a shrewd guess at the father?"

"Nay; it would be sinful, in such a question, to follow the clew of profane philosophy," said Mr. Wilson. "Better to fast and pray upon it; and still better, it may be, to leave the mystery as we find it, unless Providence reveal it of its own accord. Thereby, every good Christian man hath a title to show a father's kindness towards the poor, deserted babe."

The affair being so satisfactorily concluded, Hester Prynne, with Pearl, departed from the house. As they descended the steps, it is averred that the lattice of a chamber-window was thrown open, and forth into the sunny day was thrust the face of Mistress Hibbins, Governor Bellingham's bitter-tempered sister, and the same who, a few years later, was executed as a witch.

"Hist, hist!" said she, while her ill-omened physiognomy seemed to cast a shadow over the cheerful newness of the house. "Wilt thou go with us to-night? There will be a merry company in the forest; and I wellnigh promised the Black Man that comely Hester Prynne should make one."

"Make my excuse to him, so please you!" answered Hester, with a triumphant smile. "I must tarry at home, and keep watch over my little Pearl. Had they taken her from me, I would willingly have gone with thee into the forest, and signed my name in the Black Man's book too, and that with mine own blood!"

"We shall have thee there anon!" said the witch-lady, frowning, as she drew back her head.

But here—if we suppose this interview betwixt Mistress Hibbins and Hester Prynne to be authentic, and not a parable—was already an illustration of the young minister's argument against sundering the relation of a fallen mother to the offspring of her frailty. Even thus early had the child saved her from Satan's snare.

IX

The Leech

UNDER the appellation of Roger Chillingworth, the reader will remember, was hidden another name, which its former wearer had resolved should never more be spoken. It has been related, how, in the crowd that witnessed Hester Prynne's ignominious exposure, stood a man, elderly, travel-worn, who, just emerging from the perilous wilderness, beheld the woman, in whom he hoped to find embodied the warmth and cheerfulness of home, set up as a type of sin before the people. Her matronly fame was trodden under all men's feet. Infamy was babbling around her in the public market-place. For her kindred, should the tidings ever reach them, and for the companions of her unspotted life, there remained nothing but the contagion of her dishonor; which would not fail to be distributed in strict accordance and proportion with the intimacy and sacredness of their previous relationship. Then why—since the choice was with himself—should the individual, whose connection with the fallen woman had been the most intimate and sacred of them all, come forward to vindicate his claim to an inheritance so little desirable? He resolved not to be pilloried beside her on her pedestal of shame. Unknown to all but Hester Prynne, and possessing the lock and key of her silence, he chose to withdraw his name from the roll of mankind, and, as regarded his former ties and interests, to vanish out of life as completely as if he indeed lay at the bottom of the ocean, whither rumor had long ago consigned him. This purpose once effected, new interests would immediately spring up, and likewise a new purpose; dark, it is true, if not guilty, but of force enough to engage the full strength of his faculties.

In pursuance of this resolve, he took up his residence in the Puritan town, as Roger Chillingworth, without other introduction than the learning and intelligence of which he possessed more than a common measure. As his studies, at a previous period of his life, had made him extensively acquainted with the medical science of the day, it was as a physician that he presented himself, and as such was cordially received. Skilful men, of the medical and chirurgical profession, were of rare occurrence in the colony. They seldom, it would appear, partook of the religious zeal that brought other emigrants across the Atlantic. In their researches into the human frame, it may be that the higher and more subtile faculties of such men were materialized, and that they lost the spiritual view of existence amid the intricacies of that wondrous mechanism, which seemed to involve art enough to comprise all of life within itself. At all events, the health of the good town of Boston, so far as medicine had aught to do with it, had hitherto lain in the guardianship of an aged deacon and apothecary, whose piety and godly deportment were stronger testimonials in his favor than any that he could have produced in the shape of a diploma. The only surgeon was one who combined the occasional exercise of that noble art with the daily and habitual flourish of a razor. To such a professional body Roger Chillingworth was a brilliant acquisition. He soon manifested his familiarity with the ponderous and imposing machinery of antique physic; in which every remedy contained a multitude of far-fetched and heterogeneous ingredients, as elaborately compounded as if the proposed result had been the Elixir of Life. In his Indian captivity, moreover, he had gained much knowledge of the properties of native herbs and roots; nor did he conceal from his patients, that these simple medicines, Nature's boon to the untutored savage, had quite as large a share of his own confidence as the European pharmacopœia, which so many learned doctors had spent centuries in elaborating.

This learned stranger was exemplary, as regarded, at least, the outward forms of a religious life, and, early after his arrival, had chosen for his spiritual guide the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. The young divine, whose scholar-like renown still lived in Oxford, was considered by his more fervent admirers as little less than a heaven-ordained apostle, destined, should he live and labor for the ordinary term of life, to do as great deeds for the now feeble New England Church, as the early Fathers had achieved for the infancy of the Christian faith. About this period, however, the health of Mr. Dimmesdale had evidently begun to fail. By those best acquainted with his habits, the paleness of the young minister's cheek

was accounted for by his too earnest devotion to study, his scrupulous fulfillment of parochial duty, and, more than all, by the fasts and vigils of which he made a frequent practice, in order to keep the grossness of this earthly state from clogging and obscuring his spiritual lamp. Some declared, that, if Mr. Dimmesdale were really going to die, it was cause enough, that the world was not worthy to be any longer trodden by his feet. He himself, on the other hand, with characteristic humility, avowed his belief, that, if Providence should see fit to remove him, it would be because of his own unworthiness to perform its humblest mission here on earth. With all this difference of opinion as to the cause of his decline, there could be no question of the fact. His form grew emaciated; his voice, though still rich and sweet, had a certain melancholy prophecy of decay in it; he was often observed, on any slight alarm or other sudden accident, to put his hand over his heart, with first a flush and then a paleness, indicative of pain.

Such was the young clergyman's condition, and so imminent the prospect that his dawning light would be extinguished, all untimely, when Roger Chillingworth made his advent to the town. His first entry on the scene, few people could tell whence, dropping down, as it were, out of the sky, or starting from the nether earth, had an aspect of mystery, which was easily heightened to the miraculous. He was now known to be a man of skill; it was observed that he gathered herbs, and the blossoms of wild-flowers, and dug up roots, and plucked off twigs from the forest-trees, like one acquainted with hidden virtues in what was valueless to common eyes. He was heard to speak of Sir Kenelm Digby, and other famous men, —whose scientific attainments were esteemed hardly less than supernatural,—as having been his correspondents or associates. Why, with such rank in the learned world, had he come hither? What could he, whose sphere was in great cities, be seeking in the wilderness? In answer to this query, a rumor gained ground,—and, however absurd, was entertained by some very sensible people,—that Heaven had wrought an absolute miracle, by transporting an eminent Doctor of Physic, from a German university, bodily through the air, and setting him down at the door of Mr. Dimmesdale's study! Individuals of wiser faith, indeed, who knew that Heaven promotes its purposes without aiming at the stage-effect of what is called miraculous interposition, were inclined to see a providential hand in Roger Chillingworth's so opportune arrival.

This idea was countenanced by the strong interest which the physician ever manifested in the young clergyman; he attached himself to him as a parishioner, and sought to win a friendly regard and confidence from his naturally reserved sensibility. He expressed great alarm at his pastor's state of health, but was anxious to attempt the cure, and, if early undertaken, seemed not despondent of a favorable result. The elders, the deacons, the motherly dames, and the young and fair maidens, of Mr. Dimmesdale's flock, were alike importunate that he should make trial of the physician's frankly offered skill. Mr. Dimmesdale gently repelled their entreaties.

"I need no medicine," said he.

But how could the young minister say so, when, with every successive Sabbath, his cheek was paler and thinner, and his voice more tremulous than before,—when it had now become a constant habit, rather than a casual gesture, to press his hand over his heart? Was he weary of his labors? Did he wish to die? These questions were solemnly propounded to Mr. Dimmesdale by the elder ministers of Boston and the deacons of his church, who, to use their own phrase, "dealt with him" on the sin of rejecting the aid which Providence so manifestly held out. He listened in silence, and finally promised to confer with the physician.

"Were it God's will," said the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, when, in fulfillment of this pledge, he requested old Roger Chillingworth's professional advice, "I could be well content, that my labors, and my sorrows, and my sins, and my pains, should shortly end with me, and what is earthly of them be buried in my grave, and the spiritual go with me to my eternal state, rather than that you should put your skill to the proof in my behalf."

"Ah," replied Roger Chillingworth, with that quietness which, whether imposed or natural, marked all his deportment, "it is thus that a young clergyman is apt to speak. Youthful men, not having taken a deep root, give up their hold of life so easily! And saintly men, who walk with God on earth, would fain be away, to walk with him on the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem."

"Nay," rejoined the young minister, putting his hand to his heart, with a flush of pain flitting over his brow, "were I worthier to walk there, I could be better content to toil here."

"Good men ever interpret themselves too meanly," said the physician.

In this manner, the mysterious old Roger Chillingworth became the medical adviser of the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. As not only the disease interested the physician, but he was strongly moved to look into the character and qualities of the patient, these two men, so different in age, came gradually to spend

much time together. For the sake of the minister's health, and to enable the leech to gather plants with healing balm in them, they took long walks on the sea-shore, or in the forest; mingling various talk with the plash and murmur of the waves, and the solemn wind-anthem among the tree-tops. Often, likewise, one was the guest of the other, in his place of study and retirement. There was a fascination for the minister in the company of the man of science, in whom he recognized an intellectual cultivation of no moderate depth or scope; together with a range and freedom of ideas, that he would have vainly looked for among the members of his own profession. In truth he was startled, if not shocked, to find this attribute in the physician. Mr. Dimmesdale was a true priest, a true religionist, with the reverential sentiment largely developed, and an order of mind that impelled itself powerfully along the track of a creed, and wore its passage continually deeper with the lapse of time. In no state of society would he have been what is called a man of liberal views; it would always be essential to his peace to feel the pressure of a faith about him, supporting, while it confined him within its iron framework. Not the less, however, though with a tremulous enjoyment, did he feel the occasional relief of looking at the universe through the medium of another kind of intellect than those with which he habitually held converse. It was as if a window were thrown open, admitting a freer atmosphere into the close and stifled study, where his life was wasting itself away, amid lamplight, or obstructed day-beams, and the musty fragrance, be it sensual or moral, that exhales from books. But the air was too fresh and chill to be long breathed with comfort. So the minister, and the physician with him, withdrew again within the limits of what their church defined as orthodox.

Thus Roger Chillingworth scrutinized his patient carefully, both as he saw him in his ordinary life, keeping an accustomed pathway in the range of thoughts familiar to him, and as he appeared when thrown amidst other moral scenery, the novelty of which might call out something new to the surface of his character. He deemed it essential, it would seem, to know the man, before attempting to do him good. Wherever there is a heart and an intellect, the diseases of the physical frame are tinged with the peculiarities of these. In Arthur Dimmesdale, thought and imagination were so active, and sensibility so intense, that the bodily infirmity would be likely to have its groundwork there. So Roger Chillingworth—the man of skill, the kind and friendly physician—strove to go deep into his patient's bosom, delving among his principles, prying into his recollections, and probing everything with a cautious touch, like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern. Few secrets can escape an investigator, who has opportunity and license to undertake such a quest, and skill to follow it up. A man burdened with a secret should especially avoid the intimacy of his physician. If the latter possess native sagacity, and a nameless something more,—let us call it intuition; if he show no intrusive egotism, nor disagreeably prominent characteristics of his own; if he have the power, which must be born with him, to bring his mind into such affinity with his patient's, that this last shall unawares have spoken what he imagines himself only to have thought; if such revelations be received without tumult, and acknowledged not so often by an uttered sympathy as by silence, an inarticulate breath, and here and there a word, to indicate that all is understood; if to these qualifications of a confidant be joined the advantages afforded by his recognized character as a physician;—then, at some inevitable moment, will the soul of the sufferer be dissolved, and flow forth in a dark, but transparent stream, bringing all its mysteries into the daylight.

Roger Chillingworth possessed all, or most, of the attributes above enumerated. Nevertheless, time went on; a kind of intimacy, as we have said, grew up between these two cultivated minds, which had as wide a field as the whole sphere of human thought and study, to meet upon; they discussed every topic of ethics and religion, of public affairs and private character; they talked much, on both sides, of matters that seemed personal to themselves; and yet no secret, such as the physician fancied must exist there, ever stole out of the minister's consciousness into his companion's ear. The latter had his suspicions, indeed, that even the nature of Mr. Dimmesdale's bodily disease had never fairly been revealed to him. It was a strange reserve!

After a time, at a hint from Roger Chillingworth, the friends of Mr. Dimmesdale effected an arrangement by which the two were lodged in the same house; so that every ebb and flow of the minister's life-tide might pass under the eye of his anxious and attached physician. There was much joy throughout the town, when this greatly desirable object was attained. It was held to be the best possible measure for the young clergyman's welfare; unless, indeed, as often urged by such as felt authorized to do so, he had selected some one of the many blooming damsels, spiritually devoted to him, to become his devoted wife. This latter step, however, there was no present prospect that Arthur Dimmesdale would be prevailed upon to take; he rejected all suggestions of the kind, as if priestly celibacy were one of his articles of

church-discipline. Doomed by his own choice, therefore, as Mr. Dimmesdale so evidently was, to eat his unsavory morsel always at another's board, and endure the life-long chill which must be his lot who seeks to warm himself only at another's fireside, it truly seemed that this sagacious, experienced, benevolent old physician, with his concord of paternal and reverential love for the young pastor, was the very man, of all mankind, to be constantly within reach of his voice.

The new abode of the two friends was with a pious widow, of good social rank, who dwelt in a house covering pretty nearly the site on which the venerable structure of King's Chapel has since been built. It had the graveyard, originally Isaac Johnson's home-field, on one side, and so was well adapted to call up serious reflections, suited to their respective employments, in both minister and man of physic. The motherly care of the good widow assigned to Mr. Dimmesdale a front apartment, with a sunny exposure, and heavy window-curtains, to create a noontide shadow, when desirable. The walls were hung round with tapestry, said to be from the Gobelin looms, and, at all events, representing the Scriptural story of David and Bathsheba, and Nathan the Prophet, in colors, still unfaded, but which made the fair woman of the scene almost as grimly picturesque as the woe-denouncing seer. Here, the pale clergyman piled up his library, rich with parchment-bound folios of the Fathers, and the lore of Rabbis, and monkish erudition, of which the Protestant divines, even while they vilified and decried that class of writers, were yet constrained often to avail themselves. On the other side of the house, old Roger Chillingworth arranged his study and laboratory; not such as a modern man of science would reckon even tolerably complete, but provided with a distilling apparatus, and the means of compounding drugs and chemicals, which the practised alchemist knew well how to turn to purpose. With such commodiousness of situation, these two learned persons set themselves down, each in his own domain, yet familiarly passing from one apartment to the other, and bestowing a mutual and not incurious inspection into one another's business.

And the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale's best discerning friends, as we have intimated, very reasonably imagined that the hand of Providence had done all this, for the purpose—besought in so many public, and domestic, and secret prayers—of restoring the young minister to health. But—it must now be said—another portion of the community had latterly begun to take its own view of the relation betwixt Mr. Dimmesdale and the mysterious old physician. When an uninstructed multitude attempts to see with its eyes, it is exceedingly apt to be deceived. When, however, it forms its judgment, as it usually does, on the intuitions of its great and warm heart, the conclusions thus attained are often so profound and so unerring, as to possess the character of truths supernaturally revealed. The people, in the case of which we speak, could justify its prejudice against Roger Chillingworth by no fact or argument worthy of serious refutation. There was an aged handicraftsman, it is true, who had been a citizen of London at the period of Sir Thomas Overbury's murder, now some thirty years agone; he testified to having seen the physician, under some other name, which the narrator of the story had now forgotten, in company with Doctor Forman, the famous old conjurer, who was implicated in the affair of Overbury. Two or three individuals hinted, that the man of skill, during his Indian captivity, had enlarged his medical attainments by joining in the incantations of the savage priests; who were universally [illegible] to be powerful enchanters, often performing seemingly miraculous cures by their skill in the black art. A large number—and many of these were persons of such sober sense and practical observation that their opinions would have been valuable, in other matters—affirmed that Roger Chillingworth's aspect had undergone a remarkable change while he had dwelt in town, and especially since his abode with Mr. Dimmesdale. At first, his expression had been calm, meditative, scholar-like. Now, there was [illegible] ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight, the oftener they looked upon him. According to the vulgar idea, the fire in his laboratory had been brought from the lower regions, and was fed with infernal fuel; and so, as might be expected, his visage was getting sooty with the smoke.

To sum up the matter, it grew to be a widely diffused opinion, that the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, like many other personages of especial sanctity, in all ages of the Christian world, was haunted either by Satan himself, or Satan's emissary, in the guise of old Roger Chillingworth. This diabolical agent had the Divine permission, for a season, to burrow into the clergyman's intimacy, and plot against his soul. No sensible man, it was confessed, could doubt on which side the victory would turn. The people looked, with an unshaken hope, to see the minister come forth out of the conflict, transfigured with the glory which he would unquestionably win. Meanwhile, nevertheless, it was sad to think of the perchance mortal agony through which he must struggle towards his triumph.

Alas! to judge from the gloom and terror in the depths of the poor minister's eyes, the battle was a sore one and the victory anything but secure.

X

The Leech and His Patient

OLD Roger Chillingworth, throughout life, had been calm in temperament, kindly, though not of warm affections, but ever, and in all his relations with the world, a pure and upright man. He had begun an investigation, as he imagined, with the severe and equal integrity of a judge, desirous only of truth, even as if the question involved no more than the air-drawn lines and figures of a geometrical problem, instead of human passions, and wrongs inflicted on himself. But, as he proceeded, a terrible fascination, a kind of fierce, though still calm, necessity seized the old man within its gripe, and never set him free again, until he had done all its bidding. He now dug into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold; or, rather, like a sexton delving into a grave, possibly in quest of a jewel that had been buried on the dead man's bosom, but likely to find nothing save mortality and corruption. Alas for his own soul, if these were what he sought!

Sometimes, a light glimmered out of the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or, let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Bunyan's awful doorway in the hillside, and quivered on the pilgrim's face. The soil where this dark miner was working had perchance shown indications that encouraged him.

"This man," said he, at one such moment, to himself, "pure as they deem him,—all spiritual as he seems,—hath inherited a strong animal nature from his father or his mother. Let us dig a little further in the direction of this vein!"

Then, after long search into the minister's dim interior, and turning over many precious materials, in the shape of high aspirations for the welfare of his race, warm love of souls, pure sentiments, natural piety, strengthened by thought and study, and illuminated by revelation,—all of which invaluable gold was perhaps no better than rubbish to the seeker,—he would turn back, discouraged, and begin his quest towards another point. He groped along as stealthily, with as cautious a tread, and as wary an outlook, as a thief entering a chamber where a man lies only half asleep,—or, it may be, broad awake,—with purpose to steal the very treasure which this man guards as the apple of his eye. In spite of his premeditated carefulness, the floor would now and then creak; his garments would rustle; the shadow of his presence, in a forbidden proximity, would be thrown across his victim. In other words, Mr. Dimmesdale, whose sensibility of nerve often produced the effect of spiritual intuition, would become vaguely aware that something inimical to his peace had thrust itself into relation with him. But old Roger Chillingworth, too, had perceptions that were almost intuitive; and when the minister threw his startled eyes towards him, there the physician sat; his kind, watchful, sympathizing, but never intrusive friend.

Yet Mr. Dimmesdale would perhaps have seen this individual's character more perfectly, if a certain morbidness, to which sick hearts are liable, had not rendered him suspicious of all mankind. Trusting no man as his friend, he could not recognize his enemy when the latter actually appeared. He therefore still kept up a familiar intercourse with him, daily receiving the old physician in his study; or visiting the laboratory, and, for recreation's sake, watching the processes by which weeds were converted into drugs of potency.

One day, leaning his forehead on his hand, and his elbow on the sill of the open window, that looked towards the graveyard, he talked with Roger Chillingworth, while the old man was examining a bundle of unsightly plants.

"Where," asked he, with a look askance at them,—for it was the clergyman's peculiarity that he seldom, nowadays, looked straightforth at any object, whether human or inanimate,—"where, my kind doctor, did you gather those herbs, with such a dark, flabby leaf?"

"Even in the graveyard here at hand," answered the physician, continuing his employment. "They are new to me. I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tombstone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds, that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his lifetime."

"Perchance," said Mr. Dimmesdale, "he earnestly desired it, but could not."

"And wherefore?" rejoined the physician. "Wherefore not; since all the powers of nature call so earnestly for the confession of sin, that these black weeds have sprung up out of a buried heart, to make manifest an unspoken crime?"

"That, good Sir, is but a fantasy of yours," replied the minister. "There can be, if I forbode aright, no power, short of the Divine mercy, to disclose, whether by uttered words, or by type or emblem, the

secrets that may be buried with a human heart. The heart, making itself guilty of such secrets, must perforce hold them, until the day when all hidden things shall be revealed. Nor have I so read or interpreted Holy Writ, as to understand that the disclosure of human thoughts and deeds, then to be made, is intended as a part of the retribution. That, surely, were a shallow view of it. No; these revelations, unless I greatly err, are meant merely to promote the intellectual satisfaction of all intelligent beings, who will stand waiting, on that day, to see the dark problem of this life made plain. A knowledge of men's hearts will be needful to the completest solution of that problem. And I conceive, moreover, that the hearts holding such miserable secrets as you speak of will yield them up, at that last day, not with reluctance, but with a joy unutterable."

"Then why not reveal them here?" asked Roger Chillingworth, glancing quietly aside at the minister. "Why should not the guilty ones sooner avail themselves of this unutterable solace?"

"They mostly do," said the clergyman, griping hard at his breast as if afflicted with an importunate throb of pain. "Many, many a poor soul hath given its confidence to me, not only on the death-bed, but while strong in life, and fair in reputation. And ever, after such on outpouring, O, what a relief have I witnessed in those sinful brethren! even as in one who at last draws free air, after long stifling with his own polluted breath. How can it be otherwise? Why should a wretched man, guilty, we will say, of murder, prefer to keep the dead corpse buried in his own heart, rather than fling it forth at once, and let the universe take care of it!"

"Yet some men bury their secrets thus," observed the calm physician.

"True; there are such men," answered Mr. Dimmesdale. "But, not to suggest more obvious reasons, it may be that they are kept silent by the very constitution of their nature. Or,—can we not suppose it? —guilty as they may be, retaining, nevertheless, a zeal for God's glory and man's welfare, they shrink from displaying themselves black and filthy in the view of men; because, thenceforward, no good can be achieved by them; no evil of the past be redeemed by better service. So, to their own unutterable torment, they go about among their fellow-creatures, looking pure as new-fallen snow while their hearts are all speckled and spotted with iniquity of which they cannot rid themselves."

"These men deceive themselves," said Roger Chillingworth, with somewhat more emphasis than usual, and making a slight gesture with his forefinger. "They fear to take up the shame that rightfully belongs to them. Their love for man, their zeal for God's service,—these holy impulses may or may not coexist in their hearts with the evil inmates to which their guilt has unbarred the door, and which must needs propagate a hellish breed within them. But, if they seek to glorify God, let them not lift heavenward their unclean hands! If they would serve their fellow-men, let them do it by making manifest the power and reality of conscience, in constraining them to penitential self-abasement! Wouldst thou have me to believe, O wise and pious friend, that a false show can be better—can be more for God's glory, or man's welfare—than God's own truth? Trust me, such men deceive themselves!"

"It may be so," said the young clergyman, indifferently, as waiving a discussion that he considered irrelevant or unseasonable. He had a ready faculty, indeed, of escaping from any topic that agitated his too sensitive and nervous temperament.—"But, now, I would ask of my well-skilled physician, whether, in good sooth, he deems me to have profited by his kindly care of this weak frame of mine?"

Before Roger Chillingworth could answer, they heard the clear, wild laughter of a young child's voice, proceeding from the adjacent burial-ground. Looking instinctively from the open window,—for it was summer-time,—the minister beheld Hester Prynne and little Pearl passing along the footpath that traversed the enclosure. Pearl looked as beautiful as the day, but was in one of those moods of perverse merriment which, whenever they occurred, seemed to remove her entirely out of the sphere of sympathy or human contact. She now skipped irreverently from one grave to another; until, coming to the broad, flat, armorial tombstone of a departed worthy,—perhaps of Isaac Johnson himself,—she began to dance upon it. In reply to her mother's command and entreaty that she would behave more decorously, little Pearl paused to gather the prickly burrs from a tall burdock which grew beside the tomb. Taking a handful of these, she arranged them along the lines of the scarlet letter that decorated the maternal bosom, to which the burrs, as their nature was, tenaciously adhered. Hester did not pluck them off.

Roger Chillingworth had by this time approached the window, and smiled grimly down.

"There is no law, nor reverence for authority, no regard for human ordinances or opinions, right or wrong, mixed up with that child's composition," remarked he, as much to himself as to his companion. "I saw her, the other day, bespatter the Governor himself with water, at the cattle-trough in Spring Lane. What, in Heaven's name, is she? Is the imp

altogether evil? Hath she affections? Hath she any discoverable principle of being?"

"None,—save the freedom of a broken law," answered Mr. Dimmesdale, in a quiet way, as if he had been discussing the point within himself. "Whether capable of good, I know not."

The child probably overheard their voices; for, looking up to the window, with a bright, but naughty smile of mirth and intelligence, she threw one of the prickly burrs at the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. The sensitive clergyman shrunk, with nervous dread, from the light missile. Detecting his emotion, Pearl clapped her little hands, in the most extravagant ecstasy. Hester Prynne, likewise, had involuntarily looked up; and all these four persons, old and young, regarded one another in silence, till the child laughed aloud, and shouted,—"Come away, mother! Come away, or yonder old Black Man will catch you! He hath got hold of the minister already. Come away, mother, or he will catch you! But he cannot catch little Pearl!"

So she drew her mother away, skipping, dancing, and frisking fantastically, among the hillocks of the dead people, like a creature that had nothing in common with a bygone and buried generation, nor owned herself akin to it. It was as if she had been made afresh, out of new elements, and must perforce be permitted to live her own life, and be a law unto herself, without her eccentricities being reckoned to her for a crime.

"There goes a woman," resumed Roger Chillingworth, after a pause, "who, be her demerits what they may, hath none of that mystery of hidden sinfulness which you deem so grievous to be borne. Is Hester Prynne the less miserable, think you, for that scarlet letter on her breast?"

"I do verily believe it," answered the clergyman. "Nevertheless, I cannot answer for her. There was a look of pain in her face, which I would gladly have been spared the sight of. But still, methinks, it must needs be better for the sufferer to be free to show his pain, as this poor woman Hester is, than to cover it all up in his heart."

There was another pause; and the physician began anew to examine and arrange the plants which he had gathered.

"You inquired of me, a little time agone," said he, at length, "my judgment as touching your health."

"I did," answered the clergyman, "and would gladly learn it. Speak frankly, I pray you, be it for life or death."

"Freely, then, and plainly," said the physician, still busy with his plants, but keeping a wary eye on Mr. Dimmesdale, "the disorder is a strange one; not so much in itself, nor as outwardly manifested,—in so far, at least, as the symptoms have been laid open to my observation. Looking daily at you, my good Sir, and watching the tokens of your aspect, now for months gone by, I should deem you a man sore sick, it may be, yet not so sick but that an instructed and watchful physician might well hope to cure you. But —I know not what to say—the disease is what I seem to know, yet know it not."

"You speak in riddles, learned Sir," said the pale minister, glancing aside out of the window.

"Then, to speak more plainly," continued the physician, "and I crave pardon, sir,—should it seem to require pardon,—for this needful plainness of my speech. Let me ask,—as your friend,—as one having charge, under Providence, of your life and physical well-being,—hath all the operation of this disorder been fairly laid open and recounted to me?"

"How can you question it?" asked the minister. "Surely, it were child's play, to call in a physician, and then hide the sore!"

"You will tell me, then, that I know all?" said Roger Chillingworth, deliberately, and fixing an eye, bright with intense and concentrated intelligence, on the minister's face. "Be it so! But, again! He to whom only the outward and physical evil is laid open, knoweth, oftentimes, but half the evil which he is called upon to cure. A bodily disease, which we look upon as whole and entire within itself, may, after all, be but a symptom of some ailment in the spiritual part. Your pardon, once again, good Sir, if my speech give the shadow of offence. You, Sir, of all men whom I have known, are he whose body is the closest conjoined, and imbued, and identified, so to speak, with the spirit whereof it is the instrument."

"Then I need ask no further," said the clergyman, somewhat hastily rising from his chair. "You deal not, I take it, in medicine for the soul!"

"Thus, a sickness," continued Roger Chillingworth, going on, in an unaltered tone, without heeding the interruption,—but standing up, and confronting the emaciated and white-cheeked minister, with his low, dark, and misshapen figure,—"a sickness, a sore place, if we may so call it, in your spirit, hath immediately its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame. Would you, therefore, that your physician heal the bodily evil? How may this be, unless you first lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul?"

"No!—not to thee!—not to an earthly physician!" cried Mr. Dimmesdale, passionately, and turning his eyes, full and bright, and with a kind of fierceness, on old Roger Chillingworth. "Not to thee! But, if it be the soul's disease, then do I commit myself to the one Physician of the soul! He, if it stand with his

good pleasure, can cure; or he can kill! Let him do with me as, in his justice and wisdom, he shall see good. But who art thou, that meddlest in this matter? —that dares thrust himself between the sufferer and his God?"

With a frantic gesture he rushed out of the room.

"It is well to have made this step," said Roger Chillingworth to himself, looking after the minister with a grave smile. "There is nothing lost. We shall be friends again anon. But see, now, how passion takes hold upon this man, and hurrieth him out of himself! As with one passion, so with another! He hath done a wild thing erenow, this pious Master Dimmesdale, in the hot passion of his heart!"

It proved not difficult to re-establish the intimacy of the two companions, on the same footing and in the same degree as heretofore. The young clergyman, after a few hours of privacy, was sensible that the disorder of his nerves had hurried him into an unseemly outbreak of temper, which there had been nothing in the physician's words to excuse or palliate. He marvelled, indeed, at the violence with which he had thrust back the kind old man, when merely proffering the advice which it was his duty to bestow, and which the minister himself had expressly sought. With these remorseful feelings, he lost no time in making the amplest apologies, and besought his friend still to continue the care, which, if not successful in restoring him to health, had, in all probability, been the means of prolonging his feeble existence to that hour. Roger Chillingworth readily assented, and went on with his medical supervision of the minister; doing his best for him, in all good faith, but always quitting the patient's apartment, at the close of a professional interview, with a mysterious and puzzled smile upon his lips. This expression was invisible in Mr. Dimmesdale's presence, but grew strongly evident as the physician crossed the threshold.

"A rare case!" he muttered. "I must needs look deeper into it. A strange sympathy betwixt soul and body! Were it only for the art's sake, I must search this matter to the bottom!"

It came to pass, not long after the scene above recorded, that the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, at noonday, and entirely unawares, fell into a deep, deep slumber, sitting in his chair, with a large black-letter volume open before him on the table. It must have been a work of vast ability in the somniferous school of literature. The profound depth of the minister's repose was the more remarkable, inasmuch as he was one of those persons whose sleep, ordinarily, is as light, as fitful, and as easily scared away, as a small bird hopping on a twig. To such an unwonted remoteness, however, had his spirit now withdrawn into itself, that he stirred not in his chair, when old Roger Chillingworth, without any extraordinary precaution, came into the room. The physician advanced directly in front of his patient, laid his hand upon his bosom, and thrust aside the vestment, that, hitherto, had always covered it even from the professional eye.

Then, indeed, Mr. Dimmesdale shuddered, and slightly stirred.

After a brief pause, the physician turned away.

But, with what a wild look of wonder, joy, and horror! With what a ghastly rapture, as it were, too mighty to be expressed only by the eye and features, and therefore bursting forth through the whole ugliness of his figure, and making itself even riotously manifest by the extravagant gestures with which he threw up his arms towards the ceiling, and stamped his foot upon the floor! Had a man seen old Roger Chillingworth, at that moment of his ecstasy, he would have had no need to ask how Satan comports himself, when a precious human soul is lost to heaven, and won into his kingdom.

But what distinguished the physician's ecstasy from Satan's was the trait of wonder in it!

XI

The Interior of a Heart

AFTER the incident last described, the intercourse between the clergyman and the physician, though externally the same, was really of another character than it had previously been. The intellect of Roger Chillingworth had now a sufficiently plain path before it. It was not, indeed, precisely that which he had laid out for himself to tread. Calm, gentle, passionless, as he appeared, there was yet, we fear, a quiet depth of malice, hitherto latent, but active now, in this unfortunate old man, which led him to imagine a more intimate revenge than any mortal had ever wreaked upon an enemy. To make himself the one trusted friend, to whom should be confided all the fear, the remorse, the agony, the ineffectual repentance, the backward rush of sinful thoughts, expelled in vain! All that guilty sorrow, hidden from the world, whose great heart would have pitied and forgiven, to be revealed to him, the Pitiless, to him, the Unforgiving! All that dark treasure to be lavished on the very man, to whom nothing else could so adequately pay the debt of vengeance!

The clergyman's shy and sensitive reserve had balked this scheme. Roger Chillingworth, however, was inclined to be hardly, if at all, less satisfied with the aspect of affairs, which Providence—using the avenger and his victim for its own purposes, and,

perchance, pardoning where it seemed most to punish —had substituted for his black devices. A revelation, he could almost say, had been granted to him. It mattered little, for his object, whether celestial, or from what other region. By its aid, in all the subsequent relations betwixt him and Mr. Dimmesdale, not merely the external presence, but the very inmost soul, of the latter, seemed to be brought out before his eyes, so that he could see and comprehend its every movement. He became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor, in the poor minister's interior world. He could play upon him as he chose. Would he arouse him with a throb of agony? The victim was forever on the rack; it needed only to know the spring that controlled the engine;—and the physician knew it well! Would he startle him with sudden fear? As at the waving of a magician's wand, uprose a grisly phantom,—uprose a thousand phantoms,—in many shapes, of death, or more awful shame, all flocking round about the clergyman, and pointing with their fingers at his breast!

All this was accomplished with a subtlety so perfect, that the minister, though he had constantly a dim perception of some evil influence watching over him, could never gain a knowledge of its actual nature. True, he looked doubtfully, fearfully,—even, at times, with horror and the bitterness of hatred,—at the deformed figure of the old physician. His gestures, his gait, his grizzled beard, his slightest and most indifferent acts, the very fashion of his garments, were odious in the clergyman's sight; a token implicitly to be relied on, of a deeper antipathy in the breast of the latter than he was willing to acknowledge to himself. For, as it was impossible to assign a reason for such distrust and abhorrence, so Mr. Dimmesdale, conscious that the poison of one morbid spot was infecting his heart's entire substance, attributed all his presentiments to no other cause. He took himself to task for his bad sympathies in reference to Roger Chillingworth, disregarded the lesson that he should have drawn from them, and did his best to root them out. Unable to accomplish this, he nevertheless, as a matter of principle, continued his habits of social familiarity with the old man, and thus gave him constant opportunities for perfecting the purpose to which—poor, forlorn creature that he was, and more wretched than his victim—the avenger had devoted himself.

While thus suffering under bodily disease, and gnawed and tortured by some black trouble of the soul, and given over to the machinations of his deadliest enemy, the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale had achieved a brilliant popularity in his sacred office. He won it, indeed, in great part, by his sorrows. His intellectual gifts, his moral perceptions, his power of experiencing and communicating emotion, were kept in a state of preternatural activity by the prick and anguish of his daily life. His fame, though still on its upward slope, already overshadowed the soberer reputations of his fellow-clergymen, eminent as several of them were. There were scholars among them, who had spent more years in acquiring abstruse lore, connected with the divine profession, than Mr. Dimmesdale had lived; and who might well, therefore, be more profoundly versed in such solid and valuable attainments than their youthful brother. There were men, too, of a sturdier texture of mind than his, and endowed with a far greater share of shrewd, hard, iron, or granite understanding; which, duly mingled with a fair proportion of doctrinal ingredient, constitutes a highly respectable, efficacious, and unamiable variety of the clerical species. There were others, again, true saintly fathers, whose faculties had been elaborated by weary toil among their books, and by patient thought, and etherealized, moreover, by spiritual communications with the better world, into which their purity of life had almost introduced these holy personages, with their garments of mortality still clinging to them. All that they lacked was the gift that descended upon the chosen disciples at Pentecost, in tongues of flame; symbolizing, it would seem, not the power of speech in foreign and unknown languages, but that of addressing the whole human brotherhood in the heart's native language. These fathers, otherwise so apostolic, lacked Heaven's last and rarest attestation of their office, the Tongue of Flame. They would have vainly sought—had they ever dreamed of seeking to express the highest truths through the humblest medium of familiar words and images. Their voices came down, afar and indistinctly, from the upper heights where they habitually dwelt.

Not improbably, it was to this latter class of men that Mr. Dimmesdale, by many of his traits of character, naturally belonged. To the high mountain-peaks of faith and sanctity he would have climbed, had not the tendency been thwarted by the burden, whatever it might be, of crime or anguish, beneath which it was his doom to totter. It kept him down, on a level with the lowest; him, the man of ethereal attributes, whose voice the angels might else have listened to and answered! But this very burden it was, that gave him sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind; so that his heart vibrated in unison with theirs, and received their pain into itself, and sent its own throb of pain through a thousand other hearts, in gushes of sad, persuasive eloquence. Oftenest persuasive, but sometimes ter-

rible! The people knew not the power that moved them thus. They deemed the young clergyman a miracle of holiness. They fancied him the mouthpiece of Heaven's messages of wisdom, and rebuke, and love. In their eyes, the very ground on which he trod was sanctified. The virgins of his church grew pale around him, victims of a passion so imbued with religious sentiment that they imagined it to be all religion, and brought it openly, in their white bosoms, as their most acceptable sacrifice before the altar. The aged members of his flock, beholding Mr. Dimmesdale's frame so feeble, while they were themselves so rugged in their infirmity, believed that he would go heavenward before them, and enjoined it upon their children, that their old bones should be buried close to their young pastor's holy grave. And, all this time, perchance, when poor Mr. Dimmesdale was thinking of his grave, he questioned with himself whether the grass would ever grow on it, because an accursed thing must there be buried!

It is inconceivable, the agony with which this public veneration tortured him! It was his genuine impulse to adore the truth, and to reckon all things shadowlike, and utterly devoid of weight or value, that had not its divine essence as the life within their life. Then, what was he?—a substance?—or the dimmest of all shadows? He longed to speak out, from his own pulpit, at the full height of his voice, and tell the people what he was. "I, whom you behold in these black garments of the priesthood,—I, who ascend the sacred desk, and turn my pale face heavenward, taking upon myself to hold communion, in your behalf, with the Most High Omniscience,—I, in whose daily life you discern the sanctity of Enoch,—I, whose footsteps, as you suppose, leave a gleam along my earthly track, whereby the pilgrims that shall come after me may be guided to the regions of the blest,—I, who have laid the hand of baptism upon your children,—I, who have breathed the parting prayer over your dying friends, to whom the Amen sounded faintly from a world which they had quitted,—I, your pastor, whom you so reverence and trust, am utterly a pollution and a lie!"

More than once, Mr. Dimmesdale had gone into the pulpit, with a purpose never to come down its steps, until he should have spoken words like the above. More than once, he had cleared his throat, and drawn in the long, deep, and tremulous breath, which, when sent forth again, would come burdened with the black secret of his soul. More than once—nay, more than a hundred times—he had actually spoken! Spoken! But how? He had told his hearers that he was altogether vile, a viler companion of the vilest, the worst of sinners, an abomination, a thing of unimaginable iniquity; and that the only wonder was, that they did not see his wretched body shrivelled up before their eyes, by the burning wrath of the Almighty! Could there be plainer speech than this? Would not the people start up in their seats, by a simultaneous impulse, and tear him down out of the pulpit which he defiled? Not so, indeed! They heard it all, and did but reverence him the more. They little guessed what deadly purport lurked in those self-condemning words. "The godly youth!" said they among themselves. "The saint on earth! Alas, if he discern such sinfulness in his own white soul, what horrid spectacle would he behold in thine or mine!" The minister well knew—subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was!—the light in which his vague confession would be viewed. He had striven to put a cheat upon himself by making the avowal of a guilty conscience, but had gained only one other sin, and a self-acknowledged shame, without the momentary relief of being self-deceived. He had spoken the very truth, and transformed it into the veriest falsehood. And yet, by the constitution of his nature, he loved the truth, and loathed the lie, as few men ever did. Therefore, above all things else, he loathed his miserable self!

His inward trouble drove him to practices more in accordance with the old, corrupted faith of Rome, than with the better light of the church in which he had been born and bred. In Mr. Dimmesdale's secret closet, under lock and key, there was a bloody scourge. Oftentimes, this Protestant and Puritan divine had plied it on his own shoulders; laughing bitterly at himself the while, and smiting so much the more pitilessly because of that bitter laugh. It was his custom, too, as it has been that of many other pious Puritans, to fast,—not, however, like them, in order to purify the body and render it the fitter medium of celestial illumination, but rigorously, and until his knees trembled beneath him, as an act of penance. He kept vigils, likewise, night after night, sometimes in utter darkness; sometimes with a glimmering lamp; and sometimes, viewing his own face in a looking-glass, by the most powerful light which he could throw upon it. He thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify, himself. In these lengthened vigils, his brain often reeled, and visions seemed to flit before him; perhaps seen doubtfully, and by a faint light of their own, in the remote dimness of the chamber, or more vividly, and close beside him, within the looking-glass. Now it was a herd of diabolic shapes, that grinned and mocked at the pale minister, and beckoned him away with them; now a group of shining angels, who flew upward heavily, as sorrow-laden, but

grew more ethereal as they rose. Now came the dead friends of his youth, and his white-bearded father, with a saint-like frown, and his mother, turning her face away as she passed by. Ghost of a mother,—thinnest fantasy of a mother,—methinks she might yet have thrown a pitying glance towards her son! And now, through the chamber which these spectral thoughts had made so ghastly, glided Hester Prynne, leading along little Pearl, in her scarlet garb, and pointing her forefinger, first at the scarlet letter on her bosom, and then at the clergyman's own breast.

None of these visions ever quite deluded him. At any moment, by an effort of his will, he could discern substances through their misty lack of substance, and convince himself that they were not solid in their nature, like yonder table of carved oak, or that big, square, leathern-bound and brazen-clasped volume of divinity. But, for all that, they were, in one sense, the truest and most substantial things which the poor minister now dealt with. It is the unspeakable misery of a life so false as his, that it steals the pith and substance out of whatever realities there are around us, and which were meant by Heaven to be the spirit's joy and nutriment. To the untrue man, the whole universe is false,—it is impalpable,—it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself, in so far as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow, or, indeed, ceases to exist. The only truth that continued to give Mr. Dimmesdale a real existence on this earth, was the anguish in his inmost soul, and the undissembled expression of it in his aspect. Had he once found power to smile, and wear a face of gayety, there would have been no such man!

On one of those ugly nights, which we have faintly hinted at, but forborne to picture forth, the minister started from his chair. A new thought had struck him. There might be a moment's peace in it. Attiring himself with as much care as if it had been for public worship, and precisely in the same manner, he stole softly down the staircase, undid the door, and issued forth.

XII

The Minister's Vigil

WALKING in the shadow of a dream, as it were, and perhaps actually under the influence of a species of somnambulism, Mr. Dimmesdale reached the spot where, now so long since, Hester Prynne had lived through her first hours of public ignominy. The same platform or scaffold, black and weather-stained with the storm or sunshine of seven long years, and foot-worn, too, with the tread of many culprits who had since ascended it, remained standing beneath the balcony of the meeting-house. The minister went up the steps.

It was an obscure night of early May. An unvaried pall of cloud muffled the whole expanse of sky from zenith to horizon. If the same multitude which had stood as eye-witnesses while Hester Prynne sustained her punishment could now have been summoned forth, they would have discerned no face above the platform, nor hardly the outline of a human shape, in the dark gray of the midnight. But the town was all asleep. There was no peril of discovery. The minister might stand there, if it so pleased him, until morning should redden in the east, without other risk than that the dank and chill night-air would creep into his frame, and stiffen his joints with rheumatism, and clog his throat with catarrh and cough; thereby defrauding the expectant audience of to-morrow's prayer and sermon. No eye could see him, save that ever-wakeful one which had seen him in his closet, wielding the bloody scourge. Why, then, had he come hither? Was it but the mockery of penitence? A mockery, indeed, but in which his soul trifled with itself! A mockery at which angels blushed and wept, while fiends rejoiced, with jeering laughter! He had been driven hither by the impulse of that Remorse which dogged him everywhere, and whose own sister and closely linked companion was that Cowardice which invariably drew him back, with her tremulous gripe, just when the other impulse had hurried him to the verge of a disclosure. Poor, miserable man! what right had infirmity like his to burden itself with crime? Crime is for the iron-nerved, who have their choice either to endure it, or, if it press too hard, to exert their fierce and savage strength for a good purpose, and fling it off at once! This feeble and most sensitive of spirits could do neither, yet continually did one thing or another, which intertwined, in the same inextricable knot, the agony of heaven-defying guilt and vain repentance.

And thus, while standing on the scaffold, in this vain show of expiation, Mr. Dimmesdale was overcome with a great horror of mind, as if the universe were gazing at a scarlet token on his naked breast, right over his heart. On that spot, in very truth, there was, and there had long been, the gnawing and poisonous tooth of bodily pain. Without any effort of his will, or power to restrain himself, he shrieked aloud; an outcry that went pealing through the night, and was beaten back from one house to another, and reverberated from the hills in the background; as if a company of devils, detecting so much misery and terror in it, had made a plaything of the sound, and were bandying it to and fro.

"It is done!" muttered the minister, covering his face with his hands. "The whole town will awake, and hurry forth, and find me here!"

But it was not so. The shriek had perhaps sounded with a far greater power, to his own startled ears, than it actually possessed. The town did not awake; or, if it did, the drowsy slumberers mistook the cry either for something frightful in a dream, or for the noise of witches; whose voices, at that period, were often heard to pass over the settlements or lonely cottages, as they rode with Satan through the air. The clergyman, therefore, hearing no symptoms of disturbance, uncovered his eyes and looked about him. At one of the chamber-windows of Governor Bellingham's mansion, which stood at some distance, on the line of another street, he beheld the appearance of the old magistrate himself, with a lamp in his hand, a white nightcap on his head, and a long white gown enveloping his figure. He looked like a ghost, evoked unseasonably from the grave. The cry had evidently startled him. At another window of the same house, moreover, appeared old Mistress Hibbins, the Governor's sister, also with a lamp, which, even thus far off, revealed the expression of her sour and discontented face. She thrust forth her head from the lattice, and looked anxiously upward. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, this venerable witch-lady had heard Mr. Dimmesdale's outcry, and interpreted it, with its multitudinous echoes and reverberations, as the clamor of the fiends and night-hags, with whom she was well known to make excursions into the forest.

Detecting the gleam of Governor Bellingham's lamp, the old lady quickly extinguished her own, and vanished. Possibly, she went up among the clouds. The minister saw nothing further of her motions. The magistrate, after a wary observation of the darkness,—into which, nevertheless, he could see but little further than he might into a mill-stone,—retired from the window.

The minister grew comparatively calm. His eyes, however, were soon greeted by a little, glimmering light, which, at first a long way off, was approaching up the street. It threw a gleam of recognition on here a post, and there a garden-fence, and here a latticed window-pane, and there a pump, with its full trough of water, and here, again, an arched door of oak, with an iron knocker, and a rough log for the doorstep. The Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale noted all these minute particulars, even while firmly convinced that the doom of his existence was stealing onward, in the footsteps which he now heard; and that the gleam of the lantern would fall upon him, in a few moments more, and reveal his long-hidden secret. As the light drew nearer, he beheld, within its illuminated circle, his brother clergyman,—or, to speak more accurately, his professional father, as well as highly valued friend,—the Reverend Mr. Wilson; who, as Mr. Dimmesdale now conjectured, had been praying at the bedside of some dying man. And so he had. The good old minister came freshly from the death-chamber of Governor Winthrop, who had passed from earth to heaven within that very hour. And now, surrounded, like the saint-like personages of olden times, with a radiant halo, that glorified him amid this gloomy night of sin,—as if the departed Governor had left him an inheritance of his glory, or as if he had caught upon himself the distant shine of the celestial city, while looking thitherward to see the triumphant pilgrim pass within its gates,—now, in short, good Father Wilson was moving homeward, aiding his footsteps with a lighted lantern! The glimmer of this luminary . . . . . the above conceits to Mr. Dimmesdale, who smiled,—nay, almost laughed at them,—and then wondered if he were going mad.

As the Reverend Mr. Wilson passed beside the scaffold, closely muffling his Geneva cloak about him with one arm, and holding the lantern before his breast with the other, the minister could hardly restrain himself from speaking.

"A good evening to you, venerable Father Wilson! Come up hither, I pray you, and pass a pleasant hour with me!"

Good heavens! Had Mr. Dimmesdale actually spoken? For one instant, he believed that these words had passed his lips. But they were uttered only within his imagination. The venerable Father Wilson continued to step slowly onward, looking carefully at the muddy pathway before his feet, and never once turning his head towards the guilty platform. When the light of the glimmering lantern had faded quite away, the minister discovered, by the faintness which came over him, that the last few moments had been a crisis of terrible anxiety; although his mind had made an involuntary effort to relieve itself by a kind of lurid playfulness.

Shortly afterwards, the like grisly sense of the humorous again stole in among the solemn phantoms of his thought. He felt his limbs growing stiff with the unaccustomed chilliness of the night, and doubted whether he should be able to descend the steps of the scaffold. Morning would break, and find him there. The neighborhood would begin to rouse itself. The earliest riser, coming forth in the dim twilight, would perceive a vaguely defined figure aloft on the place of shame; and, half crazed betwixt alarm and curiosity, would go, knocking from door to door, sum-

moning all the people to behold the ghost—as he needs must think it—of some defunct transgressor. A dusky tumult would flap its wings from one house to another. Then—the morning light still waxing stronger—old patriarchs would rise up in great haste, each in his flannel gown, and matronly dames, without pausing to put off their night-gear. The whole tribe of decorous personages, who had never heretofore been seen with a single hair of their heads awry, would start into public view, with the disorder of a nightmare in their aspects. Old Governor Bellingham would come grimly forth, with his King James's ruff fastened askew; and Mistress Hibbins, with some twigs of the forest clinging to her skirts, and looking sourer than ever, as having hardly got a wink of sleep after her night ride; and good Father Wilson, too, after spending half the night at a death-bed, and liking ill to be disturbed, thus early, out of his dreams about the glorified saints. Hither, likewise, would come the elders and deacons of Mr. Dimmesdale's church, and the young virgins who so idolized their minister, and had made a shrine for him in their white bosoms; which now, by the by, in their hurry and confusion, they would scantly have given themselves time to cover with their kerchiefs. All people, in a word, would come stumbling over their thresholds, and turning up their amazed and horror-stricken visages around the scaffold. Whom would they discern there, with the red eastern light upon his brow? Whom, but the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, half frozen to death, overwhelmed with shame, and standing where Hester Prynne had stood!

Carried away by the grotesque horror of this picture, the minister, unawares, and to his own infinite alarm, burst into a great peal of laughter. It was immediately responded to by a light, airy, childish laugh, in which, with a thrill of the heart,—but he knew not whether of exquisite pain, or pleasure as acute,—he recognized the tones of little Pearl.

"Pearl! Little Pearl!" cried he after a moment's pause; then, suppressing his voice,—"Hester! Hester Prynne! Are you there?"

"Yes; it is Hester Prynne!" she replied, in a tone of surprise; and the minister heard her footsteps approaching from the sidewalk, along which she had been passing. "It is I, and my little Pearl."

"Whence come you, Hester?" asked the minister. "What sent you hither?"

"I have been watching at a death-bed," answered Hester Prynne;—"at Governor Winthrop's death-bed, and have taken his measure for a robe, and am now going homeward to my dwelling."

"Come up hither, Hester, thou and little Pearl," said the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. "Ye have both been here before, but I was not with you. Come up hither once again, and we will stand all three together!"

She silently ascended the steps, and stood on the platform, holding little Pearl by the hand. The minister felt for the child's other hand, and took it. The moment that he did so, there came what seemed a tumultuous rush of new life, other life than his own, pouring like a torrent into his heart, and hurrying through all his veins, as if the mother and the child were communicating their vital warmth to his half-torpid system. The three formed an electric chain.

"Minister!" whispered little Pearl.

"What wouldst thou say, child?" asked Mr. Dimmesdale.

"Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, to-morrow noontide?" inquired Pearl.

"Nay; not so, my little Pearl," answered the minister; for, with the new energy of the moment, all the dread of public exposure, that had so long been the anguish of his life, had returned upon him; and he was already trembling at the conjunction in which—with a strange joy, nevertheless—he now found himself. "Not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not to-morrow."

Pearl laughed, and attempted to pull away her hand. But the minister held it fast.

"A moment longer, my child!" said he.

"But wilt thou promise," asked Pearl, "to take my hand, and mother's hand, to-morrow noontide?"

"Not then, Pearl," said the minister "but another time."

"And what other time?" persisted the child.

"At the great judgment day," whispered the minister,—and, strangely enough, the sense that he was a professional teacher of the truth impelled him to answer the child so. "Then, and there, before the judgment-seat, thy mother, and thou, and I must stand together. But the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting!"

Pearl laughed again.

But, before Mr. Dimmesdale had done speaking, a light gleamed far and wide over all the muffled sky. It was doubtless caused by one of those meteors, which the night-watcher may so often observe burning out to waste, in the vacant regions of the atmosphere. So powerful was its radiance, that it thoroughly illuminated the dense medium of cloud betwixt the sky and earth. The great vault brightened, like the dome of an immense lamp. It showed the familiar scene of the street, with the distinctness of mid-day, but also with the awfulness that is always imparted to familiar objects by an unaccustomed

light. The wooden houses, with their jutting stories and quaint gable-peaks; the doorsteps and thresholds, with the early grass springing up about them; the garden-plots, black with freshly turned earth; the wheel-track, little worn, and, even in the market-place, margined with green on either side;—all were visible, but with a singularity of aspect that seemed to give another moral interpretation to the things of this world than they had ever borne before. And there stood the minister, with his hand over his heart; and Hester Prynne, with the embroidered letter glimmering on her bosom; and little Pearl, herself a symbol, and the connecting link between those two. They stood in the noon of that strange and solemn splendor, as if it were the light that is to reveal all secrets, and the daybreak that shall unite all who belong to one another.

There was witchcraft in little Pearl's eyes, and her face, as she glanced upward at the minister, wore that naughty smile which made its expression frequently so elfish. She withdrew her hand from Mr. Dimmesdale's, and pointed across the street. But he clasped both his hands over his breast, and cast his eyes towards the zenith.

Nothing was more common, in those days, than to interpret all meteoric appearances, and other natural phenomena, that occurred with less regularity than the rise and set of sun and moon, as so many revelations from a supernatural source. Thus, a blazing spear, a sword of flame, a bow, or a sheaf of arrows, seen in the midnight sky, prefigured Indian warfare. Pestilence was known to have been foreboded by a shower of crimson light. We doubt whether any marked event, for good or evil, ever befell New England, from its settlement down to Revolutionary times, of which the inhabitants had not been previously warned by some spectacle of this nature. Not seldom, it had been seen by multitudes. Oftener, however, its credibility rested on the faith of some lonely eye-witness, who beheld the wonder through the colored, magnifying, and distorting medium of his imagination, and shaped it more distinctly in his after thought. It was, indeed, a majestic idea, that the destiny of nations should be revealed, in these awful hieroglyphics, on the cope of heaven. A scroll so wide might not be deemed too expansive for Providence to write a people's doom upon. The belief was a favorite one with our forefathers, as betokening that their infant commonwealth was under a celestial guardianship of peculiar intimacy and strictness. But what shall we say, when an individual discovers a revelation addressed to himself alone, on the same vast sheet of record! In such a case, it could only be the symptom of a highly disordered mental state, when a man, rendered morbidly self-contemplative by long, intense, and secret pain, had extended his egotism over the whole expanse of nature, until the firmament itself should appear no more than a fitting page for his soul's history and fate!

We impute it, therefore, solely to the disease in his own eye and heart, that the minister, looking upward to the zenith, beheld there the appearance of an immense letter,—the letter A,—marked out in lines of dull red light. Not but the meteor may have shown itself at that point, burning duskily through a veil of cloud; but with no such shape as his guilty imagination gave it; or, at least, with so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it.

There was a singular circumstance that characterized Mr. Dimmesdale's psychological state, at this moment. All the time that he gazed upward to the zenith, he was, nevertheless, perfectly aware that little Pearl was pointing her finger towards old Roger Chillingworth, who stood at no great distance from the scaffold. The minister appeared to see him, with the same glance that discerned the miraculous letter. To his features, as to all other objects, the meteoric light imparted a new expression; or it might well be that the physician was not careful then, as at all other times, to hide the malevolence with which he looked upon his victim. Certainly, if the meteor kindled up the sky, and disclosed the earth, with an awfulness that admonished Hester Prynne and the clergyman of the day of judgment, then might Roger Chillingworth have passed with them for the arch-fiend, standing there with a smile and scowl, to claim his own. So vivid was the expression, or so intense the minister's perception of it, that it seemed still to remain painted on the darkness, after the meteor had vanished, with an effect as if the street and all things else were at once annihilated.

"Who is that man, Hester?" gasped Mr. Dimmesdale, overcome with terror. "I shiver at him! Dost thou know the man? I hate him, Hester!"

She remembered her oath, and was silent.

"I tell thee, my soul shivers at him!" muttered the minister again. "Who is he? Who is he? Canst thou do nothing for me? I have a nameless horror of the man!"

"Minister," said little Pearl, "I can tell thee who he is!"

"Quickly, then, child!" said the minister, bending his ear close to her lips. "Quickly!—and as low as thou canst whisper."

Pearl mumbled [illegible] into his ear, that sounded, indeed, like human language, but was only such gibberish as children may be heard amusing

themselves with, by the hour together. At all events, if it involved any secret information in regard to old Roger Chillingworth, it was in a tongue unknown to the erudite clergyman, and did but increase the bewilderment of his mind. The elfish child then laughed aloud.

"Dost thou mock me now?" said the minister.

"Thou wast not bold!—thou wast not true!"—answered the child. "Thou wouldst not promise to take my hand, and mother's hand, to-morrow noontide."

"Worthy Sir," answered the physician, who had now advanced to the foot of the platform. "Pious Master Dimmesdale, can this be you? Well, well, indeed! We men of study, whose heads are in our books, have need to be straitly looked after! We dream in our waking moments, and walk in our sleep. Come, good Sir, and my dear friend, I pray you, let me lead you home!"

"How knewest thou that I was here?" asked the minister, fearfully.

"Verily, and in good faith," answered Roger Chillingworth, "I knew nothing of the matter. I had spent the better part of the night at the bedside of the worshipful Governor Winthrop, doing what my poor skill might to give him ease. He going home to a better world, I, likewise, was on my way homeward, when this strange light shone out. Come with me, I beseech you, Reverend Sir; else you will be poorly able to do Sabbath duty to-morrow. Aha! see now, how they trouble the brain,—these books!—these books! You should study less, good Sir, and take a little pastime; or these night-whimseys will grow upon you."

"I will go home with you," said Mr. Dimmesdale.

With a chill of despondency, like one awaking, all nerveless, from an ugly dream, he yielded himself to the physician, and was led away.

The next day, however, being the Sabbath, he preached a discourse which was held to be the richest and most powerful, and the most replete with heavenly influences, that had ever proceeded from his lips. Souls, it is said more souls than one, were brought to the truth by the efficacy of that sermon, and vowed within themselves to cherish a holy gratitude towards Mr. Dimmesdale throughout the long hereafter. But, as he came down the pulpit steps, the gray-bearded sexton met him, holding up a black glove, which the minister recognized as his own.

"It was found," said the sexton, "this morning, on the scaffold where evil-doers are set up to public shame. Satan dropped it there, I take it, intending a scurrilous jest against your reverence. But, indeed, he was blind and foolish, as he ever and always is. A pure hand needs no glove to cover it!"

"Thank you, my good friend," said the minister, gravely, but startled at heart; for, so confused was his remembrance, that he had almost brought himself to look at the events of the past night as visionary. "Yes, it seems to be my glove, indeed!"

"And, since Satan saw fit to steal it, your reverence must needs handle him without gloves, henceforward," remarked the old sexton, grimly smiling. "But did your reverence hear of the portent that was seen last night?—a great red letter in the sky,—the letter A, which we interpret to stand for Angel! For, as our good Governor Winthrop was made an angel this past night, it was doubtless held fit that there should be some notice thereof!"

"No," answered the minister, "I had not heard of it."

XIII

Another View of Hester

In her late singular interview with Mr. Dimmesdale, Hester Prynne was shocked at the condition to which she found the clergyman reduced. His nerve seemed absolutely destroyed. His moral force was abased into more than childish weakness. It grovelled helpless on the ground, even while his intellectual faculties retained their pristine strength, or had perhaps acquired a morbid energy, which disease only could have given them. With her knowledge of a train of circumstances hidden from all others, she could readily infer that, besides the legitimate action of his own conscience, a terrible machinery had been brought to bear, and was still operating, on Mr. Dimmesdale's well-being and repose. Knowing what this poor, fallen man had once been, her whole soul was moved by the shuddering terror with which he had appealed to her,—the outcast woman,—for support against his instinctively discovered enemy. She decided, moreover, that he had a right to her utmost aid. Little accustomed, in her long seclusion from society, to measure her ideas of right and wrong by any standard external to herself, Hester saw—or seemed to see—that there lay a responsibility upon her, in reference to the clergyman, which she owed to no other, nor to the whole world besides. The links that united her to the rest of human kind —links of flowers, or silk, or gold, or whatever the material—had all been broken Here was the iron link of mutual crime, which neither he nor she could break. Like all other ties, it brought along with it its [illegible].

Hester Prynne did not now occupy precisely the same position in which we beheld her during the earlier periods of her ignominy. Years had come and

gone. Pearl was now seven years old. Her mother, with the scarlet letter on her breast, glittering in its fantastic embroidery, had long been a familiar object to the townspeople. As is apt to be the case when a person stands out in any prominence before the community, and at the same time, interferes neither with public nor individual interests and convenience, a species of general regard had ultimately grown up in reference to Hester Prynne. It is to the credit of human nature, that, except where its selfishness is brought into play, it loves more readily than it hates. Hatred, by a gradual and quiet process, will often be transformed to love, unless the change be impeded by a continually new irritation of the original feeling of hostility. In this matter of Hester Prynne, there was neither irritation nor irksomeness. She never battled with the public, but submitted, uncomplainingly, to its worst usage; she made no claim upon it, in requital for what she suffered; she did not weigh upon its sympathies. Then, also, the blameless purity of her life during all these years in which she had been set apart to infamy, was reckoned largely in her favor. With nothing now to lose, in the sight of mankind, and with no hope, and seemingly no wish, of gaining anything, it could only be a genuine regard for virtue that had brought back the poor wanderer to its paths.

It was perceived, too, that while Hester never put forward even the humblest title to share in the world's privileges,—further than to breathe the common air, and earn daily bread for little Pearl and herself by the faithful labor of her hands,—she was quick to acknowledge her sisterhood with the race of man, whenever benefits were to be conferred. None so ready as she to give of her little substance to every demand of poverty; even though the bitter-hearted pauper threw back a gibe in requital of the food brought regularly to his door, or the garments wrought for him by the fingers that could have embroidered a monarch's robe. None so self-devoted as Hester, when pestilence stalked through the town. In all seasons of calamity, indeed, whether general or of individuals, the outcast of society at once found her place. She came, not as a guest, but as a rightful inmate, into the household that was darkened by trouble; as if its gloomy twilight were a medium in which she was entitled to hold intercourse with her fellow-creatures. There glimmered the embroidered letter, with comfort in its unearthly ray. Elsewhere the token of sin, it was the taper of the sick-chamber. It had even thrown its gleam, in the sufferer's hard extremity, across the verge of time. It had shown him where to set his foot, while the light of earth was fast becoming dim, and ere the light of futurity could reach him. In such emergencies, Hester's nature showed itself warm and rich; a well-spring of human tenderness, unfailing to every real demand, and inexhaustible by the largest. Her breast, with its badge of shame, was but the softer pillow for the head that needed one. She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked forward to this result. The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her,—so much power to do, and power to sympathize,—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength.

It was only the darkened house that could contain her. When sunshine came again, she was not there. Her shadow had faded across the threshold. The helpful inmate had departed without one backward glance to gather up the meed of gratitude, if any were in the hearts of those whom she had served so zealously. Meeting them in the street, she never raised her head to receive their greeting. If they were resolute to accost her, she laid her finger on the scarlet letter, and passed on. This might be pride, but was so like humility, that it produced all the softening influence of the latter quality on the public mind. The public is despotic in its temper; it is capable of denying common justice, when too strenuously demanded as a right; but quite as frequently it awards more than justice, when the appeal is made, as despots love to have it made, entirely to its generosity. Interpreting Hester Prynne's deportment as an appeal of this nature, society was inclined to show its former victim a more benign countenance than she cared to be favored with, or, perchance, than she deserved.

The rulers, and the wise and learned men of the community, were longer in acknowledging the influence of Hester's good qualities than the people. The prejudices which they shared in common with the latter were fortified in themselves by an iron framework of reasoning, that made it a far tougher labor to expel them. Day by day, nevertheless, their sour and rigid wrinkles were relaxing into something which, in the due course of years, might grow to be an expression of almost benevolence. Thus it was with the men of rank, on whom their eminent position imposed the guardianship of the public morals. Individuals in private life, meanwhile, had quite forgiven Hester Prynne for her frailty; nay, more, they had begun to look upon the scarlet letter as the token, not of that one sin, for which she had borne so long and dreary a penance, but of her many good deeds

since. "Do you see that woman with the embroidered badge?" they would say to strangers. "It is our Hester,—the town's own Hester, who is so kind to the poor, so helpful to the sick, so comfortable to the afflicted!" Then, it is true, the propensity of human nature to tell the very worst of itself, when embodied in the person of another, would constrain them to whisper the black scandal of bygone years. It was none the less a fact, however, that, in the eyes of the very men who spoke thus, the scarlet letter had the effect of the cross on a nun's bosom. It imparted to the wearer a kind of sacredness, which enabled her to walk securely amid all peril. Had she fallen among thieves, it would have kept her safe. It was reported, and believed by many, that an Indian had drawn his arrow against the badge, and that the missile struck it, but fell harmless to the ground.

The effect of the symbol—or, rather, of the position in respect to society that was indicated by it—on the mind of Hester Prynne herself, was powerful and peculiar. All the light and graceful foliage of her character had been withered up by this red-hot brand, and had long ago fallen away, leaving a bare and harsh outline, which might have been repulsive, had she possessed friends or companions to be repelled by it. Even the attractiveness of her person had undergone a similar change. It might be partly owing to the studied austerity of her dress, and partly to the lack of demonstration in her manners. It was a sad transformation, too, that her rich and luxuriant hair had either been cut off, or was so completely hidden by a cap, that not a shining lock of it ever once gushed into the sunshine. It was due in part to all these causes, but still more to something else, that there seemed to be no longer anything in Hester's face for Love to dwell upon; nothing in Hester's form, though majestic and statue-like, that Passion would ever dream of clasping in its embrace; nothing in Hester's bosom, to make it ever again the pillow of Affection. Some attribute had departed from her, the permanence of which had been essential to keep her a woman. Such is frequently the fate, and such the stern development of the feminine character and person, when the woman has encountered, and lived through, an experience of peculiar severity. If she be all tenderness, she will die. If she survive, the tenderness will either be crushed out of her, or—and the outward semblance is the same—crushed so deeply into her heart that it can never show itself more. The latter is perhaps the truest theory. She who has once been woman, and ceased to be so, might at any moment become a woman again if there were only the magic touch to effect the transfiguration. We will see whether Hester Prynne were ever afterwards so touched, and so transfigured.

Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance, that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling, to thought. Standing alone in the world,—alone, as to any dependence on society, and with little Pearl to be guided and protected,—alone, and hopeless of retrieving her position, even had she not scorned to consider it desirable,—she cast away the fragments of a broken chain. The world's law was no law for her mind. It was an age in which the human intellect, newly emancipated, had taken a more active and a wider range than for many centuries before. Men of the sword had overthrown nobles and kings. Men bolder than these had overthrown and rearranged—not actually, but within the sphere of theory, which was their most real abode—the whole system of ancient prejudice, wherewith was linked much of ancient principle. Hester Prynne imbibed this spirit. She assumed a freedom of speculation, then common enough on the other side of the Atlantic, but which our forefathers, had they known it, would have held to be a deadlier crime than that stigmatized by the scarlet letter. In her lonesome cottage, by the sea-shore, thoughts visited her, such as dared to enter no other dwelling in New England; shadowy guests, that would have been as perilous as demons to their entertainer, could they have been seen so much as knocking at her door.

It is remarkable, that persons who speculate the most boldly often conform with the most perfect quietude to the external regulations of society. The thought suffices them, without investing itself in the flesh and blood of action. So it seemed to be with Hester. Yet, had little Pearl never come to her from the spiritual world, it might have been far otherwise. Then, she might have come down to us in history, hand in hand with Ann Hutchinson, as the foundress of a religious sect. She might, in one of her phases, have been a prophetess. She might, and not improbably would, have suffered death from the stern tribunals of the period, for attempting to undermine the foundations of the Puritan establishment. But, in the education of her child, the mother's enthusiasm of thought had something to wreak itself upon. Providence, in the person of this little girl, had assigned to Hester's charge the germ and blossom of womanhood, to be cherished and developed amid a host of difficulties. Everything was against her. The world was hostile. The child's own nature had something wrong in it, which continually betokened that she had been born amiss,—the effluence of her mother's lawless passion,—and often impelled Hester

to ask, in bitterness of heart, whether it were for ill or good that the poor little creature had been born at all.

Indeed, the same dark question often rose into her mind, with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting, even to the happiest among them? As concerned her own individual existence, she had long ago decided in the negative, and dismissed the point as settled. A tendency to speculation, though it may keep woman quiet, as it does man, yet makes her sad. She discerns, it may be, such a hopeless task before her. As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position. Finally, all other difficulties being obviated, woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change; in which, perhaps, the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated. A woman never overcomes these problems by any exercise of thought. They are not to be solved, or only in one way. If her heart chance to become uppermost, they vanish. Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind; now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm. There was wild and ghastly scenery all around her, and a home and comfort nowhere. At times, a fearful doubt strove to possess her soul, whether it were not better to send Pearl at once to heaven, and go herself to such futurity as Eternal Justice should provide.

The scarlet letter had not done its office.

Now, however, her interview with the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, on the night of his vigil, had given her a new theme of reflection, and held up to her an object that appeared worthy of any exertion and sacrifice for its attainment. She had witnessed the intense misery beneath which the minister struggled, or, to speak more accurately, had ceased to struggle. She saw that he stood on the verge of lunacy, if he had not already stepped across it. It was impossible to doubt, that, whatever painful efficacy there might be in the secret sting of remorse, a deadlier venom had been infused into it by the hand that proffered relief. A secret enemy had been continually by his side, under the semblance of a friend and helper, and had availed himself of the opportunities thus afforded for tampering with the delicate springs of Mr. Dimmesdale's nature. Hester could not but ask herself, whether there had not originally been a defect of truth, courage, and loyalty, on her own part, in allowing the minister to be thrown into a position where so much evil was to be foreboded, and nothing auspicious to be hoped. Her only justification lay in the fact, that she had been able to discern no method of rescuing him from a blacker ruin than had overwhelmed herself, except by acquiescing in Roger Chillingworth's scheme of disguise. Under that impulse, she had made her choice, and had chosen, as it now appeared, the more wretched alternative of the two. She determined to redeem her error, so far as it might yet be possible. Strengthened by years of hard and solemn trial, she felt herself no longer so inadequate to cope with Roger Chillingworth as on that night, abased by sin, and half maddened by the ignominy that was still new, when they had talked together in the prison-chamber. She had climbed her way, since then, to a higher point. The old man, on the other hand, had brought himself nearer to her level, or perhaps below it, by the revenge which he had stooped for.

In fine, Hester Prynne resolved to meet her former husband, and do what might be in her power for the rescue of the victim on whom he had so evidently set his gripe. The occasion was not long to seek. One afternoon, walking with Pearl in a retired part of the peninsula, she beheld the old physician, with a basket on one arm, and a staff in the other hand, stooping along the ground, in quest of roots and herbs to concoct his medicines withal.

XIV

Hester and the Physician

HESTER bade little Pearl run down to the margin of the water, and play with the shells and tangled sea-weed, until she should have talked awhile with yonder gatherer of herbs. So the child flew away like a bird, and, making bare her small white feet, went pattering along the moist margin of the sea. Here and there she came to a full stop, and peeped curiously into a pool, left by the retiring tide as a mirror for Pearl to see her face in. Forth peeped at her, out of the pool, with dark, glistening curls around her head, and an elf-smile in her eyes, the image of a little maid, whom Pearl, having no other playmate, invited to take her hand, and run a race with her. But the visionary little maid, on her part, beckoned likewise, as if to say,—"This is a better place! Come thou into the pool!" And Pearl, stepping in, mid-leg deep, beheld her own white feet at the bottom; while, out of a still lower depth, came

the gleam of a kind of fragmentary smile, floating to and fro in the agitated water.

Meanwhile, her mother had accosted the physician.

"I would speak a word with you," said she,—"a word that concerns us much."

"Aha! and is it Mistress Hester that has a word for old Roger Chillingworth?" answered he, raising himself from his stooping posture. "With all my heart! Why, Mistress, I hear good tidings of you on all hands! No longer ago than yester-eve, a magistrate, a wise and godly man, was discoursing of your affairs, Mistress Hester, and whispered me that there had been question concerning you in the council. It was debated whether or no, with safety to the common weal, yonder scarlet letter might be taken off your bosom. On my life, Hester, I made my entreaty to the worshipful magistrate that it might be done forthwith!"

"It lies not in the pleasure of the magistrate to take off this badge," calmly replied Hester. "Were I worthy to be quit of it, it would fall away of its own nature, or be transformed into something that should speak a different purport."

"Nay, then, wear it, if it suit you better," rejoined he. "A woman must needs follow her own fancy, touching the adornment of her person. The letter is gayly embroidered, and shows right bravely on your bosom!"

All this while, Hester had been looking steadily at the old man, and was shocked, as well as wonder-smitten, to discern what a change had been wrought upon him within the past seven years. It was not so much that he had grown older; for though the traces of advancing life were visible, he bore his age well, and seemed to retain a wiry vigor and alertness. But the former aspect of an intellectual and studious man, calm and quiet, which was what she best remembered in him, had altogether vanished, and been succeeded by an eager, searching, almost fierce, yet carefully guarded look. It seemed to be his wish and purpose to mask this expression with a smile; but the latter played him false, and flickered over his visage so derisively, that the spectator could see his blackness all the better for it. Ever and anon, too, there came a glare of red light out of his eyes; as if the old man's soul were on fire, and kept on smouldering duskily within his breast, until, by some casual puff of passion, it was blown into a momentary flame. This he repressed, as speedily as possible, and strove to look as if nothing of the kind had happened.

In a word, old Roger Chillingworth was a striking evidence of man's faculty of transforming himself into a devil, if he will only, for a reasonable space of time, undertake a devil's office. This unhappy person had effected such a transformation, by devoting himself, for seven years, to the constant analysis of a heart full of torture, and deriving his enjoyment thence, and adding fuel to those fiery tortures which he analyzed and gloated over.

The scarlet letter burned on Hester Prynne's bosom. Here was another ruin, the responsibility of which came partly home to her.

"What see you in my face," asked the physician, "that you look at it so earnestly?"

"Something that would make me weep, if there were any tears bitter enough for it," answered she. "But let it pass! It is of yonder miserable man that I would speak."

"And what of him?" cried Roger Chillingworth, eagerly, as if he loved the topic, and were glad of an opportunity to discuss it with the only person of whom he could make a confidant. "Not to hide the truth, Mistress Hester, my thoughts happen just now to be busy with the gentleman. So speak freely; and I will make answer."

"When we last spake together," said Hester, "now seven years ago, it was your pleasure to extort a promise of secrecy, as touching the former relation betwixt yourself and me. As the life and good fame of yonder man were in your hands, there seemed no choice to me, save to be silent, in accordance with your behest. Yet it was not without heavy misgivings that I thus bound myself; for, having cast off all duty towards other human beings, there remained a duty towards him; and something whispered me that I was betraying it, in pledging myself to keep your counsel. Since that day, no man is so near to him as you. You tread behind his every footstep. You are beside him, sleeping and waking. You search his thoughts. You burrow and rankle in his heart! Your clutch is on his life, and you cause him to die daily a living death; and still he knows you not. In permitting this, I have surely acted a false part by the only man to whom the power was left me to be true!"

"What choice had you?" asked Roger Chilling worth. "My finger, pointed at this man, would have hurled him from his pulpit into a dungeon,—thence, peradventure, to the gallows!"

"It had been better so!" said Hester Prynne.

"What evil have I done the man?" asked Roger Chillingworth again. "I tell thee, Hester Prynne, the richest fee that ever physician earned from monarch could not have bought such care as I have wasted on this miserable priest! But for my aid, his life would have burned away in torments, within the first two years after the perpetration of his crime and thine. For, Hester, his spirit lacked the strength

that could have borne up, as thine has, beneath a burden like thy scarlet letter. O, I could reveal a goodly secret! But enough! What art can do, I have exhausted on him. That he now breathes, and creeps about on earth, is owing all to me!"

"Better he had died at once!" said Hester Prynne.

"Yea, woman, thou sayest truly!" cried old Roger Chillingworth, letting the lurid fire of his heart blaze out before her eyes. "Better had he died at once! Never did mortal suffer what this man has suffered. And all, all, in the sight of his worst enemy! He has been conscious of me. He has felt an influence dwelling always upon him like a curse. He knew, by some spiritual sense,—for the Creator never made another being so sensitive as this,—he knew that no friendly hand was pulling at his heart-strings, and that an eye was looking curiously into him, which sought only evil, and found it. But he knew not that the eye and hand were mine! With the superstition common to his brotherhood, he fancied himself given over to a fiend, to be tortured with frightful dreams, and desperate thoughts, the sting of remorse, and despair of pardon; as a foretaste of what awaits him beyond the grave. But it was the constant shadow of my presence!—the closest propinquity of the man whom he had most vilely wronged!—and who had grown to exist only by this perpetual poison of the direst revenge! Yea, indeed!—he did not err!—there was a fiend at his elbow! A mortal man, with once a human heart, has become a fiend for his especial torment!"

The unfortunate physician, while uttering these words, lifted his hands with a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of his own image in a glass. It was one of those moments—which sometimes occur only at the interval of years—when a man's moral aspect is faithfully revealed to his mind's eye. Not improbably, he had never before viewed himself as he did now.

"Hast thou not tortured him enough?" said Hester, noticing the old man's look. "Has he not paid thee all?"

"No!—no!— He has but increased the debt!" answered the physician; and as he proceeded, his manner lost its fiercer characteristics, and subsided into gloom. "Dost thou remember me, Hester, as I was nine years agone? Even then, I was in the autumn of my days, nor was it the early autumn. But all my life had been made up of earnest, studious, thoughtful, quiet years, bestowed faithfully for the increase of mine own knowledge, and faithfully, too, though this latter object was but casual to the other,—faithfully for the advancement of human welfare. No life had been more peaceful and innocent than mine; few lives so rich with benefits conferred. Dost thou remember me? Was I not, though you might deem me cold, nevertheless a man thoughtful for others, craving little for himself,—kind, true, just, and of constant, if not warm affections? Was I not all this?"

"All this, and more," said Hester.

"And what am I now?" demanded he, looking into her face, and permitting the whole evil within him to be written on his features. "I have already told thee what I am! A fiend! Who made me so?"

"It was myself!" cried Hester, shuddering. "It was I, not less than he. Why hast thou not avenged thyself on me?"

"I have left thee to the scarlet letter," replied Roger Chillingworth. "If that have not avenged me, I can do no more!"

He laid his finger on it, with a smile.

"It has avenged thee!" answered Hester Prynne.

"I judged no less," said the physician. "And now, what wouldst thou with me touching this man?"

"I must reveal the secret," answered Hester, firmly. "He must discern thee in thy true character. What may be the result, I know not. But this long debt of confidence, due from me to him, whose bane and ruin I have been, shall at length be paid. So far as concerns the overthrow or preservation of his fair fame and his earthly state, and perchance his life, he is in thy hands. Nor do I,—whom the scarlet letter has disciplined to truth, though it be the truth of red-hot iron, entering into the soul,—nor do I perceive such advantage in his living any longer a life of ghastly emptiness, that I shall stoop to implore thy mercy. Do with him as thou wilt. There is no good for him,—no good for me,—no good for thee! There is no good for little Pearl! There is no path to guide us out of this dismal maze!"

"Woman, I could wellnigh pity thee!" said Roger Chillingworth, unable to restrain a thrill of admiration too; for there was a quality almost majestic in the despair which she expressed. "Thou hadst great elements. Peradventure, hadst thou met earlier with a better love than mine, this evil had not been. I pity thee, for the good that has been wasted in thy nature!"

"And I thee," answered Hester Prynne, "for the hatred that has transformed a wise and just man to a fiend! Wilt thou yet purge it out of thee, and be once more human? If not for his sake, then doubly for thine own! Forgive, and leave his further retribution to the Power that claims it! I said, but now, that there could be no good event for him, or thee, or me, who are here wandering together in this gloomy maze of evil, and stumbling, at every step, over the

guilt wherewith we have strewn our path. It is not so! There might be good for thee, and thee alone, since thou hast been deeply wronged, and hast it at thy will to pardon. Wilt thou give up that only privilege? Wilt thou reject that priceless benefit?"

"Peace, Hester, peace!" replied the old man, with gloomy sternness. "It is not granted me to pardon. I have no such power as thou tellest me of. My old faith, long forgotten, comes back to me, and explains all that we do, and all we suffer. By thy first step awry thou didst plant the germ of evil; but since that moment, it has all been a dark necessity. Ye that have wronged me are not sinful, save in a kind of typical illusion; neither am I fiend-like, who have snatched a fiend's office from his hands. It is our fate. Let the black flower blossom as it may! Now go thy ways, and deal as thou wilt with yonder man."

He waved his hand, and betook himself again to his employment of gathering herbs.

XV

Hester and Pearl

So Roger Chillingworth—a deformed old figure, with a face that haunted men's memories longer than they liked—took leave of Hester Prynne, and went stooping away along the earth. He gathered here and there an herb, or grubbed up a root, and put it into the basket on his arm. His gray beard almost touched the ground, as he crept onward. Hester gazed after him a little while, looking with a half-fantastic curiosity to see whether the tender grass of early spring would not be blighted beneath him, and show the wavering track of his footsteps, sear and brown, across its cheerful verdure. She wondered what sort of herbs they were, which the old man was so sedulous to gather. Would not the earth, quickened to an evil purpose by the sympathy of his eye, greet him with poisonous shrubs, of species hitherto unknown, that would start up under his fingers? Or might it suffice him, that every wholesome growth should be converted into something deleterious and malignant at his touch? Did the sun, which shone so brightly everywhere else, really fall upon him? Or was there, as it rather seemed, a circle of ominous shadow moving along with his deformity, whichever way he turned himself? And whither was he now going? Would he not suddenly sink into the earth, leaving a barren and blasted spot, where, in due course of time, would be seen deadly nightshade, dogwood, henbane, and whatever else of vegetable wickedness the climate could produce, all flourishing with hideous luxuriance? Or would he spread bat's wings and flee away, looking so much the uglier, the higher he rose towards heaven?

"Be it sin or no," said Hester Prynne, bitterly, as she still gazed after him, "I hate the man!"

She upbraided herself for the sentiment, but could not overcome or lessen it. Attempting to do so, she thought of those long-past days, in a distant land, when he used to emerge at eventide from the seclusion of his study, and sit down in the firelight of their home, and in the light of her nuptial smile. He needed to bask himself in that smile, he said, in order that the chill of so many lonely hours among his books might be taken off the scholar's heart. Such scenes had once appeared not otherwise than happy, but now, as viewed through the dismal medium of her subsequent life, they classed themselves among her ugliest remembrances. She marvelled how such scenes could have been! She marvelled how she could ever have been wrought upon to marry him! She deemed it her crime most to be repented of, that she had ever endured, and reciprocated, the lukewarm grasp of his hand, and had suffered the smile of her lips and eyes to mingle and melt into his own. And it seemed a fouler offence committed by Roger Chillingworth, than any which had since been done him, that, in the time when her heart knew no better, he had persuaded her to fancy herself happy by his side.

"Yes, I hate him!" repeated Hester, more bitterly than before. "He betrayed me! He has done me worse wrong than I did him!"

Let men tremble to win the hand of woman, unless they win along with it the utmost passion of her heart! Else it may be their miserable fortune, as it was Roger Chillingworth's, when some mightier touch than their own may have awakened all her sensibilities, to be reproached even for the calm content, the marble image of happiness, which they will have imposed upon her as the warm reality. But Hester ought long ago to have done with this injustice. What did it betoken? Had seven long years, under the torture of the scarlet letter, inflicted so much of misery, and wrought out no repentance?

The emotions of that brief space, while she stood gazing after the crooked figure of old Roger Chillingworth, threw a dark light on Hester's state of mind, revealing much that she might not otherwise have acknowledged to herself.

He being gone, she summoned back her child.

"Pearl! Little Pearl! Where are you?"

Pearl, whose activity of spirit never flagged, had been at no loss for amusement while her mother talked with the old gatherer of herbs. At first, as already told, she had flirted fancifully with her own

image in a pool of water, beckoning the phantom forth, and—as it declined to venture—seeking a passage for herself into its sphere of impalpable earth and unattainable sky. Soon finding, however, that either she or the image was unreal, she turned elsewere for better pastime. She made little boats out of birch-bark, and freighted them with snail-shells, and sent out more ventures on the mighty deep than any merchant in New England; but the larger part of them foundered near the shore. She seized a live horseshoe by the tail, and made prize of several five-fingers, and laid out a jelly-fish to melt in the warm sun. Then she took up the white foam, that streaked the line of the [illegible] tide, and threw it upon the breeze, scampering after it, with winged footsteps, to catch the great snow-flakes ere they fell. Perceiving a flock of beach-birds, that fed and fluttered along the shore, the naughty child picked up her apron full of pebbles, and, creeping from rock to rock after these small sea-fowl, displayed remarkable dexterity in pelting them. One little gray bird, with a white breast, Pearl was almost sure, had been hit by a pebble, and fluttered away with a broken wing. But then the elf-child sighed, and gave up her sport; because it grieved her to have done harm to a little being that was as wild as the sea-breeze, or as wild as Pearl herself.

Her final employment was to gather sea-weed, of various kinds, and make herself a scarf, or mantle, and a head-dress, and thus assume the aspect of a little mermaid. She inherited her mother's gift for devising drapery and costume. As the last touch to her mermaid's garb, Pearl took some eel-grass, and imitated, as best she could, on her own bosom, the decoration with which she was so familiar on her mother's. A letter,—the letter A,—but freshly green, instead of scarlet! The child bent her chin upon her breast, and contemplated this device with strange interest; even as if the one only thing for which she had been sent into the world was to make out its hidden import.

"I wonder if mother will ask me what it means!" thought Pearl.

Just then, she heard her mother's voice, and flitting along as lightly as one of the little sea-birds, appeared before Hester Prynne, dancing, laughing, and pointing her finger to the ornament upon her bosom.

"My little Pearl," said Hester, after a moment's silence, "the green letter, and on thy childish bosom, has no purport. But dost thou know, my child, what this letter means which thy mother is doomed to wear?"

"Yes, mother," said the child. "It is the great letter A. Thou hast taught me in the horn-book."

Hester looked steadily into her little face; but, though there was that singular expression which she had so often remarked in her black eyes, she could not satisfy herself whether Pearl really attached any meaning to the symbol. She felt a morbid desire to ascertain the point.

"Dost thou know, child, wherefore thy mother wears this letter?"

"Truly do I!" answered Pearl, looking brightly into her mother's face. "It is for the same reason that the minister keeps his hand over his heart!"

"And what reason is that?" asked Hester, half smiling at the absurd incongruity of the child's observation; but, on second thoughts, turning pale. "What has the letter to do with any heart, save mine?"

"Nay, mother, I have told all I know," said Pearl, more seriously than she was wont to speak. "Ask yonder old man whom thou hast been talking with! It may be he can tell. But in good earnest now, mother dear, what does this scarlet letter mean?—and why dost thou wear it on thy bosom?—and why does the minister keep his hand over his heart?"

She took her mother's hand in both her own, and gazed into her eyes with an earnestness that was seldom seen in her wild and capricious character. The thought occurred to Hester, that the child might really be seeking to approach her with childlike confidence, and doing what she could, and as intelligently as she knew how, to establish a meeting-point of sympathy. It showed Pearl in an unwonted aspect. Heretofore, the mother, while loving her child with the intensity of a sole affection, had schooled herself to hope for little other return than the waywardness of an April breeze; which spends its time in airy sport, and has its gusts of inexplicable passion, and is petulant in its best of moods, and chills oftener than caresses you, when you take it to your bosom; in requital of which misdemeanors, it will sometimes, of its own vague purpose, kiss your cheek with a kind of doubtful tenderness, and play gently with your hair, and then be gone about its other idle business, leaving a dreamy pleasure at your heart. And this, moreover, was a mother's estimate of the child's disposition. Any other observer might have seen few but unamiable traits, and have given them a far darker coloring. But now the idea came strongly into Hester's mind, that Pearl, with her remarkable precocity and acuteness, might already have approached the age when she could be made a friend, and intrusted with as much of her mother's sorrows as could be imparted, without irreverence either to the parent or the child. In the little chaos of Pearl's character there might be seen emerging—and could

have been, from the very first—the steadfast principles of an unflinching courage,—an uncontrollable will,—a sturdy pride, which might be disciplined into self-respect,—and a bitter scorn of many things, which, when examined, might be found to have the taint of falsehood in them. She possessed affections, too, though hitherto acrid and disagreeable, as are the richest flavors of unripe fruit. With all these sterling attributes, thought Hester, the evil which she inherited from her mother must be great indeed, if a noble woman do not grow out of this elfish child.

Pearl's inevitable tendency to hover about the enigma of the scarlet letter seemed an innate quality of her being. From the earliest epoch of her conscious life, she had entered upon this as her appointed mission. Hester had often fancied that Providence had a design of justice and retribution, in endowing the child with this marked propensity; but never, until now, had she bethought herself to ask, whether, linked with that design, there might not likewise be a purpose of mercy and beneficence. If little Pearl were entertained with faith and trust, as a spirit messenger no less than an earthly child, might it not be her errand to soothe away the sorrow that lay cold in her mother's heart, and converted it into a tomb?—and to help her to overcome the passion, once so wild, and even yet neither dead nor asleep, but only imprisoned within the same tomb-like heart?

Such were some of the thoughts that now stirred in Hester's mind, with as much vivacity of impression as if they had actually been whispered into her ear. And there was little Pearl, all this while, holding her mother's hand in both her own, and turning her face upward, while she put these searching questions, once, and again, and still a third time.

"What does the letter mean, mother?—and why dost thou wear it?—and why does the minister keep his hand over his heart?"

"What shall I say?" thought Hester to herself. "No! If this be the price of the child's sympathy, I cannot pay it."

Then she spoke aloud.

"Silly Pearl," said she, "what questions are these? There are many things in this world that a child must not ask about. What know I of the minister's heart? And as for the scarlet letter, I wear it for the sake of its gold thread."

In all the seven bygone years, Hester Prynne had never before been false to the symbol on her bosom. It may be that it was the talisman of a stern and severe, but yet a guardian spirit, who now forsook her; as recognizing that, in spite of his strict watch over her heart, some new evil had crept into it, or some old one had never been expelled. As for little Pearl, the earnestness soon passed out of her face.

But the child did not see fit to let the matter drop. Two or three times, as her mother and she went homeward, and as often at supper-time, and while Hester was putting her to bed, and once after she seemed to be fairly asleep, Pearl looked up, with mischief gleaming in her black eyes.

"Mother," said she, "what does the scarlet letter mean?"

And the next morning, the first indication the child gave of being awake was by popping up her head from the pillow, and making that other inquiry, which she had so unaccountably connected with her . . . about the scarlet letter:——

"Mother!—Mother!—Why does the minister keep his hand over his heart?"

"Hold thy tongue, naughty child!" answered her mother, with an asperity that she had never permitted to herself before. "Do not tease me; else I shall shut thee into the dark closet!"

XVI

A Forest Walk

HESTER PRYNNE remained constant in her resolve to make known to Mr. Dimmesdale, at whatever risk of present pain or ulterior consequences, the true character of the man who had crept into his intimacy. For several days, however, she vainly sought an opportunity of addressing him in some of the meditative walks which she knew him to be in the habit of taking, along the shores of the peninsula, or on the wooded hills of the neighboring country. There would have been no scandal, indeed, nor peril to the holy whiteness of the clergyman's good fame, had she visited him in his own study; where many a penitent, ere now, had confessed sins of perhaps as deep a dye as the one betokened by the scarlet letter. But, partly that she dreaded the secret or undisguised interference of old Roger Chillingworth, and partly that her conscious heart imputed suspicion where none could have been felt, and partly that both the minister and she would need the whole wide world to breathe in, while they talked together,—for all these reasons, Hester never thought of meeting him in any narrower privacy than beneath the open sky.

At last, while . . . in a sick-chamber, whither the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale had been summoned to make a prayer, she learnt that he had gone, the day before, to visit the Apostle Eliot, among his Indian converts. He would probably return, by a certain hour, in the afternoon of the morrow. Betimes, therefore, the next day, Hester took little

Pearl,—who was necessarily the companion of all her mother's expeditions, however inconvenient her presence,—and set forth.

The road, after the two wayfarers had crossed from the peninsula to the mainland, was no other than a footpath. It straggled onward into the mystery of the primeval forest. This hemmed it in so narrowly, and stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering. The day was chill and sombre. Overhead was a gray expanse of cloud, slightly stirred, however, by a breeze; so that a gleam of flickering sunshine might now and then be seen at its solitary play along the path. This flitting cheerfulness was always at the farther extremity of some long vista through the forest. The sportive sunlight—feebly sportive, at best, in the predominant pensiveness of the day and scene—withdrew itself as they came nigh, and left the spots where it had danced the drearier, because they had hoped to find them bright.

"Mother," said little Pearl, "the sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom. Now, see! There it is, playing, a good way off. Stand you here, and let me run and catch it. I am but a child. It will not flee from me; for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!"

"Nor ever will, my child, I hope," said Hester.

"And why not, mother?" asked Pearl, stopping short, just at the beginning of her race. "Will not it come of its own accord, when I am a woman grown?"

"Run away, child," answered her mother, "and catch the sunshine! It will soon be gone."

Pearl set forth, at a great pace, and, as Hester smiled to perceive, did actually catch the sunshine, and stood laughing in the midst of it, all brightened by its splendor, and scintillating with the vivacity excited by rapid motion. The light lingered about the lonely child, as if glad of such a playmate, until her mother had drawn almost nigh enough to step into the magic circle too.

"It will go now," said Pearl, shaking her head.

"See!" answered Hester, smiling. "Now I can stretch out my hand, and grasp some of it."

As she attempted to do so, the sunshine vanished; or, to judge from the bright expression that was dancing on Pearl's features, her mother could have fancied that the child had absorbed it into herself, and would give it forth again, with a gleam about her path, as they should plunge into some gloomier shade. There was no other attribute that so much impressed her with a sense of new and untransmitted vigor in Pearl's nature, as this never-failing vivacity of spirits; she had not the disease of sadness, which almost all children, in these latter days, inherit, with the scrofula, from the troubles of their ancestors. Perhaps this too was a disease, and but the reflex of the wild energy with which Hester had fought against her sorrows, before Pearl's birth. It was certainly a doubtful charm, imparting a hard, metallic lustre to the child's character. She wanted—what some people want throughout life—a grief that should deeply touch her, and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy. But there was time enough yet for little Pearl.

"Come, my child!" said Hester, looking about her from the spot where Pearl had stood still in the sunshine. "We will sit down a little way within the wood, and rest ourselves."

"I am not aweary, mother," replied the little girl. "But you may sit down, if you will tell me a story meanwhile."

"A story, child!" said Hester. "And about what?"

"O, a story about the Black Man," answered Pearl, taking hold of her mother's gown, and looking up, half earnestly, half mischievously, into her face. "How he haunts this forest, and carries a book with him,—a big, heavy book, with iron clasps; and how this ugly Black Man offers his book and an iron pen to everybody that meets him here among the trees; and they are to write their names with their own blood. And then he sets his mark on their bosoms! Didst thou ever meet the Black Man, mother?"

"And who told you this story, Pearl?" asked her mother, recognizing a common superstition of the period.

"It was the old dame in the chimney-corner, at the house where you watched last night," said the child. "But she fancied me asleep while she was talking of it. She said that a thousand and a thousand people had met him here, and had written in his book, and have his mark on them. And that ugly-tempered lady, old Mistress Hibbins, was one. And, mother, the old dame said that this scarlet letter was the Black Man's mark on thee, and that it glows like a red flame when thou meetest him at midnight, here in the dark wood. Is it true, mother? And dost thou go to meet him in the night-time?"

"Didst thou ever awake, and find thy mother gone?" asked Hester.

"Not that I remember," said the child. "If thou fearest to leave me in our cottage, thou mightest take me along with thee. I would very gladly go! But, mother, tell me now! Is there such a Black

Man? And didst thou ever meet him? And is this his mark?"

"Wilt thou let me be at peace, if I once tell thee?" asked her mother.

"Yes, if thou tellest me all," answered Pearl.

"Once in my life I met the Black Man!" said her mother. "This scarlet letter is his mark!"

Thus conversing, they entered sufficiently deep into the wood to secure themselves from the observation of any casual passenger along the forest track. Here they sat down on a luxuriant heap of moss; which, at some epoch of the preceding century, had been a gigantic pine, with its roots and trunk in the darksome shade, and its head aloft in the upper atmosphere. It was a little dell were they had seated themselves, with a leaf-strewn bank rising gently on either side, and a brook flowing through the midst, over a bed of fallen and drowned leaves. The trees impending over it had flung down great branches, from time to time, which choked up the current and compelled it to form eddies and black depths at some points; while, in its swifter and livelier passages, there appeared a channel-way of pebbles, and brown, sparkling sand. Letting the eyes follow along the course of the stream, they could catch the reflected light from its water, at some short distance within the forest, but soon lost all traces of it amid the bewilderment of tree-trunks and underbrush, and here and there a huge rock covered over with gray lichens. All these giant trees and bowlders of granite seemed intent on making a mystery of the course of this small brook; fearing, perhaps, that, with its never-ceasing loquacity, it should whisper tales out of the heart of the old forest whence it flowed, or mirror its revelations on the smooth surface of a pool. Continually, indeed, as it stole onward, the streamlet kept up a babble, kind, quiet, soothing, but melancholy, like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy without playfulness, and knew not how to be merry among sad acquaintance and events of sombre hue.

"O brook! O foolish and tiresome little brook!" cried Pearl, after listening awhile to its talk. "Why art thou so sad? Pluck up a spirit, and do not be all the time sighing and murmuring!"

But the brook, in the course of its little lifetime among the forest-trees, had gone through so solemn an experience that it could not help talking about it, and seemed to have nothing else to say. Pearl resembled the brook, inasmuch as the current of her life gushed from a well-spring as mysterious, and had flowed through scenes shadowed as heavily with gloom. But, unlike the little stream, she danced and sparkled, and prattled airily along her course.

"What does this sad little brook say, mother?" inquired she.

"If thou hadst a sorrow of thine own, the brook might tell thee of it," answered her mother, "even as it is telling me of mine! But now, Pearl, I hear a footstep along the path, and the noise of one putting aside the branches. I would have thee betake thyself to play, and leave me to speak with him that comes yonder."

"Is it the Black Man?" asked Pearl.

"Wilt thou go and play, child?" repeated her mother. "But do not stray far into the wood. And take heed that thou come at my first call."

"Yes, mother," answered Pearl. "But if it be the Black Man, wilt thou not let me stay a moment, and look at him, with his big book under his arm?"

"Go, silly child!" said her mother, impatiently. "It is no Black Man! Thou canst see him now, through the trees. It is the minister!"

"And so it is!" said the child. "And, mother, he has his hand over his heart! Is it because, when the minister wrote his name in the book, the Black Man set his mark in that place? But why does he not wear it outside his bosom, as thou dost, mother?"

"Go now, child, and thou shalt tease me as thou wilt another time," cried Hester Prynne. "But do not stray far. Keep where thou canst hear the babble of the brook."

The child went singing away, following up the current of the brook, and striving to mingle a more lightsome cadence with its melancholy voice. But the little stream would not be comforted, and still kept telling its unintelligible secret of some very mournful mystery that had happened—or making a prophetic lamentation about something that was yet to happen—within the verge of the dismal forest. So Pearl, who had enough of shadow in her own little life, chose to break off all acquaintance with this repining brook. She set herself, therefore, to gathering violets and wood-anemones, and some scarlet columbines that she found growing in the crevices of a high rock.

When her elf-child had departed, Hester Prynne made a step or two towards the track that led through the forest, but still remained under the deep shadow of the trees. She beheld the minister advancing along the path, entirely alone, and leaning on a staff which he had cut by the wayside. He looked haggard and feeble, and betrayed a nerveless despondency in his air, which had never so remarkably characterized him in his walks about the settlement, nor in any other situation where he deemed himself liable to notice. Here it was wofully visible, in this intense seclusion of the forest, which of itself would

have been a heavy trial to the spirits. There was a listlessness in his gait; as if he saw no reason for taking one step farther, nor felt any desire to do so, but would have been glad, could he be glad of anything, to fling himself down at the root of the nearest tree, and lie there passive, forevermore. The leaves might bestrew him, and the soil gradually accumulate and form a little hillock over his frame, no matter whether there were life in it or no. Death was too definite an object to be wished for, or avoided.

To Hester's eye, the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale exhibited no symptom of positive and vivacious suffering, except that, as little Pearl had remarked, he kept his hand over his heart.

XVII

The Pastor and His Parishioner

SLOWLY as the minister walked, he had almost gone by, before Hester Prynne could gather voice enough to attract his observation. At length, she succeeded.

"Arthur Dimmesdale!" she said, faintly at first; then louder, but hoarsely. "Arthur Dimmesdale!"

"Who speaks?" answered the minister.

Gathering himself quickly up, he stood more erect, like a man taken by surprise in a mood to which he was reluctant to have witnesses. Throwing his eyes anxiously in the direction of the voice, he indistinctly beheld a form under the trees, clad in garments so sombre, and so little relieved from the gray twilight into which the clouded sky and the heavy foliage had darkened the noontide, that he knew not whether it were a woman or a shadow. It may be, that his pathway through life was haunted thus, by a spectre that had stolen out from among his thoughts.

He made a step nigher, and discovered the scarlet letter.

"Hester! Hester Prynne!" said he. "Is it thou? Art thou in life?"

"Even so!" she answered. "In such life as has been mine these seven years past! And thou, Arthur Dimmesdale, dost thou yet live?"

It was no wonder that they thus questioned one another's actual and bodily existence, and even doubted of their own. So strangely did they meet, in the dim wood, that it was like the first encounter, in the world beyond the grave, of two spirits who had been intimately connected in their former life, but now stood coldly shuddering, in mutual dread; as not yet familiar with their state, nor wonted to the companionship of disembodied beings. Each a ghost, and awe-stricken at the other ghost! They were awe-stricken likewise at themselves; because the crisis flung back to them their consciousness, and revealed to each heart its history and experience, as life never does, except at such breathless epochs. The soul beheld its features in the mirror of the passing moment. It was with fear, and tremulously, and, as it were, by a slow, reluctant necessity, that Arthur Dimmesdale put forth his hand, chill as death, and touched the chill hand of Hester Prynne. The grasp, cold as it was, took away what was dreariest in the interview. They now felt themselves, at least, inhabitants of the same sphere.

Without a word more spoken,—neither he nor she assuming the guidance, but with an unexpressed consent,—they glided back into the shadow of the woods, whence Hester had emerged, and sat down on the heap of moss where she and Pearl had before been sitting. When they found voice to speak, it was, at first, only to utter remarks and inquiries such as any two acquaintance might have made, about the gloomy sky, the threatening storm, and, next, the health of each. Thus they went onward, not boldly, but step by step, into the themes that were brooding deepest in their hearts. So long estranged by fate and circumstances, they needed something slight and casual to run before, and throw open the doors of intercourse, so that their real thoughts might be led across the threshold.

After a while, the minister fixed his eyes on Hester Prynne's.

"Hester," said he, "hast thou found peace?"

She smiled drearily, looking down upon her bosom.

"Hast thou?" she asked.

"None!—nothing but despair!" he answered. "What else could I look for, being what I am, and leading such a life as mine? Were I an atheist,—a man devoid of conscience,—a wretch with coarse and brutal instincts,—I might have found peace, long ere now. Nay, I never should have lost it! But, as matters stand with my soul, whatever of good capacity there originally was in me, all of God's gifts that were the choicest have become the ministers of spiritual torment. Hester, I am most miserable!"

"The people reverence thee," said Hester. "And surely thou workest good among them! Doth this bring thee no comfort?"

"More misery, Hester!—only the more misery!" answered the clergyman, with a bitter smile. "As concerns the good which I may appear to do, I have no faith in it. It must needs be a delusion. What can a ruined soul, like mine, effect towards the redemption of other souls?—or a polluted soul towards their purification? And as for the people's reverence, would that it were turned to scorn and hatred! Canst thou

deem it, Hester, a consolation, that I must stand up in my pulpit, and meet so many eyes turned upward to my face, as if the light of heaven were beaming from it!—must see my flock hungry for the truth, and listening to my words as if a tongue of Pentecost were speaking!—and then look inward, and discern the black reality of what they idolize? I have laughed, in bitterness and agony of heart, at the contrast between what I seem and what I am! And Satan laughs at it!"

"You wrong yourself in this," said Hester, gently. "You have deeply and sorely repented. Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past. Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes. Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and witnessed by good works? And wherefore should it not bring you peace?"

"No, Hester, no!" replied the clergyman. "There is no substance in it! It is cold and dead, and can do nothing for me! Of penance, I have had enough! Of penitence, there has been none! Else, I should long ago have thrown off these garments of mock holiness, and have shown myself to mankind as they will see me at the judgment-seat. Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret! Thou little knowest what a relief it is, after the torment of a seven years' cheat, to look into an eye that recognizes me for what I am! Had I one friend,—or were it my worst enemy! —to whom, when sickened with the praises of all other men, I could daily betake myself, and be known as the vilest of all sinners, methinks my soul might keep itself alive thereby. Even thus much of truth would save me! But, now, it is all falsehood! —all emptiness!—all death!"

Hester Prynne looked into his face, but hesitated to speak. Yet, uttering his long-restrained emotions so vehemently as he did, his words here offered her the very point of circumstances in which to interpose what she came to say. She conquered her fears, and spoke.

"Such a friend as thou hast even now wished for," said she, "with whom to weep over thy sin, thou hast in me, the partner of it!"—Again she hesitated, but brought out the words with an effort.—"Thou hast long had such an enemy, and dwellest with him, under the same roof!"

The minister started to his feet, gasping for breath, and clutching at his heart, as if he would have torn it out of his bosom.

"Ha! What sayest thou!" cried he. "An enemy! And under mine own roof! What mean you?"

Hester Prynne was now fully sensible of the deep injury for which she was responsible to this unhappy man, in permitting him to lie for so many years, or, indeed, for a single moment, at the mercy of one whose purposes could not be other than malevolent. The very contiguity of his enemy, beneath whatever mask the latter might conceal himself, was enough to disturb the magnetic sphere of a being so sensitive as Arthur Dimmesdale. There had been a period when Hester was less alive to this consideration; or, perhaps, in the misanthropy of her own trouble, she left the minister to bear what she might picture to herself as a more tolerable doom. But of late, since the night of his vigil, all her sympathies towards him had been both softened and invigorated. She now read his heart more accurately. She doubted not, that the continual presence of Roger Chillingworth,—the secret poison of his malignity, infecting all the air about him,—and his authorized interference, as a physician, with the minister's physical and spiritual infirmities,—that these bad opportunities had been turned to a cruel purpose. By means of them, the sufferer's conscience had been kept in an irritated state, the tendency of which was, not to cure by wholesome pain, but to disorganize and corrupt his spiritual being. Its result, on earth, could hardly fail to be insanity, and hereafter, that eternal alienation from the Good and True, of which madness is perhaps the earthly type.

Such was the ruin to which she had brought the man, once,—nay, why should we not speak it?—still so passionately loved! Hester felt that the sacrifice of the clergyman's good name, and death itself, as she had already told Roger Chillingworth, would have been infinitely preferable to the alternative which she had taken upon herself to choose. And now, rather than have had this grievous wrong to confess, she would gladly have lain down on the forest-leaves, and died there, at Arthur Dimmesdale's feet.

"O Arthur," cried she, "forgive me! In all things else, I have striven to be true! Truth was the one virtue which I might have held fast, and did hold fast, through all extremity; save when thy good,—thy life,—thy fame—were put in question! Then I consented to a deception. But a lie is never good, even though death threaten on the other side! Dost thou not see what I would say? That old man!—the physician!—he whom they call Roger Chillingworth!—he was my husband!"

The minister looked at her, for an instant, with all that violence of passion, which—intermixed, in more shapes than one, with his higher, purer, softer qualities—was, in fact, the portion of him which the Devil claimed, and through which he sought to win the rest. Never was there a blacker or a fiercer frown than Hester now encountered. For the brief space

that it lasted, it was a dark transfiguration. But his character had been so much enfeebled by suffering, that even its lower energies were incapable of more than a temporary struggle. He sank down on the ground, and buried his face in his hands.

"I might have known it," murmured he. "I did know it! Was not the secret told me, in the natural recoil of my heart, at the first sight of him, and as often as I have seen him since? Why did I not understand? O Hester Prynne, thou little, little knowest all the horror of this thing! And the shame!—the indelicacy!—the horrible ugliness of this exposure of a sick and guilty heart to the very eye that would gloat over it! Woman, woman, thou art accountable for this! I cannot forgive thee!"

"Thou shalt forgive me!" cried Hester, flinging herself on the fallen leaves beside him. "Let God punish! Thou shalt forgive!"

With sudden and desperate tenderness, she threw her arms around him, and pressed his head against her bosom; little caring though his cheek rested on the scarlet letter. He would have released himself, but strove in vain to do so. Hester would not set him free, lest he should look her sternly in the face. All the world had frowned on her,—for seven long years had it frowned upon this lonely woman,—and still she bore it all, nor ever once turned away her firm, sad eyes. Heaven, likewise, had frowned upon her, and she had not died. But the frown of this pale, weak, sinful, and sorrow-stricken man was what Hester could not bear and live.

"Wilt thou yet forgive me!" she repeated, over and over again. "Wilt thou not frown? Wilt thou forgive?"

"I do forgive you, Hester," replied the minister, at length, with a deep utterance, out of an abyss of sadness, but no anger. "I freely forgive you now. May God forgive us both! We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so!"

"Never, never!" whispered she. "What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other! Hast thou forgotten it?"

"Hush, Hester!" said Arthur Dimmesdale, rising from the ground. "No; I have not forgotten!"

They sat down again, side by side, and hand clasped in hand, on the mossy trunk of the fallen tree. Life had never brought them a gloomier hour; it was the point whither their pathway had so long been tending, and darkening ever, as it stole along;—and yet it enclosed a charm that made them linger upon it, and claim another, and another, and, after all, another moment. The forest was obscure around them, and creaked with a blast that was passing through it. The boughs were tossing heavily above their heads; while one solemn old tree groaned dolefully to another, as if telling the sad story of the pair that sat beneath, or constrained to forbode evil to come.

And yet they lingered. How dreary looked the forest-track that led backward to the settlement, where Hester Prynne must take up again the burden of ignominy, and the minister the hollow mockery of his good name! So they lingered an instant longer. No golden light had ever been so precious as the gloom of this dark forest. Here, seen only by his eyes, the scarlet letter need not burn into the bosom of the fallen woman! Here, seen only by her eyes, Arthur Dimmesdale, false to God and man, might be, for one moment, true!

He started at a thought that suddenly occurred to him.

"Hester," cried he, "here is a new horror! Roger Chillingworth knows your purpose to reveal his true character. Will he continue, then, to keep our secret? What will now be the course of his revenge?"

"There is a strange secrecy in his nature," replied Hester, thoughtfully; "and it has grown upon him by the hidden practices of his revenge. I deem it not likely that he will betray the secret. He will doubtless seek other means of satiating his dark passion."

"And I!—how am I to live longer, breathing the same air with this deadly enemy?" exclaimed Arthur Dimmesdale, shrinking within himself, and pressing his hand nervously against his heart,—a gesture that had grown involuntary with him. "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me!"

"Thou must dwell no longer with this man," said Hester, slowly and firmly. "Thy heart must be no longer under his evil eye!"

"It were far worse than death!" replied the minister. "But how to avoid it? What choice remains to me? Shall I lie down again on these withered leaves, where I cast myself when thou didst tell me what he was? Must I sink down there, and die at once?"

"Alas, what a ruin has befallen thee!" said Hester, with the tears gushing into her eyes. "Wilt thou die for very weakness? There is no other cause!"

"The judgment of God is on me," answered the conscience-stricken priest. "It is too mighty for me to struggle with!"

"Heaven would show mercy," rejoined Hester, "hadst thou but the strength to take advantage of it."

"Be thou strong for me!" answered he. "Advise me what to do."

"Is the world, then, so narrow?" exclaimed Hester

Prynne, fixing her deep eyes on the minister's, and instinctively exercising a magnetic power over a spirit so shattered and subdued that it could hardly hold itself erect. "Doth the universe lie within the compass of yonder town, which only a little time ago was but a leaf-strewn desert, as lonely as this around us? Whither leads yonder forest-track? Backward to the settlement, thou sayest! Yes; but onward, too. Deeper it goes, and deeper, into the wilderness, less plainly to be seen at every step; until, some few miles hence, the yellow leaves will show no vestige of the white man's tread. There thou art free! So brief a journey would bring thee from a world where thou hast been most wretched, to one where thou mayest still be happy! Is there not shade enough in all this boundless forest to hide thy heart from the gaze of Roger Chillingworth?"

"Yes, Hester; but only under the fallen leaves!" replied the minister, with a sad smile.

"Then there is the broad pathway of the sea!" continued Hester. "It brought thee hither. If thou so choose, it will bear thee back again. In our native land, whether in some remote rural village or in vast London,—or, surely, in Germany, in France, in pleasant Italy,—thou wouldst be beyond his power and knowledge! And what hast thou to do with all these iron men, and their opinions? They have kept thy better part in bondage too long already!"

"It cannot be?" answered the minister, listening as if he were called upon to realize a dream. "I am powerless to go! Wretched and sinful as I am, I have had no other thought than to drag on my earthly existence in the sphere where Providence hath placed me. Lost as my own soul is, I would still do what I may for other human souls! I dare not quit my post, though an unfaithful sentinel, whose sure reward is death and dishonor, when his dreary watch shall come to an end!"

"Thou art crushed under this seven years' weight of misery," replied Hester, fervently resolved to buoy him up with her own energy. "But thou shalt leave it all behind thee! It shall not cumber thy steps, as thou treadest along the forest-path; neither shalt thou freight the ship with it, if thou prefer to cross the sea. Leave this wreck and ruin here where it hath happened. Meddle no more with it! Begin all anew! Hast thou exhausted possibility in the failure of this one trial? Not so! The future is yet full of trial and success. There is happiness to be enjoyed! There is good to be done! Exchange this false life of thine for a true one. Be, if thy spirit summon thee to such a mission, the teacher and apostle of the red men. Or,—as is more thy nature,—be a scholar and a sage among the wisest and the most renowned of the cultivated world. Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save to lie down and die! Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame. Why shouldst thou tarry so much as one other day in the torments that have so gnawed into thy life!—that have made thee feeble to will and to do!—that will leave thee powerless even to repent! Up, and away!"

"O Hester!" cried Arthur Dimmesdale, in whose eyes a fitful light, kindled by her enthusiasm, flashed up and died away, "thou tellest of running a race to a man whose knees are tottering beneath him! I must die here! There is not the strength or courage left me to venture into the wide, strange, difficult world, alone!"

It was the last expression of the despondency of a broken spirit. He lacked energy to grasp the better fortune that seemed within his reach.

He repeated the word.

"Alone, Hester!"

"Thou shalt not go alone!" answered she, in a deep whisper.

Then, all was spoken!

XVIII

A Flood of Sunshine

ARTHUR DIMMESDALE gazed into Hester's face with a look in which hope and joy shone out, indeed, but with fear betwixt them, and a kind of horror at her boldness, who had spoken what he vaguely hinted at, but dared not speak.

But Hester Prynne, with a mind of native courage and activity, and for so long a period not merely estranged, but outlawed, from society, had habituated herself to such latitude of speculation as was altogether foreign to the clergyman. She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; as vast, as intricate and shadowy, as the untamed forest, amid the gloom of which they were now holding a colloquy that was to decide their fate. Her intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely as the wild Indian in his woods. For years past she had looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established; criticising all with hardly more reverence than the Indian would feel for the clerical band, the judicial robe, the pillory, the gallows, the fireside, or the church. The tendency of her fate and fortunes had been to set her free. The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teach-

ers,—stern and wild ones,—and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss.

The minister, on the other hand, had never gone through an experience calculated to lead him beyond the scope of generally received laws; although, in a single instance, he had so fearfully transgressed one of the most sacred of them. But this had been a sin of passion, not of principle, nor even purpose. Since that wretched epoch, he had watched, with morbid zeal and minuteness, not his acts,—for those it was easy to arrange,—but each breath of emotion, and his every thought. At the head of the social system, as the clergymen of that day stood, he was only the more trammelled by its regulations, its principles, and even its prejudices. As a priest, the framework of his order inevitably hemmed him in. As a man who had once sinned, but who kept his conscience all alive and painfully sensitive by the fretting of an unhealed wound, he might have been supposed safer within the line of virtue than if he had never sinned at all.

Thus, we seem to see that, as regarded Hester Prynne, the whole seven years of outlaw and ignominy had been little other than a preparation for this very hour. But Arthur Dimmesdale! Were such a man once more to fall, what plea could be urged in extenuation of his crime? None; unless it avail him somewhat, that he was broken down by long and exquisite suffering; that his mind was darkened and confused by the very remorse which harrowed it; that, between fleeing as an avowed criminal, and remaining as a hypocrite, conscience might find it hard to strike the balance; that it was human to avoid the peril of death and infamy, and the inscrutable machinations of an enemy; that, finally, to this poor pilgrim, on his dreary and desert path, faint, sick, miserable, there appeared a glimpse of human affection and sympathy, a new life, and a true one, in exchange for the heavy doom which he was now expiating. And be the stern and sad truth spoken, that the breach which guilt has once made into the human soul is never, in this mortal state, repaired. It may be watched and guarded; so that the enemy shall not force his way again into the citadel, and might even, in his subsequent assaults, select some other avenue, in preference to that where he had formerly succeeded. But there is still the ruined wall, and, near it, the stealthy tread of the foe that would win over again his unforgotten triumph.

The struggle, if there were one, need not be described. Let it suffice, that the clergyman resolved to flee, and not alone.

"If, in all these past seven years," thought he, "I could recall one instant of peace or hope, I would yet endure, for the sake of that earnest of Heaven's mercy. But now,—since I am irrevocably doomed,—wherefore should I not snatch the solace allowed to the condemned culprit before his execution? Or, if this be the path to a better life, as Hester would persuade me, I surely give up no fairer prospect by pursuing it! Neither can I any longer live without her companionship; so powerful is she to sustain,—so tender to soothe! O Thou to whom I dare not lift mine eyes, wilt Thou yet pardon me!"

"Thou wilt go!" said Hester, calmly, as he met her glance.

The decision once made, a glow of strange enjoyment threw its flickering brightness over the trouble of his breast. It was the exhilarating effect—upon a prisoner just escaped from the dungeon of his own heart—of breathing the wild, free atmosphere of an unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region. His spirit rose, as it were, with a bound, and attained a nearer prospect of the sky, than throughout all the misery which had kept him grovelling on the earth. Of a deeply religious temperament, there was inevitably a tinge of the devotional in his mood.

"Do I feel joy again?" cried he, wondering at himself. "Methought the germ of it was dead in me! O Hester, thou art my better angel! I seem to have flung myself—sick, sin-stained, and sorrow-blackened—down upon these forest-leaves, and to have risen up all made anew, and with new powers to glorify Him that hath been merciful! This is already the better life! Why did we not find it sooner?"

"Let us not look back," answered Hester Prynne. "The past is gone! Wherefore should we linger upon it now? See! With this symbol, I undo it all, and make it as it had never been!"

So speaking, she undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter, and, taking it from her bosom, threw it to a distance among the withered leaves. The mystic token alighted on the hither verge of the stream. With a hand's breadth farther flight it would have fallen into the water, and have given the little brook another woe to carry onward, besides the unintelligible tale which it still kept murmuring about. But there lay the embroidered letter, glittering like a lost jewel, which some ill-fated wanderer might pick up, and thenceforth be haunted by strange phantoms of guilt, sinkings of the heart, and unaccountable misfortune.

The stigma gone, Hester heaved a long, deep sigh, in which the burden of shame and anguish departed from her spirit. O exquisite relief! She had not known the weight, until she felt the freedom! By another impulse, she took off the formal cap that confined her hair; and down it fell upon her shoulders, dark and rich, with at once a shadow and a light in its abun-

dance, and imparting the charm of softness to her features. There played around her mouth, and beamed out of her eyes, a radiant and tender smile, that seemed gushing from the very heart of womanhood. A crimson flush was glowing on her cheek, that had been long so pale. Her sex, her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty, came back from what men call the irrevocable past, and clustered themselves, with her maiden hope, and a happiness before unknown, within the magic circle of this hour. And, as if the gloom of the earth and sky had been but the effluence of these two mortal hearts, it vanished with their sorrow. All at once, as with a sudden smile of heaven, forth burst the sunshine, pouring a very flood into the obscure forest, gladdening each green leaf, transmuting the yellow fallen ones to gold, and gleaming adown the gray trunks of the solemn trees. The objects that had made a shadow hitherto, embodied the brightness now. The course of the little brook might be traced by its merry gleam afar into the wood's heart of mystery, which had become a mystery of joy.

Such was the sympathy of Nature—that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth—with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a death-like slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester's eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale's!

Hester looked at him with the thrill of another joy.

"Thou must know Pearl!" said she. "Our little Pearl! Thou hast seen her,—yes, I know it!—but thou wilt see her now with other eyes. She is a strange child! I hardly comprehend her! But thou wilt love her dearly, as I do, and wilt advise me how to deal with her."

"Dost thou think the child will be glad to know me?" asked the minister, somewhat uneasily. "I have long shrunk from children, because they often show a distrust,—a backwardness to be familiar with me. I have even been afraid of little Pearl!"

"Ah, that was sad!" answered the mother. "But she will love thee dearly, and thou her. She is not far off. I will call her! Pearl! Pearl!"

"I see the child," observed the minister. "Yonder she is, standing in a streak of sunshine, a good way off, on the other side of the brook. So thou thinkest the child will love me?"

Hester smiled, and again called to Pearl, who was visible, at some distance, as the minister had described her, like a bright-apparelled vision, in a sunbeam, which fell down upon her through an arch of boughs. The ray quivered to and fro, making her figure dim or distinct,—now like a real child, now like a child's spirit,—as the splendor went and came again. She heard her mother's voice, and approached slowly through the forest.

Pearl had not found the hour pass wearisomely, while her mother sat talking with the clergyman. The great black forest—stern as it showed itself to those who brought the guilt and troubles of the world into its bosom—became the playmate of the lonely infant, as well as it knew how. Sombre as it was, it put on the kindest of its moods to welcome her. It offered her the partridge-berries, the growth of the preceding autumn, but ripening only in the spring, and now red as drops of blood upon the withered leaves. These Pearl gathered, and was pleased with their wild flavor. The small denizens of the wilderness hardly took pains to move out of her path. A partridge, indeed, with a brood of ten behind her, ran forward threateningly, but soon repented of her fierceness, and clucked to her young ones not to be afraid. A pigeon, alone on a low branch, allowed Pearl to come beneath, and uttered a sound as much of greeting as alarm. A squirrel, from the lofty depths of his domestic tree, chattered either in anger or merriment,—for a squirrel is such a choleric and humorous little personage, that it is hard to distinguish between his moods,—so he chattered at the child, and flung down a nut upon her head. It was a last year's nut, and already gnawed by his sharp tooth. A fox, startled from his sleep by her light footstep on the leaves, looked inquisitively at Pearl, as doubting whether it were better to steal off, or renew his nap on the same spot. A wolf, it is said,—but here the tale has surely lapsed into the improbable,—came up, and smelt of Pearl's robe, and offered his savage head to be patted by her hand. The truth seems to be, however, that the mother-forest, and these wild things which it nourished, all recognized a kindred wildness in the human child.

And she was gentler here than in the grassy-margined streets of the settlement, or in her mother's cottage. The flowers appeared to know it; and one and another whispered as she passed, "Adorn thyself with me, thou beautiful child, adorn thyself with me!" —and, to please them, Pearl gathered the violets, and anemones, and columbines, and some twigs of the freshest green, which the old trees held down before her eyes. With these she decorated her hair, and her young waist, and became a nymph-child, or an infant dryad, or whatever else was in closest sympathy with the antique wood. In such guise had Pearl adorned herself, when she heard her mother's voice, and came slowly back.

Slowly; for she saw the clergyman.

XIX

The Child at the Brook-Side

"THOU wilt love her dearly," repeated Hester Prynne, as she and the minister sat watching little Pearl. "Dost thou not think her beautiful? And see with what natural skill she has made those simple flowers adorn her! Had she gathered pearls, and diamonds, and rubies, in the wood, they could not have become her better. She is a splendid child! But I know whose brow she has!"

"Dost thou know, Hester," said Arthur Dimmesdale, with an unquiet smile, "that this dear child, tripping about always at thy side, hath caused me many an alarm? Methought—O Hester, what a thought is that, and how terrible to dread it!—that my own features were partly repeated in her face, and so strikingly that the world might see them! But she is mostly thine!"

"No, no! Not mostly!" answered the mother, with a tender smile. "A little longer, and thou needest not to be afraid to trace whose child she is. But how strangely beautiful she looks, with those wild-flowers in her hair! It is as if one of the fairies, whom we left in our dear old England, had decked her out to meet us."

It was with a feeling which neither of them had ever before experienced, that they sat and watched Pearl's slow advance. In her was visible the tie that united them. She had been offered to the world, these seven years past, as the living hieroglyphic, in which was revealed the secret they so darkly sought to hide, —all written in this symbol,—all plainly manifest,— had there been a prophet or magician skilled to read the character of flame! And Pearl was the oneness of their being. Be the foregone evil what it might, how could they doubt that their earthly lives and future destinies were conjoined, when they beheld at once the material union, and the spiritual idea, in whom they met, and were to dwell immortally together? Thoughts like these—and perhaps other thoughts, which they did not acknowledge or define—threw an awe about the child, as she came onward.

"Let her see nothing strange—no passion nor eagerness—in thy way of accosting her," whispered Hester. "Our Pearl is a fitful and fantastic little elf, sometimes. Especially, she is seldom tolerant of emotion, when she does not fully comprehend the why and wherefore. But the child hath strong affections! She loves me, and will love thee!"

"Thou canst not think," said the minister, glancing aside at Hester Prynne, "how my heart dreads this interview, and yearns for it! But, in truth, as I already told thee, children are not readily won to be familiar with me. They will not climb my knee, nor prattle in my ear, nor answer to my smile; but stand apart, and eye me strangely. Even little babes, when I take them in my arms, weep bitterly. Yet Pearl, twice in her little lifetime, hath been kind to me! The first time,—thou knowest it well! The last was when thou ledst her with thee to the house of yonder stern old Governor."

"And thou didst plead so bravely in her behalf and mine!" answered the mother. "I remember it; and so shall little Pearl. Fear nothing! She may be strange and shy at first, but will soon learn to love thee!"

By this time Pearl had reached the margin of the brook, and stood on the farther side, gazing silently at Hester and the clergyman, who still sat together on the mossy tree-trunk, waiting to receive her. Just where she had paused, the brook chanced to form a pool, so smooth and quiet that it reflected a perfect image of her little figure, with all the brilliant picturesqueness of her beauty, in its adornment of flowers and wreathed foliage, but more refined and spiritualized than the reality. This image, so nearly identical with the living Pearl, seemed to communicate somewhat of its own shadowy and intangible quality to the child herself. It was strange, the way in which Pearl stood, looking so steadfastly at them through the dim medium of the forest-gloom; herself, meanwhile, all glorified with a ray of sunshine, that was attracted thitherward as by a certain sympathy. In the brook beneath stood another child,— another and the same,—with likewise its ray of golden light. Hester felt herself, in some indistinct and tantalizing manner, estranged from Pearl; as if the child, in her lonely ramble through the forest, had strayed out of the sphere in which she and her mother dwelt together, and was now vainly seeking to return to it.

There was both truth and error in the impression; the child and mother were estranged, but through Hester's fault, not Pearl's. Since the latter rambled from her side, another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all, that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was.

"I have a strange fancy," observed the sensitive minister, "that this brook is the boundary between two worlds, and that thou canst never meet thy Pearl again. Or is she an elfish spirit, who, as the legends of our childhood taught us, is forbidden to cross a running stream? Pray hasten her; for this delay has already imparted a tremor to my nerves."

"Come, dearest child!" said Hester, encouragingly, and stretching out both her arms. "How slow thou art! When hast thou been so sluggish before now?

Here is a friend of mine, who must be thy friend also. Thou wilt have twice as much love, henceforward, as thy mother alone could give thee! Leap across the brook, and come to us. Thou canst leap like a young deer!"

Pearl, without responding in any manner to these honey-sweet expressions, remained on the other side of the brook. Now she fixed her bright, wild eyes on her mother, now on the minister, and now included them both in the same glance; as if to detect and explain to herself the relation which they bore to one another. For some unaccountable reason, as Arthur Dimmesdale felt the child's eyes upon himself, his hand—with that gesture so habitual as to have become involuntary—stole over his heart. At length, assuming a singular air of authority, Pearl stretched out her hand, with the small forefinger extended, and pointing evidently towards her mother's breast. And beneath, in the mirror of the brook, there was the flower girdled and sunny image of little Pearl, pointing her small forefinger too.

"Thou strange child, why dost thou not come to me?" exclaimed Hester.

Pearl still pointed with her forefinger; and a frown gathered on her brow; the more impressive from the childish, the almost baby-like aspect of the features that conveyed it. As her mother still kept beckoning to her, and arraying her face in a holiday suit of unaccustomed smiles, the child stamped her foot with a yet more imperious look and gesture. In the brook, again, was the fantastic beauty of the image, with its reflected frown, its pointed finger, and imperious gesture, giving emphasis to the aspect of little Pearl.

"Hasten, Pearl; or I shall be angry with thee!" cried Hester Prynne, who, however inured to such behavior on the elf-child's part at other seasons, was naturally anxious for a more seemly deportment now. "Leap across the brook, naughty child, and run hither! Else I must come to thee!"

But Pearl, not a whit startled at her mother's threats, any more than mollified by her entreaties, now suddenly burst into a fit of passion, gesticulating violently, and throwing her small figure into the most extravagant contortions. She accompanied this wild outbreak with piercing shrieks, which the woods reverberated on all sides; so that, alone as she was in her childish and unreasonable wrath, it seemed as if a hidden multitude were lending her their sympathy and encouragement. Seen in the brook, once more, was the shadowy wrath of Pearl's image, crowned and girdled with flowers, but stamping its foot, wildly gesticulating, and, in the midst of all, still pointing its small forefinger at Hester's bosom!

"I see what ails the child," whispered Hester to the clergyman, and turning pale in spite of a strong effort to conceal her trouble and annoyance. "Children will not abide any, the slightest, change in the accustomed aspect of things that are daily before their eyes. Pearl misses something which she has always seen me wear!"

"I pray you," answered the minister, "if thou hast any means of pacifying the child, do it forthwith! Save it were the cankered wrath of an old witch, like Mistress Hibbins," added he, attempting to smile, "I know nothing that I would not sooner encounter than this passion in a child. In Pearl's young beauty, as in the wrinkled witch, it has a preternatural effect. Pacify her, if thou lovest me!"

Hester turned again towards Pearl, with a crimson blush upon her cheek, a conscious glance aside at the clergyman, and then a heavy sigh; while, even before she had time to speak, the blush yielded to a deadly pallor.

"Pearl," said she, sadly, "look down at thy feet! There!—before thee!—on the hither side of the brook!"

The child turned her eyes to the point indicated; and there lay the scarlet letter, so close upon the margin of the stream, that the gold embroidery was reflected in it.

"Bring it hither!" said Hester.

"Come thou and take it up!" answered Pearl.

"Was ever such a child!" observed Hester, aside to the minister. "O, I have much to tell thee about her! But, in very truth, she is right as regards this hateful token. I must bear its torture yet a little longer,—only a few days longer,—until we shall have left this region, and look back hither as to a land which we have dreamed of. The forest cannot hide it! The mid-ocean shall take it from my hand, and swallow it up forever!"

With these words, she advanced to the margin of the brook, took up the scarlet letter, and fastened it again into her bosom. Hopefully, but a moment ago, as Hester had spoken of drowning it in the deep sea, there was a sense of inevitable doom upon her, as she thus received back this deadly symbol from the hand of fate. She had flung it into infinite space!—she had drawn an hour's free breath!—and here again was the scarlet misery, glittering on the old spot! So it ever is, whether thus typified or no, that an evil deed invests itself with the character of doom. Hester next gathered up the heavy tresses of her hair, and confined them beneath her cap. As if there were a withering spell in the sad letter, her beauty, the warmth and richness of her womanhood, departed, like fading sunshine; and a gray shadow seemed to fall across her.

When the dreary change was wrought, she extended her hand to Pearl.

"Dost thou know thy mother now, child?" asked she, reproachfully, but with a subdued tone. "Wilt thou come across the brook, and own thy mother, now that she has her shame upon her,—now that she is sad?"

"Yes; now I will!" answered the child, bounding across the brook, and clasping Hester in her arms. "Now thou art my mother indeed! And I am thy little Pearl!"

In a mood of tenderness that was not usual with her, she drew down her mother's head, and kissed her brow and both her cheeks. But then—by a kind of necessity that always impelled this child to alloy whatever comfort she might chance to give with a throb of anguish—Pearl put up her mouth, and kissed the scarlet letter too!

"That was not kind!" said Hester. "When thou hast shown me a little love, thou mockest me!"

"Why doth the minister sit yonder?" asked Pearl.

"He waits to welcome thee," replied her mother. "Come thou, and entreat his blessing! He loves thee, my little Pearl, and loves thy mother too. Wilt thou not love him? Come! he longs to greet thee!"

"Doth he love us?" said Pearl, looking up, with acute intelligence, into her mother's face. "Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?"

"Not now, dear child," answered Hester. "But in days to come he will walk hand in hand with us. We will have a home and fireside of our own; and thou shalt sit upon his knee; and he will teach thee many things, and love thee dearly. Thou wilt love him; wilt thou not?"

"And will he always keep his hand over his heart?" inquired Pearl.

"Foolish child, what a question is that!" exclaimed her mother. "Come and ask his blessing!"

But, whether influenced by the jealousy that seems instinctive with every petted child towards a dangerous rival, or from whatever caprice of her freakish nature, Pearl would show no favor to the clergyman. It was only by an exertion of force that her mother brought her up to him, hanging back, and manifesting her reluctance by odd grimaces; of which, ever since her babyhood, she had possessed a singular variety, and could transform her mobile physiognomy into a series of different aspects, with a new mischief in them, each and all. The minister—painfully embarrassed, but hoping that a kiss might prove a talisman to admit him into the child's kindlier regards—bent forward, and impressed one on her brow. Hereupon, Pearl broke away from her mother, and running to the brook, stooped over it, and bathed her forehead, until the unwelcome kiss was quite washed off, and diffused through a long lapse of the gliding water. She then remained apart, silently watching Hester and the clergyman; while they talked together, and made such arrangements as were suggested by their new position, and the purposes soon to be fulfilled.

And now this fateful interview had come to a close. The dell was to be left a solitude among its dark, old trees, which, with their multitudinous tongues, would whisper long of what had passed there, and no mortal be the wiser. And the melancholy brook would add this other tale to the mystery with which its little heart was already overburdened, and whereof it still kept up a murmuring babble, with not a whit more cheerfulness of tone than for ages heretofore.

XX

The Minister in a Maze

As the minister departed, in advance of Hester Prynne and little Pearl, he threw a backward glance; half expecting that he should discover only some faintly traced features or outline of the mother and the child, slowing fading into the twilight of the woods. So great a vicissitude in his life could not at once be received as real. But there was Hester, clad in her gray robe, still standing beside the tree-trunk, which some blast had overthrown a long antiquity ago, and which time had ever since been covering with moss, so that these two fated ones, with earth's heaviest burden on them, might there sit down together, and find a single hour's rest and solace. And there was Pearl, too, lightly dancing from the margin of the brook,—now that the intrusive third person was gone,—and taking her old place by her mother's side. So the minister had not fallen asleep and dreamed!

In order to free his mind from this indistinctness and duplicity of impression, which vexed it with a strange disquietude, he recalled and more thoroughly defined the plans which Hester and himself had sketched for their departure. It had been determined between them, that the Old World, with its crowds and cities, offered them a more eligible shelter and concealment than the wilds of New England, or all America, with its alternatives of an Indian wigwam, or the few settlements of Europeans, scattered thinly along the seaboard. Not to speak of the clergyman's health, so inadequate to sustain the hardships of a forest life, his native gifts, his culture, and his entire development, would secure him a home only in the

midst of civilization and refinement; the higher the state, the more delicately adapted to it the man. In furtherance of this choice, it so happened that a ship lay in the harbor; one of those questionable cruisers, frequent at that day, which, without being absolutely outlaws of the deep, yet roamed over its surface with a remarkable irresponsibility of character. This vessel had recently arrived from the Spanish Main, and, within three days' time would sail for Bristol. Hester Prynne—whose vocation, as a self-enlisted Sister of Charity, had brought her acquainted with the captain and crew—could take upon herself to secure the passage of two individuals and a child, with all the secrecy which circumstances rendered more than desirable.

The minister had inquired of Hester, with no little interest, the precise time at which the vessel might be expected to depart. It would probably be on the fourth day from the present. "That is most fortunate!" he had then said to himself. Now, why the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale considered it so very fortunate, we hesitate to reveal. Nevertheless,—to hold nothing back from the reader,—it was because, on the third day from the present, he was to preach the Election Sermon; and, as such an occasion formed an honorable epoch in the life of a New England clergyman, he could not have chanced upon a more suitable mode and time of terminating his professional career. "At least, they shall say of me," thought this exemplary man, "that I leave no public duty unperformed, nor ill performed!" Sad, indeed, that an introspection so profound and acute as this poor minister's should be so miserably deceived! We have had, and may still have, worse things to tell of him; but none, we apprehend, so pitiably weak; no evidence, at once so slight and irrefragable, of a subtle disease, that had long since begun to eat into the real substance of his character. No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true.

The excitement of Mr. Dimmesdale's feelings, as he returned from his interview with Hester, lent him unaccustomed physical energy, and hurried him townward at a rapid pace. The pathway among the woods seemed wilder, more uncouth with its rude natural obstacles, and less trodden by the foot of man, than he remembered it on his outward journey. But he leaped across the plashy places, thrust himself through the clinging underbrush, climbed the ascent, plunged into the hollow, and overcame, in short, all the difficulties of the track, with an unweariable activity that astonished him. He could not but recall how feebly, and with what frequent pauses for breath, he had toiled over the same ground, only two days before. As he drew near the town, he took an impression of change from the series of familiar objects that presented themselves. It seemed not yesterday, not one, nor two, but many days, or even years ago, since he had quitted them. There, indeed, was each former trace of the street, as he remembered it, and all the peculiarities of the houses, with the due multitude of gable-peaks, and a weathercock at every point where his memory suggested one. Not the less, however, came this importunately obtrusive sense of change. The same was true as regarded the acquaintance whom he met, and all the well-known shapes of human life, about the little town. They looked neither older nor younger now; the beards of the aged were no whiter, nor could the creeping babe of yesterday walk on his feet to-day; it was impossible to describe in what respect they differed from the individuals on whom he had so recently bestowed a parting glance; and yet the minister's deepest sense seemed to inform him of their mutability. A similar impression struck him most remarkably, as he passed under the walls of his own church. The edifice had so very strange, and yet so familiar, an aspect, that Mr. Dimmesdale's mind vibrated between two ideas; either that he had seen it only in a dream hitherto, or that he was merely dreaming about it now.

This phenomenon, in the serious shapes which it assumed, indicated no external change, but so sudden and important a change in the spectator of the familiar scene, that the intervening space of a single day had operated on his consciousness like the lapse of years. The minister's own will, and Hester's will, and the fate that grew between them, had wrought this transformation. It was the same town as heretofore; but the same minister returned not from the forest. He might have said to the friends who greeted him,—"I am not the man for whom you take me! I left him yonder in the forest, withdrawn into a secret dell, by a mossy tree-trunk, and near a melancholy brook! Go, seek your minister, and see if his emaciated figure, his thin cheek, his white, heavy, pain-wrinkled brow, be not flung down there, like a cast-off garment!" His friends, no doubt, would still have insisted with him,—"Thou art thyself the man!"—but the error would have been their own, not his.

Before Mr. Dimmesdale reached home, his inner man gave him other evidences of a revolution in the sphere of thought and feeling. In truth, nothing short of a total change of dynasty and moral code, in that interior kingdom, was adequate to account for the impulses now communicated to the unfortunate and

startled minister. At every step he was incited to do some strange, wild, wicked thing or other, with a sense that it would be at once involuntary and intentional; in spite of himself, yet growing out of a profounder self than that which opposed the impulse. For instance, he met one of his own deacons. The good old man addressed him with the paternal affection and patriarchal privilege, which his venerable age, his upright and holy character, and his station in the Church, entitled him to use; and, conjoined with this, the deep, almost worshipping respect, which the minister's professional and private claims alike demanded. Never was there a more beautiful example of how the majesty of age and wisdom may comport with the obeisance and respect enjoined upon it, as from a lower social rank, and inferior order of endowment, towards a higher. Now, during a conversation of some two or three moments between the reverend Mr. Dimmesdale and this excellent and hoary-bearded deacon, it was only by the most careful self-control that the former could refrain from uttering certain blasphemous suggestions that rose into his mind, . the communion supper. He absolutely trembled and turned pale as ashes, lest his tongue should wag itself, in utterance of these horrible matters, and plead his own consent for so doing, without his having fairly given it. And, even with this terror in his heart, he could hardly avoid laughing, to imagine how the sanctified old patriarchal deacon would have been petrified by his minister's impiety!

Again, another incident of the same nature. Hurrying along the street, the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale encountered the eldest female member of his church; a most pious and exemplary old dame; poor, widowed, lonely, and with a heart as full of reminiscences about her dead husband and children, and her dead friends of long ago, as a burial-ground is full of storied gravestones. Yet all this, which would else have been such heavy sorrow, was made almost a solemn joy to her devout old soul, by religious consolations and the truths of Scripture, wherewith she had fed herself continually for more than thirty years. And, since Mr. Dimmesdale had taken her in charge, the good grandam's chief earthly comfort—which, unless it had been likewise a heavenly comfort, could have been none at all—was to meet her pastor, whether casually, or of set purpose, and be refreshed with a word of warm, fragrant, heaven-breathing Gospel truth, from his beloved lips, into her dulled, but rapturously attentive ear. But, on this occasion, up to the moment of putting his lips to the old woman's ear, Mr. Dimmesdale, as the great enemy of souls would have it, could recall no text of Scripture, nor aught else, except a brief, pithy, and, as it then appeared to him, unanswerable argument against the immortality of the human soul. The instilment thereof into her mind would probably have caused this aged sister to drop down dead, at once, as by the effect of an intensely poisonous infusion. What he really did whisper, the minister could never afterwards recollect. There was, perhaps, a fortunate disorder in his utterance, which failed to impart any distinct idea to the good widow's comprehension, or which Providence interpreted after a method of its own. Assuredly, as the minister looked back, he beheld an expression of divine gratitude and ecstasy that seemed like the shine of the celestial city on her face, so wrinkled and ashy pale.

Again, a third instance. After parting from the old church-member, he met the youngest sister of them all. It was a maiden newly won—and won by the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale's own sermon, on the Sabbath after his vigil—to barter the transitory pleasures of the world for the heavenly hope, that was to assume brighter substance as life grew dark around her, and which would gild the utter gloom with final glory. She was fair and pure as a lily that had bloomed in Paradise. The minister knew well that he was himself enshrined within the stainless sanctity of her heart, which hung its snowy curtains about his image, imparting to religion the warmth of love, and to love a religious purity. Satan, that afternoon, had surely led the poor young girl away from her mother's side, and thrown her into the pathway of this sorely tempted, or—shall we not rather say?—this lost and desperate man. As she drew nigh, the arch-fiend whispered him to condense into small compass and drop into her tender bosom a germ of evil that would be sure to blossom darkly soon, and bear black fruit betimes. Such was his sense of power over this virgin soul, trusting him as she did, that the minister felt potent to blight all the field of innocence with but one wicked look, and develop all its opposite with but a word. So—with a mightier struggle than he had yet sustained—he held his Geneva cloak before his face, and hurried onward, making no sign of recognition, and leaving the young sister to digest his rudeness as she might. She ransacked her conscience,—which was full of harmless little matters, like her pocket or her work-bag,—and took herself to task, poor thing! for a thousand imaginary faults; and went about her household duties with swollen eyelids the next morning.

Before the minister had time to celebrate his victory over this last temptation, he was conscious of another impulse, more ludicrous, and almost as horrible. It was,—we blush to tell it,—it was to stop short in the road, and teach some very wicked words to a

knot of little Puritan children who were playing there, and had but just begun to talk. Denying himself this freak, as unworthy of his cloth, he met a drunken seaman, one of the ship's crew from the Spanish Main. And, here, since he had so valiantly forborne all other wickedness, poor Mr. Dimmesdale longed, at least, to shake hands with the tarry blackguard, and recreate himself with a few improper jests, such as dissolute sailors so abound with, and a volley of good, round, solid, satisfactory, and heaven-defying oaths! It was not so much a better principle as partly his natural good taste, and still more his buckramed habit of clerical decorum, that carried him safely through the latter crisis.

"What is it that haunts and tempts me thus?" cried the minister to himself, at length, pausing in the street, and striking his hand against his forehead. "Am I mad? or am I given over utterly to the fiend? Did I make a contract with him in the forest, and sign it with my blood? And does he now summon me to its fulfilment, by suggesting the performance of every wickedness which his most foul imagination can conceive?"

At the moment when the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale thus communed with himself, and struck his forehead with his hand, old Mistress Hibbins, the reputed witch-lady, is said to have been passing by. She made a very grand appearance; having on a high head-dress, a rich gown of velvet, and a ruff done up with the famous yellow starch, of which Ann Turner, her especial friend, had taught her the secret, before this last good lady had been hanged for Sir Thomas Overbury's murder. Whether the witch had read the minister's thoughts, or no, she came to a full stop, looked shrewdly into his face, smiled craftily, and—though little given to converse with clergymen—began a conversation.

"So, reverend Sir, you have made a visit into the forest," observed the witch-lady, nodding her high head-dress at him. "The next time, I pray you to allow me only a fair warning, and I shall be proud to bear you company. Without taking overmuch upon myself, my good word will go far towards gaining any strange gentelman a fair reception from yonder potentate you wot of!"

"I profess, madam," answered the clergyman, with a grave obeisance, such as the lady's rank demanded, and his own good-breeding made imperative,—"I profess, on my conscience and character, that I am utterly bewildered as touching the purport of your words! I went not into the forest to seek a potentate; neither do I, at any future time, design a visit thither, with a view to gaining the favor of such a personage. My one sufficient object was to greet that pious friend of mine, the Apostle Eliot, and rejoice with him over the many precious souls he hath won from heathendom!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled the old witch-lady, still nodding her high head-dress at the minister. "Well, well, we must needs talk thus in the daytime! You carry it off like an old hand! But at midnight, and in the forest, we shall have other talk together!"

She passed on with her aged stateliness, but often turning back her head and smiling at him, like one willing to recognize a secret intimacy of connection.

"Have I then sold myself," thought the minister, "to the fiend whom, if men say true, this yellow-starched and velveted old hag has chosen for her prince and master!"

The wretched minister! He had made a bargain very like it! Tempted by a dream of happiness, he had yielded himself, with deliberate choice, as he had never done before, to what he knew was deadly sin. And the infectious poison of that sin had been thus rapidly diffused throughout his moral system. It had stupefied all blessed impulses, and awakened into vivid life the whole brotherhood of bad ones. Scorn, bitterness, unprovoked malignity, gratuitous desire of ill, ridicule of whatever was good and holy, all awoke, to tempt, even while they frightened him. And his encounter with old Mistress Hibbins, if it were a real incident, did but show his sympathy and fellowship with wicked mortals, and the world of perverted spirits.

He had, by this time, reached his dwelling, on the edge of the burial-ground, and, hastening up the stairs, took refuge in his study. The minister was glad to have reached this shelter, without first betraying himself to the world by any of those strange and wicked eccentricities to which he had been continually impelled while passing through the streets. He entered the accustomed room, and looked around him on its books, its windows, its fireplace, and the tapestried comforts of the walls, with the same perception of strangeness that had haunted him throughout his walk from the forest-dell into the town, and thitherward. Here he had studied and written; here, gone through fast and vigil, and come forth half alive; here, striven to pray; here, borne a hundred thousand agonies! There was the Bible, in its rich old Hebrew, with Moses and the Prophets speaking to him, and God's voice through all! There, on the table, with the inky pen beside it, was an unfinished sermon, with a sentence broken in the midst, where his thoughts had ceased to gush out upon the page, two days before. He knew that it was himself, the thin and white-cheeked minister, who had done and suffered these things, and written thus far into the Election Ser-

mon! But he seemed to stand apart, and eye this former self with scornful, pitying, but half-envious curiosity. That self was gone. Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached. A bitter kind of knowledge that!

While occupied with these reflections, a knock came at the door of the study, and the minister said, "Come in!"—not wholly devoid of an idea that he might behold an evil spirit. And so he did! It was old Roger Chillingworth that entered. The minister stood, white and speechless, with one hand on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the other spread upon his breast.

"Welcome home, reverend Sir," said the physician. "And how found you that godly man, the Apostle Eliot? But methinks, dear Sir, you look pale; as if the travel through the wilderness had been too sore for you. Will not my aid be requisite to put you in heart and strength to preach your Election Sermon?"

"Nay, I think not so," rejoined the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale. "My journey, and the sight of the holy Apostle yonder, and the free air which I have breathed, have done me good, after so long confinement in my study. I think to need no more of your drugs, my kind physician, good though they be, and administered by a friendly hand."

All this time, Roger Chillingworth was looking at the minister with the grave and intent regard of a physician towards his patient. But, in spite of this outward show, the latter was almost convinced of the old man's knowledge, or, at least, his confident suspicion, with respect to his own interview with Hester Prynne. The physician knew then, that, in the minister's regard, he was no longer a trusted friend, but his bitterest enemy. So much being known, it would appear natural that a part of it should be expressed. It is singular, however, how long a time often passes before words embody things; and with what security two persons, who choose to avoid a certain subject, may approach its very verge, and retire without disturbing it. Thus, the minister felt no apprehension that Roger Chillingworth would touch, in express words, upon the real position which they sustained towards one another. Yet did the physician, in his dark way, creep frightfully near the secret.

"Were it not better," said he, "that you use my poor skill to-night? Verily, dear Sir, we must take pains to make you strong and vigorous for this occasion of the Election discourse. The people look for great things from you; apprehending that another year may come about, and find their pastor gone."

"Yea, to another world," replied the minister, with pious resignation. "Heaven grant it be a better one; for, in good sooth, I hardly think to tarry with my flock through the flitting seasons of another year! But, touching your medicine, kind Sir, in my present frame of body, I need it not."

"I joy to hear it," answered the physician. "It may be that my remedies, so long administered in vain, begin now to take due effect. Happy man were I, and well deserving of New England's gratitude, could I achieve this cure!"

"I thank you from my heart, most watchful friend," said the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, with a solemn smile. "I thank you, and can but requite your good deeds with my prayers."

"A good man's prayers are golden recompense!" rejoined old Roger Chillingworth, as he took his leave. "Yea, they are the current gold coin of the New Jerusalem, with the King's own mint-mark on them!"

Left alone, the minister summoned a servant of the house, and requested food, which, being set before him, he ate with ravenous appetite. Then, flinging the already written pages of the Election Sermon into the fire, he forthwith began another, which he wrote with such an impulsive flow of thought and emotion, that he fancied himself inspired; and only wondered that Heaven should see fit to transmit the grand and solemn music of its oracles through so foul an organ-pipe as he. However, leaving that mystery to solve itself, or go unsolved forever, he drove his task onward, with earnest haste and ecstasy. Thus the night fled away, as if it were a winged steed, and he careering on it; morning came, and peeped, blushing, through the curtains; and at last sunrise threw a golden beam into the study and laid it right across the minister's bedazzled eyes. There he was, with the pen still between his fingers, and a vast, immeasurable tract of written space behind him!

XXI

The New England Holiday

BETIMES in the morning of the day on which the new Governor was to receive his office at the hands of the people, Hester Prynne and little Pearl came into the market-place. It was already thronged with the craftsmen and other plebeian inhabitants of the town, in considerable numbers; among whom, likewise, where many rough figures, whose attire of deer-skins marked them as belonging to some of the forest settlements, which surrounded the little metropolis of the colony.

On this public holiday, as on all other occasions, for seven years past, Hester was clad in a garment

of coarse gray cloth. Not more by its hue than by some indescribable peculiarity in its fashion, it had the effect of making her fade personally out of sight and outline; while, again, the scarlet letter brought her back from this twilight indistinctness, and revealed her under the moral aspect of its own illumination. Her face, so long familiar to the townspeople, showed the marble quietude which they were accustomed to behold there. It was like a mask; or, rather, like the frozen calmness of a dead woman's features; owing this dreary resemblance to the fact that Hester was actually dead, in respect to any claim of sympathy, and had departed out of the world with which she still seemed to mingle.

It might be, on this one day, that there was an expression unseen before, nor, indeed, vivid enough to be detected now; unless some preternaturally gifted observer should have first read the heart, and have afterwards sought a corresponding development in the countenance and mien. Such a spiritual seer might have conceived, that, after sustaining the gaze of the multitude through seven miserable years as a necessity, a penance, and something which it was a stern religion to endure, she now, for one last time more, encountered it freely and voluntarily, in order to convert what had so long been agony into a kind of triumph. "Look your last on the scarlet letter and its wearer!"—the people's victim and life-long bond-slave, as they fancied her, might say to them. "Yet a little while, and she will be beyond your reach! A few hours longer, and the deep, mysterious ocean will quench and hide forever the symbol which ye have caused to burn upon her bosom!" Nor were it an inconsistency too improbable to be assigned to human nature, should we suppose a feeling of regret in Hester's mind, at the moment when she was about to win her freedom from the pain which had been thus deeply incorporated with her being. Might there not be an irresistible desire to quaff a last, long, breathless draught of the cup of wormwood and aloes, with which nearly all her years of womanhood had been perpetually flavored? The wine of life, henceforth to be presented to her lips, must be indeed rich, delicious, and exhilarating, in its chased and golden beaker; or else leave an inevitable and weary languor, after the lees of bitterness wherewith she had been drugged, as with a cordial of intensest potency.

Pearl was decked out with airy gayety. It would have been impossible to guess that this bright and sunny apparition owed its existence to the shape of gloomy gray; or that a fancy, at once so gorgeous and so delicate as must have been requisite to contrive the child's apparel, was the same that had achieved a task perhaps more difficult, in imparting so distinct a peculiarity to Hester's simple robe. The dress, so proper was it to little Pearl, seemed an effluence, or inevitable development and outward manifestation of her character, no more to be separated from her than the many-hued brilliancy from a butterfly's wing, or the painted glory from the leaf of a bright flower. As with these, so with the child; her garb was all of one idea with her nature. On this eventful day, moreover, there was a certain singular inquietude and excitement in her mood, resembling nothing so much as the shimmer of a diamond, that sparkles and flashes with the varied throbbings of the breast on which it is displayed. Children have always a sympathy in the agitations of those connected with them; always, especially, a sense of any trouble or impending revolution, of whatever kind, in domestic circumstances; and therefore Pearl, who was the gem on her mother's unquiet bosom, betrayed, by the very dance of her spirits, the emotions which none could detect in the marble passiveness of Hester's brow.

This effervescence made her flit with a birdlike movement, rather than walk by her mother's side. She broke continually into shouts of a wild, inarticulate, and sometimes piercing music. When they reached the market-place, she became still more restless, on perceiving the stir and bustle that enlivened the spot; for it was usually more like the broad and lonesome green before a village meeting-house, than the centre of a town's business.

"Why, what is this, mother?" cried she. "Wherefore have all the people left their work to-day? Is it a play-day for the whole world? See, there is the blacksmith! He has washed his sooty face, and put on his Sabbath-day clothes, and looks as if he would gladly be merry, if any kind body would only teach him how! And there is Master Brackett, the old jailer, nodding and smiling at me. Why does he do so, mother?"

"He remembers thee a little babe, my child," answered Hester.

"He should not nod and smile at me, for all that,—the black, grim, ugly-eyed old man!" said Pearl. "He may nod at thee, if he will; for thou art clad in gray, and wearest the scarlet letter. But see, mother, how many faces of strange people, and Indians among them, and sailors! What have they all come to do, here in the market-place?"

"They wait to see the procession pass," said Hester. "For the Governor and the magistrates are to go by, and the ministers, and all the great people and good people, with the music and the soldiers marching before them."

"And will the minister be there?" asked Pearl.

"And will he hold out both his hands to me, as when thou ledst me to him from the brook side?"

"He will be there, child," answered her mother. "But he will not greet thee to-day; nor must thou greet him."

"What a strange, sad man is he!" said the child, as if speaking partly to herself. "In the dark night-time he calls us to him, and holds thy hand and mine, as when we stood with him on the scaffold yonder. And in the deep forest, where only the old trees can hear, and the strip of sky see it, he talks with thee, sitting on a heap of moss! And he kisses my forehead, too, so that the little brook would hardly wash it off! But here, in the sunny day, and among all the people, he knows us not; nor must we know him! A strange, sad man is he, with his hand always over his heart!"

"Be quiet, Pearl! Thou understandest not these things," said her mother. "Think not now of the minister, but look about thee, and see how cheery is everybody's face to-day. The children have come from their schools, and the grown people from their workshops and their fields, on purpose to be happy. For, to-day, a new man is beginning to rule over them; and so—as has been the custom of mankind ever since a nation was first gathered—they make merry and rejoice; as if a good and golden year were at length to pass over the poor old world!"

It was as Hester said, in regard to the unwonted jollity that brightened the faces of the people. Into this festal season of the year—as it already was, and continued to be during the greater part of two centuries—the Puritans compressed whatever mirth and public joy they deemed allowable to human infirmity; thereby so far dispelling the customary cloud, that, for the space of a single holiday, they appeared scarcely more grave than most other communities at a period of general affliction.

But we perhaps exaggerate the gray or sable tinge, which undoubtedly characterized the mood and manners of the age. The persons now in the market-place of Boston had not been born to an inheritance of Puritanic gloom. They were native Englishmen, whose fathers had lived in the sunny richness of the Elizabethan epoch; a time when the life of England, viewed as one great mass, would appear to have been as stately, magnificent, and joyous, as the world has ever witnessed. Had they followed their hereditary taste, the New England settlers would have illustrated all events of public importance by bonfires, banquets, pageantries, and processions. Nor would it have been impracticable, in the observance of majestic ceremonies, to combine mirthful recreation with solemnity, and give, as it were, a grotesque and brilliant embroidery to the great robe of state, which a nation, at such festivals, puts on. There was some shadow of an attempt of this kind in the mode of celebrating the day on which the political year of the colony commenced. The dim reflection of a remembered splendor, a colorless and manifold diluted repetition of what they had beheld in proud old London, —we will not say at a royal coronation, but at a Lord Mayor's show,—might be traced in the customs which our forefathers instituted, with reference to the annual installation of magistrates. The fathers and founders of the commonwealth—the statesman, the priest, and the soldier—deemed it a duty then to assume the outward state and majesty, which, in accordance with antique style, was looked upon as the proper garb of public or social eminence. All came forth, to move in procession before the people's eye, and thus impart a needed dignity to the simple framework of a government so newly constructed.

Then, too, the people were countenanced, if not encouraged, in relaxing the severe and close application to their various modes of rugged industry, which, at all other times, seemed of the same piece and material with their religion. Here, it is true, were none of the appliances which popular merriment would so readily have found in the England of Elizabeth's time, or that of James;—no rude shows of a theatrical kind; no minstrel, with his harp and legendary ballad, nor gleeman, with an ape dancing to his music; no juggler, with his tricks of mimic witchcraft; no Merry Andrew, to stir up the multitude with jests, perhaps hundreds of years old, but still effective, by their appeals to the very broadest sources of mirthful sympathy. All such professors of the several branches of jocularity would have been sternly repressed, not only by the rigid discipline of law, but by the general sentiment which gives law its vitality. Not the less, however, the great, honest face of the people smiled, grimly, perhaps, but widely too. Nor were sports wanting, such as the colonists had witnessed, and shared in, long ago, at the country fairs and on the village-greens of England; and which it was thought well to keep alive on this new soil, for the sake of the courage and manliness that were essential in them. Wrestling-matches, in the different fashions of Cornwall and Devonshire, were seen here and there about the market-place; in one corner, there was a friendly bout at quarterstaff; and—what attracted most interest of all—on the platform of the pillory, already so noted in our pages, two masters of defense were commencing an exhibition with the buckler and broadsword. But, much to the disappointment of the crowd, this latter business was broken off by the interposition of the town beadle, who had no idea of

permitting the majesty of the law to be violated by such an abuse of one of its consecrated places.

It may not be too much to affirm, on the whole, (the people being then in the first stages of joyless deportment, and the offspring of sires who had known how to be merry, in their day,) that they would compare favorably, in point of holiday keeping, with their descendants, even at so long an interval as ourselves. Their immediate posterity, the generation next to the early emigrants, wore the blackest shade of Puritanism, and so darkened the national visage with it, that all the subsequent years have not sufficed to clear it up. We have yet to learn again the forgotten art of gayety.

The picture of human life in the market-place, though its general tint was the sad gray, brown, or black of the English emigrants, was yet enlivened by some diversity of hue. A party of Indians—in their savage finery of curiously embroidered deer-skin robes, wampum-belts, red and yellow ochre, and feathers, and armed with the bow and arrow and stone-headed spear—stood apart, with countenances of inflexible gravity, beyond what even the Puritan aspect could attain. Nor, wild as were these painted barbarians, were they the wildest feature of the scene. This distinction could more justly be claimed by some mariners,—a part of the crew of the vessel from the Spanish Main,—who had come ashore to see the humors of Election Day. They were rough-looking desperadoes, with sun-blackened faces, and an immensity of beard; their wide, short trousers were confined about the waist by belts, often clasped with a rough plate of gold, and sustaining always a long knife, and, in some instances, a sword. From beneath their broad-brimmed hats of palm-leaf gleamed eyes which, even in good-nature and merriment, had a kind of animal ferocity. They transgressed, without fear or scruple, the rules of behavior that were binding on all others; smoking tobacco under the beadle's very nose, although each whiff would have cost a townsman a shilling; and quaffing, at their pleasure, draughts of wine or aqua-vitae from pocket-flasks, which they freely tendered to the gaping crowd around them. It remarkably characterized the incomplete morality of the age, rigid as we call it, that a license was allowed the seafaring class, not merely for their freaks on shore, but for far more desperate deeds on their proper element. The sailor of that day would go near to be arraigned as a pirate in our own. There could be little doubt, for instance, that this very ship's crew, though no unfavorable specimens of the nautical brotherhood, had been guilty, as we should phrase it, of depredations on the Spanish commerce, such as would have perilled all their necks in a modern court of justice.

But the sea, in those old times, heaved, swelled, and foamed, very much at its own will, or subject only to the tempestuous wind, with hardly any attempts at regulation by human law. The buccaneer on the wave might relinquish his calling, and become at once, if he chose, a man of probity and piety on land; nor, even in the full career of his reckless life, was he regarded as a personage with whom it was disreputable to traffic, or casually associate. Thus, the Puritan elders, in their black cloaks, starched bands, and steeple-crowned hats, smiled not unbenignantly at the clamor and rude deportment of these jolly seafaring men; and it excited neither surprise nor animadversion, when so reputable a citizen as old Roger Chillingworth, the physician, was seen to enter the market-place, in close and familiar talk with the commander of the questionable vessel.

The latter was by far the most showy and gallant figure, so far as apparel went, anywhere to be seen among the multitude. He wore a profusion of ribbons on his garment, and gold-lace on his hat, which was also encircled by a gold chain, and surmounted with a feather. There was a sword at his side, and a sword-cut on his forehead, which, by the arrangement of his hair, he seemed anxious rather to display than hide. A landsman could hardly have worn this garb and shown this face, and worn and shown them both with such a galliard air, without undergoing stern question before a magistrate, and probably incurring fine or imprisonment, or perhaps an exhibition in the stocks. As regarded the shipmaster, however, all was looked upon as pertaining to the character, as to a fish his glistening scales.

After parting from the physician, the commander of the Bristol ship strolled idly through the market-place; until, happening to approach the spot where Hester Prynne was standing, he appeared to recognize, and did not hesitate to address her. As was usually the case wherever Hester stood, a small vacant area—a sort of magic circle—had formed itself about her, into which, though the people were elbowing one another at a little distance, none ventured, or felt disposed to intrude. It was a forcible type of the moral solitude in which the scarlet letter enveloped its fated wearer; partly by her own reserve, and partly by the instinctive, though no longer so unkindly, withdrawal of her fellow-creatures. Now, if never before, it answered a good purpose, by enabling Hester and the seaman to speak together without risk of being overheard; and so changed was Hester Prynne's repute before the public, that the matron in town most eminent for rigid morality could not

have held such intercourse with less result of scandal than herself.

"So, mistress," said the mariner, "I must bid the steward make ready one more birth than you bargained for! No fear of scurvy or ship-fever, this voyage! What with the ship's surgeon and this other doctor, our only danger will be from drug or pill; more by token, as there is a lot of apothecary's stuff aboard, which I traded for with a Spanish vessel."

"What mean you?" inquired Hester, startled more than she permitted to appear. "Have you another passenger?"

"Why, know you not," cried the shipmaster, "that this physician here—Chillingworth, he calls himself—is minded to try my cabin-fare with you? Ay, ay, you must have known it; for he tells me he is of your party, and a close friend to the gentleman you spoke of,—he that is in peril from these sour old Puritan rulers!"

"They know each other well, indeed," replied Hester, with a mien of calmness, though in the utmost consternation. "They have long dwelt together."

Nothing further passed between the mariner and Hester Prynne. But, at that instant, she beheld old Roger Chillingworth himself, standing in the remotest corner of the market-place, and smiling on her; a smile which—across the wide and bustling square, and through all the talk and laughter, and various thoughts, moods, and interests of the crowd—conveyed secret and fearful meaning.

XXII

The Procession

BEFORE Hester Prynne could call together her thoughts, and consider what was practicable to be done in this new and startling aspect of affairs, the sound of military music was heard approaching along a contiguous street. It denoted the advance of the procession of magistrates and citizens, on its way towards the meeting-house; where, in compliance with a custom thus early established, and ever since observed, the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale was to deliver an Election Sermon.

Soon the head of the procession showed itself, with a slow and stately march, turning a corner, and making its way across the market-place. First came the music. It comprised a variety of instruments, perhaps imperfectly adapted to one another, and played with no great skill; but yet attaining the great object for which the harmony of drum and clarion addresses itself to the multitude,—that of imparting a higher and more heroic air to the scene of life that passes before the eye. Little Pearl at first clapped her hands, but then lost, for an instant, the restless agitation that had kept her in a continual effervescence throughout the morning; she gazed silently, and seemed to be borne upward, like a floating sea-bird, on the long heaves and swells of sound. But she was brought back to her former mood by the shimmer of the sunshine on the weapons and bright armor of the military company, which followed after the music, and formed the honorary escort of the procession. This body of soldiery—which still sustains a corporate existence, and marches down from past ages with an ancient and honorable fame—was composed of no mercenary materials. Its ranks were filled with gentlemen, who felt the stirrings of martial impulse, and sought to establish a kind of College of Arms, where, as in an association of Knights Templars, they might learn the science, and, so far as peaceful exercise would teach them, the practices of war. The high estimation then placed upon the military character might be seen in the lofty port of each individual member of the company. Some of them, indeed, by their services in the Low Countries and on other fields of European warfare, had fairly won their title to assume the name and pomp of soldiership. The entire array, moreover, clad in burnished steel, and with plumage nodding over their bright morions, had a brilliancy of effect which no modern display can aspire to equal.

And yet the men of civil eminence, who came immediately behind the military escort, were better worth a thoughtful observer's eye. Even in outward demeanor, they showed a stamp of majesty that made the warrior's haughty stride look vulgar if not absurd. It was an age when what we call talent had far less consideration than now, but the massive materials which produce stability and dignity of character a great deal more. The people possessed, by hereditary right, the quality of reverence; which, in their descendants, if it survive at all, exists in smaller proportion, and with a vastly diminished force, in the selection and estimate of public men. The change may be for good or ill, and is partly, perhaps, for both. In that old day, the English settler on these rude shores—having left king, nobles, and all degrees of awful rank behind, while still the faculty and necessity of reverence were strong in him—bestowed it on the white hair and venerable brow of age; on long-tried integrity; on solid wisdom and sad-colored experience; on endowments of that grave and weighty order which gives the idea of permanence, and comes under the general definition of respectability. These primitive statesmen, therefore, —Bradstreet, Endicott, Dudley, Bellingham, and their compeers,—who were elevated to power by the early

choice of the people, seem to have been not often brilliant, but distinguished by a ponderous sobriety, rather than activity of intellect. They had fortitude and self-reliance, and in time of difficulty or peril, stood up for the welfare of the state like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide. The traits of character here indicated were well represented in the square cast of countenance and large physical development of the new colonial magistrates. So far as a demeanor of natural authority was concerned, the mother country need not have been ashamed to see these foremost men of an actual democracy adopted into the House of Peers, or made the Privy Council of the sovereign.

Next in order to the magistrates came the young and eminently distinguished divine, from whose lips the religious discourse of the anniversary was expected. His was the profession, at that era, in which intellectual ability displayed itself far more than in political life; for—leaving a higher motive out of the question—it offered inducements powerful enough, in the almost worshipping respect of the community, to win the most aspiring ambition into its service. Even political power—as in the case of Increase Mather—was within the grasp of a successful priest.

It was the observation of those who beheld him now, that never, since Mr. Dimmesdale first set his foot on the New England shore, had he exhibited such energy as was seen in the gait and air with which he kept his pace in the procession. There was no feebleness of step, as at other times; his frame was not bent; nor did his hand rest ominously upon his heart. Yet, if the clergyman were rightly viewed, his strength seemed not of the body. It might be spiritual, and imparted to him by angelic ministrations. It might be the exhilaration of that potent cordial, which is distilled only in the furnace-glow of earnest and long-continued thought. Or, perchance, his sensitive temperament was invigorated by the loud and piercing music, that swelled heavenward, and uplifted him on its ascending wave. Nevertheless, so abstracted was his look, it might be questioned whether Mr. Dimmesdale even heard the music. There was his body, moving onward, and with an unaccustomed force. But where was his mind? Far and deep in its own region, busying itself, with preternatural activity, to marshal a procession of stately thoughts that were soon to issue thence; and so he saw nothing, heard nothing, knew nothing, of what was around him; but the spiritual element took up the feeble frame, and carried it along, unconscious of the burden, and converting it to spirit like itself. Men of uncommon intellect, who have grown morbid, possess this occasional power of mighty effort, into which they throw the life of many days, and then are lifeless for as many more.

Hester Prynne, gazing steadfastly at the clergyman, felt a dreary influence come over her, but wherefore or whence she knew not; unless that he seemed so remote from her own sphere, and utterly beyond her reach. One glance of recognition, she had imagined, must needs pass between them. She thought of the dim forest, with its little dell of solitude, and love, and anguish, and the mossy tree-trunk, where, sitting hand in hand, they had mingled their sad and passionate talk with the melancholy murmur of the brook. How deeply had they known each other then! And was this the man? She hardly knew him now! He, moving proudly past, enveloped, as it were, in the rich music, with the procession of majestic and venerable fathers; he, so unattainable in his worldly position, and still more so in that far vista of his unsympathizing thoughts, through which she now beheld him! Her spirit sank with the idea that all must have been a delusion, and that, vividly as she had dreamed it, there could be no real bond betwixt the clergyman and herself. And thus much of woman was there in Hester, that she could scarcely forgive him,—least of all now, when the heavy footstep of their approaching Fate might be heard, nearer, nearer, nearer!—for being able so completely to withdraw himself from their mutual world; while she groped darkly, and stretched forth her cold hands, and found him not.

Pearl either saw and responded to her mother's feelings, or herself felt the remoteness and intangibility that had fallen around the minister. While the procession passed, the child was uneasy, fluttering up and down, like a bird on the point of taking flight. When the whole had gone by, she looked up into Hester's face.

"Mother," said she, "was that the same minister that kissed me by the brook?"

"Hold thy peace, dear little Pearl!" whispered her mother. "We must not always talk in the market-place of what happens to us in the forest."

"I could not be sure that it was he; so strange he looked," continued the child. "Else I would have run to him, and bid him kiss me now, before all the people; even as he did yonder among the dark old trees. What would the minister have said, mother? Would he have clapped his hand over his heart, and scowled on me, and bid me be gone?"

"What should he say, Pearl," answered Hester, "save that it was no time to kiss, and that kisses are not to be given in the market-place? Well for thee, foolish child, that thou didst not speak to him!"

Another shade of the same sentiment, in reference

to Mr. Dimmesdale, was expressed by a person whose eccentricities—or insanity, as we should term it—led her to do what few of the townspeople would have ventured on; to begin a conversation with the wearer of the scarlet letter, in public. It was Mistress Hibbins, who, arrayed in great magnificence, with a triple ruff, a broidered stomacher, a gown of rich velvet, and a gold-headed cane, had come forth to see the procession. As this ancient lady had the renown (which subsequently cost her no less a price than her life) of being a principal actor in all the works of necromancy, that were continually going forward, the crowd gave way before her, and seemed to fear the touch of her garment, as if it carried the plague among its gorgeous folds. Seen in conjunction with Hester Prynne,—kindly as so many now felt towards the latter,—the dread inspired by Mistress Hibbins was doubled, and caused a general movement from that part of the market-place in which the two women stood.

"Now, what mortal imagination could conceive it!" whispered the old lady, confidentially, to Hester. "Yonder divine man! That saint on earth, as the people uphold him to be, and as—I must needs say—he really looks! Who, now, that saw him pass in the procession, would think how little while it is since he went forth out of his study,—chewing a Hebrew text of Scripture in his mouth, I warrant,—to take an airing in the forest! Aha! we know what that means, Hester Prynne! But, truly, forsooth, I find it hard to believe him the same man. Many a church-member saw I, walking behind the music, that has danced in the same measure with me, when Somebody was fiddler, and, it might be, an Indian powwow or a Lapland wizard changing hands with us! That is but a trifle, when a woman knows the world. But this minister! Couldst thou surely tell, Hester, whether he was the same man that encountered thee on the forest-path?"

"Madam, I know not of what you speak," answered Hester Prynne, feeling Mistress Hibbins to be of infirm mind; yet strangely startled and awe-stricken by the confidence with which she affirmed a personal connection between so many persons (herself among them) and the Evil One. "It is not for me to talk lightly of a learned and pious minister of the Word, like the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale!"

"Fie, woman, fie!" cried the old lady, shaking her finger at Hester. "Dost thou think I have been to the forest so many times, and have yet no skill to judge who else has been there? Yea; though no leaf of the wild garlands, which they wore while they danced, be left in their hair! I know thee, Hester; for I behold the token. We may all see it in the sunshine; and it glows like a red flame in the dark. Thou wearest it openly; so there need be no question about that. But this minister! Let me tell thee, in thine ear! When the Black Man sees one of his own servants, signed and sealed, so shy of owning to the bond as is the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, he hath a way of ordering matters so that the mark shall be disclosed in open daylight to the eyes of all the world! What is it that the minister seeks to hide, with his hand always over his heart? Ha, Hester Prynne!"

"What is it, good Mistress Hibbins?" eagerly asked little Pearl. "Hast thou seen it?"

"No matter, darling!" responded Mistress Hibbins, making Pearl a profound reverence. "Thou thyself wilt see it, one time or another. They say, child, thou art of the lineage of the Prince of the Air! Wilt thou ride with me, some fine night, to see thy father? Then thou shalt know wherefore the minister keeps his hand over his heart!"

Laughing so shrilly that all the market-place could hear her, the weird old gentlewoman took her departure.

By this time the preliminary prayer had been offered in the meeting-house, and the accents of the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale were heard commencing his discourse. An irresistible feeling kept Hester near the spot. As the sacred edifice was too much thronged to admit another auditor, she took up her position close beside the scaffold of the pillory. It was in sufficient proximity to bring the whole sermon to her ears, in the shape of an indistinct, but varied, murmur and flow of the minister's very peculiar voice.

This vocal organ was in itself a rich endowment; insomuch that a listener, comprehending nothing of the language in which the preacher spoke, might still have been swayed to and fro by the mere tone and cadence. Like all other music, it breathed passion and pathos, and emotions high or tender, in a tongue native to the human heart, wherever educated. Muffled as the sound was by its passage through the church-walls, Hester Prynne listened with such intentness, and sympathized so intimately, that the sermon had throughout a meaning for her, entirely apart from its indistinguishable words. These, perhaps, if more distinctly heard, might have been only a grosser medium, and have clogged the spiritual sense. Now she caught the low undertone, as of the wind sinking down to repose itself; then ascended with it, as it rose through progressive gradations of sweetness and power, until its volume seemed to envelop her with an atmosphere of awe and solemn grandeur. And yet, majestic as the voice sometimes became, there was forever in it an essential character

of plaintiveness. A loud or low expression of anguish,—the whisper, or the shriek, as it might be conceived, of suffering humanity, that touched a sensibility in every bosom! At times this deep strain of pathos was all that could be heard, and scarcely heard, sighing amid a desolate silence. But even when the minister's voice grew high and commanding,—when it gushed irrepressibly upward,—when it assumed its utmost breadth and power, so overfilling the church as to burst its way through the solid walls, and diffuse itself in the open air,—still, if the auditor listened intently, and for the purpose, he could detect the same cry of pain. What was it? The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,—at every moment,—in each accent,—and never in vain! It was this profound and continual undertone that gave the clergyman his most appropriate power.

During all this time, Hester stood, statue-like, at the foot of the scaffold. If the minister's voice had not kept her there, there would nevertheless have been an inevitable magnetism in that spot, whence she dated the first hour of her life of ignominy. There was a sense within her,—too ill-defined to be made a thought, but weighing heavily on her mind,—that her whole orb of life, both before and after, was connected with this spot, as with the one point that gave it unity.

Little Pearl, meanwhile, had quitted her mother's side, and was playing at her own will about the market-place. She made the sombre crowd cheerful by her erratic and glistening ray; even as a bird of bright plumage illuminates a whole tree of dusky foliage, by darting to and fro, half seen and half concealed amid the twilight of the clustering leaves. She had an undulating, but oftentimes, a sharp and irregular movement. It indicated the restless vivacity of her spirit, which to-day was doubly indefatigable in its tiptoe dance, because it was played upon and vibrated with her mother's disquietude. Whenever Pearl saw anything to excite her ever-active and wandering curiosity, she flew thitherward and, as we might say, seized upon that man or thing as her own property, so far as she desired it; but without yielding the minutest degree of control over her motions in requital. The Puritans looked on, and, if they smiled, were none the less inclined to pronounce the child a demon offspring, from the indescribable charm of beauty and eccentricity that shone through her little figure, and sparkled with its activity. She ran and looked the wild Indian in the face; and he grew conscious of a nature wilder than his own. Thence, with native audacity, but still with a reserve as characteristic, she flew into the midst of a group of mariners, the swarthy-cheeked wild men of the ocean, as the Indians were of the land; and they gazed wonderingly and admiringly at Pearl, as if a flake of the sea-foam had taken the shape of a little maid, and were gifted with a soul of the sea-fire, that flashes beneath the prow in the nighttime.

One of these seafaring men—the shipmaster, indeed, who had spoken to Hester Prynne—was so smitten with Pearl's aspect, that he attempted to lay hands upon her, with purpose to snatch a kiss. Finding it as impossible to touch her as to catch a humming-bird in the air, he took from his hat the gold chain that was twisted about it, and threw it to the child. Pearl immediately twined it around her neck and waist, with such happy skill, that, once seen there, it became a part of her, and it was difficult to imagine her without it.

"Thy mother is yonder woman with the scarlet letter," said the seaman. "Wilt thou carry her a message from me?"

"If the message pleases me, I will," answered Pearl.

"Then tell her," rejoined he, "that I spake again with the black-a-visaged, hump-shouldered old doctor, and he engages to bring his friend, the gentleman she wots of, aboard with him. So let thy mother take no thought, save for herself and thee. Wilt thou tell her this, thou witch-baby?"

"Mistress Hibbins says my father is the Prince of the Air!" cried Pearl, with a naughty smile. "If thou callest me that ill name, I shall tell him of thee; and he will chase thy ship with a tempest!"

Pursuing a zigzag course across the market-place, the child returned to her mother, and communicated what the mariner had said. Hester's strong, calm, steadfastly enduring spirit almost sank, at last, on beholding this dark and grim countenance of an inevitable doom, which—at the moment when a passage seemed to open for the minister and herself out of their labyrinth of misery—showed itself, with an unrelenting smile, right in the midst of their path.

With her mind harassed by the terrible perplexity in which the shipmaster's intelligence involved her, she was also subjected to another trial. There were many people present, from the country round about, who had often heard of the scarlet letter, and to whom it had been made terrific by a hundred false or exaggerated rumors, but who had never beheld it with their own bodily eyes. These, after exhausting other modes of amusement, now thronged about Hester Prynne with rude and boorish intrusiveness.

Unscrupulous as it was, however, it could not bring them nearer than a circuit of several yards. At that distance they accordingly stood, fixed there by the centrifugal force of the repugnance which the mystic symbol inspired. The whole gang of sailors, likewise, observing the press of spectators, and learning the purport of the scarlet letter, came and thrust their sunburnt and desperado-looking faces into the ring. Even the Indians were affected by a sort of cold shadow of the white man's curiosity, and, gliding through the crowd, fastened their snake-like black eyes on Hester's bosom; conceiving, perhaps, that the wearer of this brilliantly embroidered badge must needs be a personage of high dignity among her people. Lastly the inhabitants of the town (their own interest in this worn-out subject languidly reviving itself, by sympathy with what they saw others feel) lounged idly to the same quarter, and tormented Hester Prynne, perhaps more than all the rest, with their cool, well-acquainted gaze at her familiar shame. Hester saw and recognized the self-same faces of that group of matrons, who had awaited her forthcoming from the prison-door, seven years ago; all save one, the youngest and only compassionate among them, whose burial-robe she had since made. At the final hour, when she was so soon to fling aside the burning letter, it had strangely become the centre of more remark and excitement, and was thus made to sear her breast more painfully, than at any time since the first day she put it on.

While Hester stood in that magic circle of ignominy, where the cunning cruelty of her sentence seemed to have fixed her forever, the admirable preacher was looking down from the sacred pulpit upon an audience whose very inmost spirits had yielded to his control. The sainted minister in the church! The woman of the scarlet letter in the market-place! What imagination would have been irreverent enough to surmise that the same scorching stigma was on them both!

XXIII

The Revelation of the Scarlet Letter

THE eloquent voice, on which the souls of the listening audience had been borne aloft as on the swelling waves of the sea, at length came to a pause. There was a momentary silence, profound as what should follow the utterance of oracles. Then ensued a murmur and half-hushed tumult; as if the auditors, released from the high spell that had transported them into the region of another's mind, were returning into themselves, with all their awe and wonder still heavy on them. In a moment more, the crowd began to gush forth from the doors of the church. Now that there was an end, they needed other breath, more fit to support the gross and earthly life into which they relapsed, than that atmosphere which the preacher had converted into words of flame, and had burdened with the rich fragrance of his thought.

In the open air their rapture broke into speech. The street and the market-place absolutely babbled, from side to side, with applauses of the minister. His hearers could not rest until they had told one another of what each knew better than he could tell or hear. According to their united testimony, never had man spoken in so wise, so high, and so holy a spirit, as he that spake this day; nor had inspiration ever breathed through mortal lips more evidently than it did through his. Its influence could be seen, as it were, descending upon him, and possessing him, and continually lifting him out of the written discourse that lay before him, and filling him with ideas that must have been as marvellous to himself as to his audience. His subject, it appeared, had been the relation between the Deity and the communities of mankind, with a special reference to the New England which they were here planting in the wilderness. And, as he drew towards the close, a spirit as of prophecy had come upon him, constraining him to its purpose as mightily as the old prophets of Israel were constrained; only with this difference, that, whereas the Jewish seers had denounced judgments and ruin on their country, it was his mission to foretell a high and glorious destiny for the newly gathered people of the Lord. But, throughout it all, and through the whole discourse, there had been a certain deep, sad undertone of pathos, which could not be interpreted otherwise than as the natural regret of one soon to pass away. Yes; their minister whom they so loved—and who so loved them all, that he could not depart heavenward without a sigh—had the foreboding of untimely death upon him, and would soon leave them in their tears! This idea of his transitory stay on earth gave the last emphasis to the effect which the preacher had produced; it was as if an angel, in his passage to the skies, had shaken his bright wings over the people for an instant,—at once a shadow and a splendor,—and had shed down a shower of golden truths upon them.

Thus, there had come to the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale—as to most men, in their various spheres, though seldom recognized until they see it far behind them—an epoch of life more brilliant and full of triumph than any previous one, or than any which could hereafter be. He stood, at this mo-

ment, on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts of intellect, rich lore, prevailing eloquence, and a reputation of whitest sanctity, could exalt a clergyman in New England's earliest days, when the professional character was of itself a lofty pedestal. Such was the position which the minister occupied, as he bowed his head forward on the cushions of the pulpit, at the close of his Election Sermon. Meanwhile Hester Prynne was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory, with the scarlet letter still burning on her breast!

Now was heard again the clangor of the music, and the measured tramp of the military escort, issuing from the church-door. The procession was to be marshalled thence to the town-hall, where a solemn banquet would complete the ceremonies of the day.

Once more, therefore, the train of venerable and majestic fathers was seen moving through a broad pathway of the people, who drew back reverently, on either side, as the Governor and magistrates, the old and wise men, the holy ministers, and all that were eminent and renowned, advanced into the midst of them. When they were fairly in the market-place, their presence was greeted by a shout. This—though doubtless it might acquire additional force and volume from the childlike loyalty which the age awarded to its rulers—was felt to be an irrepressible outburst of enthusiasm kindled in the auditors by that high strain of eloquence which was yet reverberating in their ears. Each felt the impulse in himself, and, in the same breath, caught it from his neighbor. Within the church, it had hardly been kept down; beneath the sky, it pealed upward to the zenith. There were human beings enough, and enough of highly wrought and symphonious feeling, to produce that more impressive sound than the organ tones of the blast, or the thunder, or the roar of the sea; even that mighty swell of many voices, blended into one great voice by the universal impulse which makes likewise one vast heart out of the many. Never, from the soil of New England, had gone up such a shout! Never, on New England soil, had stood the man so honored by his mortal brethren as the preacher!

How fared it with him then? Were there not the brilliant particles of a halo in the air about his head? So etherealized by spirit as he was, and so apotheosized by worshipping admirers, did his footsteps, in the procession, really tread upon the dust of earth?

As the ranks of military men and civil fathers moved onward, all eyes were turned towards the point where the minister was seen to approach among them. The shout died into a murmur, as one portion of the crowd after another obtained a glimpse of him. How feeble and pale he looked, amid all his triumph! The energy—or say, rather, the inspiration which had held him up, until he should have delivered the sacred message that brought its own strength along with it from heaven—was withdrawn, now that it had so faithfully performed its office. The glow, which they had just before beheld burning on his cheek, was extinguished, like a flame that sinks down hopelessly among the late-decaying embers. It seemed hardly the face of a man alive, with such a deathlike hue; it was hardly a man with life in him, that tottered on his path so nervelessly, yet tottered, and did not fall!

One of his clerical brethren,—it was the venerable John Wilson,—observing the state in which Mr. Dimmesdale was left by the retiring wave of intellect and sensibility, stepped forward hastily to offer his support. The minister tremulously, but decidedly, repelled the old man's arm. He still walked onward, if that movement could be so described, which rather resembled the wavering effort of an infant, with its mother's arms in view, outstretched to tempt him forward. And now, almost imperceptible as were the latter steps of his progress, he had come opposite the well-remembered and weather-darkened scaffold, where, long since, with all that dreary lapse of time between, Hester Prynne had encountered the world's ignominious stare. There stood Hester, holding little Pearl by the hand! And there was the scarlet letter on her breast! The minister here made a pause; although the music still played the stately and rejoicing march to which the procession moved. It summoned him onward,—onward to the festival!—but here he made a pause.

Bellingham, for the last few moments, had kept an anxious eye upon him. He now left his own place in the procession, and advanced to give assistance; judging, from Mr. Dimmesdale's aspect, that he must otherwise inevitably fall. But there was something in the latter's expression that warned back the magistrate, although a man not readily obeying the vague intimations that pass from one spirit to another. The crowd, meanwhile, looked on with awe and wonder. This earthly faintness was, in their view, only another phase of the minister's celestial strength; nor would it have seemed a miracle too high to be wrought for one so holy, had he ascended before their eyes, waxing dimmer and brighter, and fading at last into the light of heaven.

He turned towards the scaffold, and stretched forth his arms.

"Hester," said he, "come hither! Come, my little Pearl!"

It was a ghastly look with which he regarded them; but there was something at once tender and strangely triumphant in it. The child, with the bird-like motion which was one of her characteristics, flew to him, and clasped her arms about his knees. Hester Prynne—slowly, as if impelled by inevitable fate, and against her strongest will, likewise drew near, but paused before she reached him. At this instant, old Roger Chillingworth thrust himself through the crowd,—or, perhaps, so dark, disturbed, and evil, was his look, he rose up out of some nether region,—to snatch back his victim from what he sought to do! Be that as it might, the old man rushed forward, and caught the minister by the arm.

"Madman, hold! what is your purpose?" whispered he. "Wave back that woman! Cast off this child! All shall be well! Do not blacken your fame, and perish in dishonor! I can yet save you! Would you bring infamy on your sacred profession?"

"Ha, tempter! Methinks thou art too late!" answered the minister, encountering his eye, fearfully, but firmly. "Thy power is not what it was! With God's help, I shall escape thee now!"

He again extended his hand to the woman of the scarlet letter.

"Hester Prynne," cried he, with a piercing earnestness, "in the name of Him, so terrible and so merciful, who gives me grace, at this last moment, to do what—for my own heavy sin and miserable agony—I withheld myself from doing seven years ago, come hither now, and twine thy strength about me! Thy strength, Hester; but let it be guided by the will which God hath granted me! This wretched and wronged old man is opposing it with all his might!—with all his own might, and the fiend's! Come, Hester, come! Support me up yonder scaffold!"

The crowd was in a tumult. The men of rank and dignity, who stood more immediately around the clergyman, were so taken by surprise, and so perplexed as to the purport of what they saw,—unable to receive the explanation which most readily presented itself, or to imagine any other,—that they remained silent and inactive spectators of the judgment which Providence seemed about to work. They beheld the minister, leaning on Hester's shoulder, and supported by her arm around him, approach the scaffold, and ascend its steps; while still the little hand of the sin-born child was clasped in his. Old Roger Chillingworth followed, as one intimately connected with the drama of guilt and sorrow in which they had all been actors, and well entitled, therefore, to be present at its closing scene.

"Hadst thou sought the whole earth over," said he, looking darkly at the clergyman, "there was no one place so secret,—no high place nor lowly place, where thou couldst have escaped me,—save on this very scaffold!"

"Thanks be to Him who hath led me hither!" answered the minister.

Yet he trembled, and turned to Hester with an expression of doubt and anxiety in his eyes, not the less evidently betrayed, that there was a feeble smile upon his lips.

"Is not this better," murmured he, "than what we dreamed of in the forest?"

"I know not! I know not!" she hurriedly replied. "Better? Yea; so we may both die, and little Pearl die with us!"

"For thee and Pearl, be it as God shall order," said the minister; "and God is merciful! Let me now do the will which he hath made plain before my sight. For, Hester, I am a dying man. So let me make haste to take my shame upon me!"

Partly supported by Hester Prynne, and holding one hand of little Pearl's, the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale turned to the dignified and venerable rulers; to the holy ministers, who were his brethren; to the people, whose great heart was thoroughly appalled, yet overflowing with tearful sympathy, as knowing that some deep life-matter—which, if full of sin, was full of anguish and repentance likewise—was now to be laid open to them. The sun, but little past its meridian, shone down upon the clergyman, and gave a distinctness to his figure, as he stood out from all the earth, to put in his plea of guilty at the bar of Eternal Justice.

"People of New England!" cried he, with a voice that rose over them, high, solemn, and majestic,—yet had always a tremor through it, and sometimes a shriek, struggling up out of a fathomless depth of remorse and woe,—"ye, that have loved me!—ye, that have deemed me holy!—behold me here, the one sinner of the world! At last!—at last!—I stand upon the spot where, seven years since, I should have stood; here, with this woman, whose arm, more than the little strength wherewith I have crept hitherward, sustains me, at this dreadful moment, from grovelling down upon my face! Lo, the scarlet letter which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it! Wherever her walk hath been,—wherever, so miserably burdened, she may have hoped to find repose,—it hath cast a lurid gleam of awe and horrible repugnance round about her. But there stood one in the midst of you, at whose brand of sin and infamy ye have not shuddered!"

It seemed, at this point, as if the minister must leave the remainder of his secret undisclosed. But he fought back the bodily weakness,—and, still more,

the faintness of heart,—that was striving for the mastery with him. He threw off all assistance, and stepped passionately forward a pace before the woman and the child.

"It was on him!" he continued, with a kind of fierceness; so determined was he to speak out the whole. "God's eye beheld it! The angels were forever pointing at it! The Devil knew it well, and fretted it continually with the touch of his burning finger! But he hid it cunningly from men, and walked among you with the mien of a spirit, mournful, because so pure in a sinful world!—and sad, because he missed his heavenly kindred! Now, at the death-hour, he stands up before you! He bids you look again at Hester's scarlet letter! He tells you, that, with all its mysterious horror, it is but the shadow of what he bears on his own breast, and that even this, his own red stigma, is no more than the type of what has seared his inmost heart. Stand any here that question God's judgment on a sinner? Behold! Behold a dreadful witness of it!"

With a convulsive motion, he tore away the ministerial band from before his breast. It was revealed! But it were irreverent to describe that revelation. For an instant, the gaze of the horror-stricken multitude was concentrated on the ghastly miracle; while the minister stood, with flush of triumph in his face, as one who, in the crisis of acutest pain, had won a victory. Then, down he sank upon the scaffold! Hester partly raised him, and supported his head against her bosom. Old Roger Chillingworth knelt down beside him, with a blank, dull countenance, out of which the life seemed to have departed.

"Thou hast escaped me!" he repeated more than once. "Thou hast escaped me!"

"May God forgive thee!" said the minister. "Thou, too, hast deeply sinned!"

He withdrew his dying eyes from the old man, and fixed them on the woman and the child.

"My little Pearl," said he, feebly,—and there was a sweet and gentle smile over his face, as of a spirit sinking into deep repose; nay, now that the burden was removed, it seemed almost as if he would be sportive with the child,—"dear little Pearl, wilt thou kiss me now? Thou wouldst not, yonder, in the forest! But now thou wilt?"

Pearl kissed his lips. A spell was broken. The great scene of grief, in which the wild infant bore a part, had developed all her sympathies; and as her tears fell upon her father's cheeks, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor forever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it. Towards her mother, too, Pearl's errand as a messenger of anguish was all fulfilled.

"Hester," said the clergyman, "farewell!"

"Shall we not meet again?" whispered she, bending her face down close to his. "Shall we not spend our immortal life together? Surely, surely, we have ransomed one another, with all this woe! Thou lookest far into eternity, with those bright dying eyes! Then tell me what thou seest?"

"Hush, Hester, hush!" said he, with tremulous solemnity. "The law we broke!—the sin here so awfully revealed!—let these alone be thy thoughts! I fear! I fear! It may be, that, when we forgot our God,—when we violated our reverence each for the other's soul,—it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion. God knows; and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast! By sending yonder dark and terrible old man, to keep the torture always at red-heat! By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people! Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost forever! Praised be his name! His will be done! Farewell!"

That final word came forth with the minister's expiring breath. The multitude, silent till then, broke out in a strange, deep voice of awe and wonder, which could not as yet find utterance, save in this murmur that rolled so heavily after the departed spirit.

XXIV

Conclusion

AFTER many days, when time sufficed for the people to arrange their thoughts in reference to the foregoing scene, there was more than one account of what had been witnessed on the scaffold.

Most of the spectators testified to having seen, on the breast of the unhappy minister, a SCARLET LETTER —the very semblance of that worn by Hester Prynne —imprinted in the flesh. As regarded its origin, there were various explanations, all of which must necessarily have been conjectural. Some affirmed that the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, on the very day when Hester Prynne first wore her [illegible] badge, had begun a course of penance,—which he afterwards, in so many futile methods, followed out,—by inflicting a hideous torture on himself. Others contended that the stigma had not been produced until a long time subsequent, when old Roger Chillingworth, being a potent necromancer, had caused it to appear, through the agency of magic and poisonous drugs. Others, again,—and those best able to appreciate the minis-

ter's peculiar sensibility, and the wonderful operation of his spirit upon the body,—whispered their belief, that the awful symbol was the effect of the ever-active tooth of remorse, gnawing from the inmost heart outwardly, and at last manifesting Heaven's dreadful judgment by the visible presence of the letter. The reader may choose among these theories. We have thrown all the light we could acquire upon the portent, and would gladly, now that it has done its office, erase its deep print out of our brain; where long meditation has fixed it in very undesirable distinctness.

It is singular, nevertheless, that certain persons, who were spectators of the whole scene, and professed never once to have removed their eyes from the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, denied that there was any mark whatever on his breast, more than on a new-born infant's. Neither, by their report, had his dying words acknowledged, nor even remotely implied, any, the slightest connection, on his part, with the guilt for which Hester Prynne had so long worn the scarlet letter. According to these highly respectable witnesses, the minister, conscious that he was dying,—conscious, also, that the reverence of the multitude placed him already among saints and angels,—had desired, by yielding up his breath in the arms of that fallen woman, to express to the world how utterly nugatory is the choicest of man's own righteousness. After exhausting life in his efforts for mankind's spiritual good, he had made the manner of his death a parable, in order to impress on his admirers the mighty and mournful lesson, that, in the view of Infinite Purity, we are sinners all alike. It was to teach them, that the holiest among us has but attained so far above his fellows as to discern more clearly the Mercy which looks down, and repudiate more utterly the phantom of human merit, which would look aspiringly upward. Without disputing a truth so momentous, we must be allowed to consider this version of Mr. Dimmesdale's story as only an instance of that stubborn fidelity with which a man's friends—and especially a clergyman's —will sometimes uphold his character, when proofs, clear as the mid-day sunshine on the scarlet letter, established him a false and sin-stained creature of the dust.

The authority which we have chiefly followed,—a manuscript of old date, drawn up from the verbal testimony of individuals, some of whom had known Hester Prynne, while others had heard the tale from contemporary witnesses,—fully confirms the view taken in the foregoing pages. Among many morals which press upon us from the poor minister's miserable experience, we put only this into a sentence:—"Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!"

Nothing was more remarkable than the change which took place, almost immediately after Mr. Dimmesdale's death, in the appearance and demeanor of the old man known as Roger Chillingworth. All his strength and energy—all his vital and intellectual force—seemed at once to desert him; insomuch that he positively withered up, shrivelled away, and almost vanished from mortal sight, like an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun. This unhappy man had made the very principle of his life to consist in the pursuit and systematic exercise of revenge; and when, by its completest triumph and consummation, that evil principle was left with no further material to support it, when, in short, there was no more Devil's work on earth for him to do, it only remained for the unhumanized mortal to betake himself whither his Master would find him tasks enough, and pay him his wages duly. But, to all these shadowy beings, so long our near acquaintances,—as well Roger Chillingworth as his companions,—we would fain be merciful. It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry, whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom. Each, in its utmost development, supposes a high degree of intimacy and heart-knowledge; each renders one individual dependent for the food of his affections and spiritual life upon another; each leaves the passionate lover, or the no less passionate hater, forlorn and desolate by the withdrawal of his subject. Philosophically considered, therefore, the two passions seem essentially the same, except that one happens to be seen in a celestial radiance, and the other in a dusky and lurid glow. In the spiritual world, the old physician and the minister—mutual victims as they have been—may, unawares, have found their earthly stock of hatred and antipathy transmuted into golden love.

Leaving this discussion apart, we have a matter of business to communicate to the reader. At old Roger Chillingworth's decease, (which took place within the year,) and by his last will and testament, of which Governor Bellingham and the Reverend Mr. Wilson were executors, he bequeathed a very considerable amount of property, both here and in England, to little Pearl, the daughter of Hester Prynne.

So Pearl—the elf-child,—the demon offspring, as some people, up to that epoch, persisted in considering her,—became the richest heiress of her day, in the New World. Not improbably, this circumstance wrought a very material change in the public estimation; and, had the mother and child remained here, little Pearl, at a marriageable period of life, might

have mingled her wild blood with the lineage of the devoutest Puritan among them all. But, in no long time after the physician's death, the wearer of the scarlet letter disappeared, and Pearl along with her. For many years, though a vague report would now and then find its way across the sea,—like a shapeless piece of drift-wood tost ashore, with the initials of a name upon it,—yet no tidings of them unquestionably authentic were received. The story of the scarlet letter grew into a legend. Its spell, however, was still potent, and kept the scaffold awful where the poor minister had died, and likewise the cottage by the sea-shore, where Hester Prynne had dwelt. Near this latter spot, one afternoon, some children were at play, when they beheld a tall woman, in a gray robe, approach the cottage-door. In all those years it had never once been opened; but either she unlocked it, or the decaying wood and iron yielded to her hand, or she glided shadow-like through these impediments,—and, at all events, went in.

On the threshold she paused,—turned partly round,—for, perchance, the idea of entering all alone, and all so changed, the home of so intense a former life, was more dreary and desolate than even she could bear. But her hesitation was only for an instant, though long enough to display a scarlet letter on her breast.

And Hester Prynne had returned, and taken up her long-forsaken shame! But where was little Pearl? If still alive, she must now have been in the flush and bloom of early womanhood. None knew—nor ever learned, with the fulness of perfect certainty—whether the elf-child had gone thus untimely to a maiden grave; or whether her wild, rich nature had been softened and subdued, and made capable of a woman's gentle happiness. But, through the remainder of Hester's life, there were indications that the recluse of the scarlet letter was the object of love and interest with some inhabitant of another land. Letters came, with armorial seals upon them, though of bearings unknown to English heraldry. In the cottage there were articles of comfort and luxury such as Hester never cared to use, but which only wealth could have purchased, and affection have imagined for her. There were trifles, too, little ornaments, beautiful tokens of a continual remembrance, that must have been wrought by delicate fingers, at the impulse of a fond heart. And, once, Hester was seen embroidering a baby garment, with such a lavish richness of golden fancy as would have raised a public tumult, had any infant, thus apparelled, been shown to our sober-hued community.

In fine, the gossips of that day believed,—and Mr. Surveyor Pue, who made investigations a century later, believed,—and one of his recent successors in office, moreover, faithfully believes,—that Pearl was not only alive, but married, and happy, and mindful of her mother, and that she would most joyfully have entertained that sad and lonely mother at her fireside.

But there was a more real life for Hester Prynne here, in New England, than in that unknown region where Pearl had found a home. Here had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence. She had returned, therefore, and resumed,—of her own free will, for not the sternest magistrate of that iron period would have imposed it,—resumed the symbol of which we have related so dark a tale. Never afterwards did it quit her bosom. But, in the lapse of the toilsome, thoughtful, and self-devoted years that made up Hester's life, the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world's scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too. And, as Hester Prynne had no selfish ends, nor lived in any measure for her own profit and enjoyment, people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who herself had gone through a mighty trouble. Women, more especially,—in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion,—or with the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought,—came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy! Hester comforted and counselled them as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a life-long sorrow. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of a life successful to such an end!

So said Hester Prynne, and glanced her sad eyes downward at the scarlet letter. And, after many, many years, a new grave was delved, near an old and sunken one, in that burial-ground beside which King's Chapel has since been built. It was near that

old and sunken grave, yet with a space between, as if the dust of the two sleepers had no right to mingle. Yet one tombstone served for both. All around, there were monuments carved with armorial bearings; and on this simple slab of slate—as the curious investigator may still discern, and perplex himself with the purport—there appeared the semblance of an engraved escutcheon. It bore a device, a herald's wording of which might serve for a motto and brief description of our now concluded legend; so sombre is it, and relieved only by one ever-glowing point of light gloomier than the shadow:—

"ON A FIELD, SABLE, THE LETTER A, GULES."

Introduction to Biography and History

MUCH of what has been said with regard to fiction applies to biography and history as well. Like fiction, these forms are concerned with the pattern of action woven by human characters. The difference between these forms and fiction is obvious. The writer of fiction is not wedded to fact in the sense in which the biographer or the historian is. He may use an actual happening to give him the suggestion for a story, but he need not abide by the detail of the happening. If used at all, it is merely a stimulant to the story. This liberty, obviously, the historian does not possess. He must abide by the ascertainable facts. They *are* the facts, and they limit his treatment. To illustrate, Shakespeare read the story of Macbeth in Holinshed's *Chronicles,* a history book. It happened that in the same book Shakespeare read a very vivid account of a murder committed in Macbeth's time. Shakespeare, seeing that the murder furnished fine material for his purpose, in the play *Macbeth* makes Macbeth commit the murder, and thus violates history.

Now as a dramatist Shakespeare is quite justified in doing this. He is writing a play, not a biography; and consequently his incidental violation of history makes no difference. But if Shakespeare were undertaking to give us *biography,* obviously he could not have Macbeth commit a murder of which he was innocent.

This limitation which is imposed on every historian and biographer may seem at first glance to make the writing of history and biography a cut-and-dried affair, the assemblage of known facts in a chronological order. Certainly the business of ascertaining the facts is a most important matter. Much of the work of the historian and biographer consists in this most important "spade work" of unearthing and collecting the facts. But after the facts have been assembled and classified, the business of *interpretation* remains; and we have already seen in the "Introduction to Fiction" and the "Introduction to the Essay" that interpretation brings us into the realm of literature and literary values.

To use an example already employed in the "Introduction to Fiction": one catches a glimpse from a train window of a man standing under a streetlamp at night striking a woman who is standing beside him. This fragment of action in itself, it was pointed out, is meaningless. The literary man might find in it, however, we said, the germ of a story, and in turning it into fiction (that is, a unified and meaningful action) might give us an imaginative account of what happened, relating it to earlier events, making us see the motivation behind the action.

Now the biographer or the historian, when he is presented with a set of facts, has something of the same problem He must relate the facts with which he deals into some sort of pattern so that they may have a meaning. How does his task differ from that of the writer of fiction? We noticed and stated in the "Introduction to Fiction" that the bit of action seen under the streetlamp might be interpreted in dozens of ways--might become in the hands of twenty different writers, twenty different stories. But the historian is anxious to get *the one story, the historically true story.* He is not at liberty to alter the facts; he must if possible discover many more facts. He must find out the previous history of the man and woman. He must take into account all sorts of information which may throw light on their feelings toward each other, their temperaments, their attitudes, etc. But having collected all the items of relevant information which he can, he still is faced with the problem of interpretation; and here his task is essentially the same kind of task as that which the fiction writer faces.

Obviously the scene which we have been using for illustration will hardly call for the services of the biographer or the historian. But we can illustrate the general problem from an actual instance in biography. The biographer writing the life of Stonewall Jackson is faced with such a problem, for example, when he must explain why Jackson at the Seven Days' Battle delayed to attack at the time that Lee ordered him to. Obviously, he will try to find a clear reason or reasons in the records which have been preserved; he will try to find out all he can about the condition of Jackson's army, the conditions of roads, the state of the maps which Jackson possessed, the vagueness or precision of the orders. Furthermore, he will try to find out to the best of his ability the state of Jackson himself at the time: his physical condition (fatigue, possible illness, etc.) and his mental condition. But more than this, he will take into account Jackson's record as a soldier before this battle and his subsequent record, his attitude toward Lee, his attitude toward the

general strategy of the battle, etc. With these last items, however, he will have come down to dealing with the problem of Jackson himself. What sort of man was he? What is the dominant motivation of his actions? Can this particular matter, his failure to advance as ordered, be fitted into some sort of *logic?* It may be, as in this case, that the facts do not dictate positively a particular explanation of his conduct and that he will have to attempt to reconstruct *imaginatively* what probably went on in Jackson's mind. (If he has to, he will as a good historian, caution his reader that his explanation is of this sort.) But his general task, whether in an extreme case such as this or not, will call always for a use of his imagination as he attempts to order his facts into a pattern—as he tries to make them fit into a *logic* growing out of the character of the man whose life he is attempting to reconstruct. He must of course always test his conception of the character by the facts; but his picture of the man is arrived at, nonetheless, as an act of the imagination.

There are of course other more obvious levels on which the literary ability of the good biographer or historian must express itself. He must be able to present his material clearly and convincingly, and he must be able to hold his reader's interest. But such technical matters apply to any piece of writing (see the "Introduction to the Essay," for example), and the student needs only to be reminded that they exist.

In good biography, therefore, we shall look for, and expect to find, many of the qualities which we find in good fiction. We should be on our guard, however, against making a mistake often made on this point. Many people think that a good biographer who also knows how to write displays this ability by clothing his ideas in a "beautiful style." This conception is true, of course, in so far as it goes; but the style must never be thought of as merely a coat of paint brushed over the surface. If the biographer has real literary ability, that ability will display itself in more fundamental ways: it will certainly reveal itself in his ability to recreate the essential character of the man who is his subject from the various items of information which he possesses; and in his ability to make us, his readers, see and understand that character too.

In fiction, the writer may select and arrange his material as an expression of the theme which he cares to state. He may choose, of course, whatever theme he will. The biographer is, of course, far more limited. He begins, not with a theme which he has adopted, but with the circumstantial material. *His task is to find what the theme is.* But even with the limitation just stated, there remain a number of possible arrangements of his material from which the biographer may choose. His choice will depend primarily on his interest in his subject. For example, he may be interested in his subject's life in itself, or he may be interested in it as representative of some larger process; he may wish to give us a careful statement of the influences which combined to form the character whom he is studying, or he may wish to glide over his subject's development very rapidly in order to focus attention on some period of his mature life.

The biographical selections in this text will furnish examples of a number of different interests and of a number of different arrangements of material which follow from these interests. For instance, Plutarch's interest in Antony is a relatively simple interest, an interest in Antony as a man—what might be called a moral interest. It is true that Plutarch tells us of Antony's career as a Roman soldier and statesman, but he is not primarily interested in the course of the Roman Empire. Rather, he is anxious to make us see what sort of man Antony was and to make clear to us what he did. His "Life of Marcus Antonius" admirably fulfills this purpose.

We shall find a decided difference of interest if we compare Plutarch's "Antony" with Lytton Strachey's "The End of General Gordon." Strachey is interested in Gordon as an individual, it is true; but he is even more interested in him as a representative of the Victorian Age which produced him. It is easy to show how this dominant interest influences the arrangement of Strachey's material. For instance, in the most exciting part of the story, the siege of Khartoum when Gordon is attempting to hold the town against the Mahdi whose forces surround it, Strachey is continually taking us back to England, showing us what different sections of opinion thought of Gordon and Gordon's plight.

Strachey, moreover, has a very definite attitude toward the Victorian Period, and that attitude is reflected in his attitude toward Gordon himself. We may say, indeed, that one of the very important elements in Strachey's "The End of General Gordon" is this matter of the author's attitude, an attitude which is always present as a quiet irony, coloring each statement and each episode. Strachey's interpretation of the man and of the age which Strachey thinks he represents is thus definitely present for all of the biographer's show of objectivity.

In Christopher Hollis's "John Caldwell Calhoun" the author's interpretation is not masked in irony but is made thoroughly explicit. Here indeed we find

biography merging into the historical interpretation of an idea. For Hollis, though he is interested in Calhoun, the man, is primarily interested in the history of the United States. His interest in Calhoun's personality and career is, therefore, subordinated to his larger historical interest in Calhoun as the representative of an idea. We can see this subordination quite plainly in the selection of the details of Calhoun's life which Hollis makes to present to us: they are nearly all of them details which have to do with Calhoun's conception of the Union, of the relation of the states to the Union, of negro slavery, of the relation of the Southern states to those of the North, etc.

This more general historical interest is carried a stage further in F. J. Turner's "Frontier in American History," for Turner's interpretation of history is not mixed with a biographical interest at all. Turner in this essay deals, not with some single personality in order to make a general historical interpretation, but with an idea in itself. Here we enter into the realm of the essay, and much that is said in the "Introduction to the Essay" applies here. As a matter of fact, some of the work which we have included in the essay section of this text, Agar's "Culture versus Colonialism in America," for example, might have been included in this section as history.

The biographer and the historian do select and interpret for us; and this means that their activities, in part at least, fall within the realm of literature. In reading biography and history we have of course, more than a literary interest. But here a paradox appears: we cannot understand history and biography in their fullest meanings until we understand that they are like literature in that they make interpretations—that they are not merely cut-and-dried chronicles, collections of facts. Indeed, history, even history of the greatest factual and statistical emphasis, can not finally give us truth except by the exercise of the logical and imaginative powers of the historian. The historian does not finally aim at giving facts, for facts as such are meaningless. He studies and presents facts only that he may arrive at an interpretation. Though the biographer or historian is bound by his facts, and tries to master all available facts, he can only reach what we commonly regard as "the truth" —the full meaning of a given set of facts—by the exercise of the same powers as those which make literature.

THE LIFE OF MARCUS ANTONIUS

PLUTARCH

Translated by Sir Thomas North

ANTONIUS being a fair young man, and in the prime of his youth, he fell acquainted with Curio, whose friendship and acquaintance (as it is reported) was a plague unto him. For he was a dissolute man, given over to all lust and insolency, who, to have Antonius the better at his commandment, trained him on into great follies, and vain expenses upon women, in rioting and banqueting. So that in short time he brought Antonius into a marvellous great debt, and too great for one of his years, to wit, of two hundred and fifty talents, for all which sum Curio was his surety. His father hearing of it did put his son from him, and forbade him his house. Then he fell in with Clodius, one of the desperatest and most wicked Tribunes at that time in Rome. Him he followed for a time in his desperate attempts, who bred great stir and mischief in Rome: but at length he forsook him, being weary of his rashness and folly, or else for that he was afraid of them that were bent against Clodius. Thereupon he left Italy, and went into Greece, and there bestowed the most part of his time, sometime in wars, and otherwhile in the study of eloquence. He used a manner of phrase in his speech, called Asiatic, which carried the best grace and estimation at that time, and was much like to his manners and life: for it was full of ostentation, foolish bravery, and vain ambition. After he had remained there some time, Gabinius Proconsul, going into Syria, persuaded him to go with him. Antonius told him he would not go as a private man: wherefore Gabinius gave him charge of his horsemen, and so took him with him. So first of all he sent him against Aristobulus who had made the Jews to rebel, and was the first man himself that got up to the wall of a castle of his, and so drave Aristobulus out of all his holds: and with those few men he had with him he overcame all the Jews in set battle, which were many against one, and put all of them almost to the sword, and, furthermore, took Aristobulus himself prisoner with his son.

And in all other great battles and skirmishes which they fought, being many in number, Antonius did

many noble acts of a valiant and wise captain: but specially in one battle, where he compassed in the enemies behind, giving them the victory that fought against them, whereby he afterwards had such honorable reward as his valiantness deserved. So was his great courtesy also much commended of all, the which he showed unto Archelaus. For, having been his very friend, he made war with him against his will while he lived: but after his death he sought for his body, and gave it honorable burial. For these respects he won himself great fame of them of Alexandria, and he was also thought a worthy man of all the soldiers in the Romans' camp. But, besides all this, he had a noble presence, and showed a countenance of one of a noble house: he had a goodly thick beard, a broad forehead, crook-nose, and there appeared such a manly look in his countenance, as is commonly seen in Hercules' pictures, stamped or graven in metal. Now it had been a speech of old time, that the family of the Antonii were descended from one Anton, the son of Hercules, whereof the family took name. This opinion did Antonius seek to confirm in all his doings: not only resembling him in the likeness of his body, as we have said before, but also in the wearing of his garments. For, when he would openly show himself abroad before many people, he would always wear his cassock girt down low upon his hips, with a great sword hanging by his side, and, upon that, some ill-favored cloak. Furthermore, things that seem intolerable in other men, as to boast commonly, to jest with one or other, to drink like a good fellow with everybody, to sit with the soldiers when they dine, and to eat and drink with them soldierlike: it is incredible what wonderful love it won him amongst them. And furthermore, being given to love, that made him the more desired, and by that means he brought many to love him. For he would further every man's love, and also would not be angry that men should merrily tell him of those he loved. But, besides all this, that which most procured his rising and advancement was his liberality, who gave all to the soldiers and kept nothing for himself: and when he was grown to great credit, then was his authority and power also very great, the which notwithstanding himself did overthrow by a thousand other faults he had. In this place I will show you one example only of his wonderful liberality. He commanded one day his cofferer that kept his money to give a friend of his five-and-twenty myriads: which the Romans call in their tongue, *decies*. His cofferer marvelling at it, and being angry withal in his mind, brought him all this money in a heap together, to show him what a marvellous mass of money it was. Antonius, seeing it as he went by, asked what it was: his cofferer answered him, it was the money he willed him to give unto his friend. Then Antonius perceiving it, the spite of his man, "I thought," said he, "that *decies* had been a greater sum of money than it is, for this is but a trifle": and therefore he gave his friend as much more another time, but that was afterwards.

He got the ill-will of the common people, and, on the other side, the noblemen (as Cicero saith) did not only mislike him, but also hate him for his naughty life: for they did abhor his banquets and drunken feasts he made at unseasonable times, and his extreme wasteful expenses upon vain light huswives: and then in the daytime he would sleep or walk out his drunkenness, thinking to wear away the fume of the abundance of wine which he had taken over night. In his house they did nothing but feast, dance, and mask: and himself passed away the time in hearing of foolish plays, or in marrying these players, tumblers, jesters, and such sort of people. As for proof hereof it is reported, that at Hippias' marriage, one of his jesters, he drank wine so lustily all night, that the next morning, when he came to plead before the people assembled in council, who had sent for him, he, being queasy-stomached with his surfet he had taken, was compelled to lay all before them, and one of his friends held him his gown instead of a basin. He had another pleasant player called Sergious, that was one of the chiefest men about him, and a woman also called Cytheris, of the same profession, whom he loved dearily: he carried her up and down in a litter unto all the towns he went, and had as many men waiting upon her litter, she being but a player, as were attending upon his own mother. It grieved honest men also very much to see that, when he went into the country, he carried with him a great number of cupboards full of silver and gold plate, openly in the face of the world, as it had been the pomp or show of some triumph: and that eftsoons in the midst of his journey he would set up his halls and tents hard by some green grove or pleasant river, and there his cooks should prepare him a sumptuous dinner. And furthermore, lions were harnessed in traces to draw his carts: and besides also, in honest men's houses in the cities where he came, he would have common harlots, courtesans, and these tumbling gillots lodged. Now it grieved men much to see, that Caesar should be out of Italy following of his enemies, to end this great war, with such great peril and danger, and that others in the meantime, abusing his name and authority, should commit such insolent and outrageous parts unto their citizens. This methinks was the cause that made the conspiracy against Caesar increase more

and more, and laid the reins of the bridle upon the soldiers' necks, whereby they durst boldlier commit many extortions, cruelties, and robberies. And therefore Caesar after his return pardoned Dolabella, and, being created Consul the third time, he took not Antonius, but chose Lepidus his colleague and fellow-Consul. Afterwards, when Pompey's house was put to open sale, Antonius bought it: but, when they asked him money for it, he made it very strange, and was offended with them, and writeth himself that he would not go with Caesar into the wars of Africk, because he was not well recompensed for the service he had done him before. Yet Caesar did somewhat bridle his madness and insolency, not suffering him to pass his fault so lightly away, making as though he saw them not. And therefore he left his dissolute manner of life, and married Fulvia, that was Clodius' widow, a woman not so basely minded to spend her time in spinning and housewifery, and was not contented to master her husband at home, but would also rule him in his office abroad, and command him, that commanded legions and great armies: so that Cleopatra was to give Fulvia thanks for that she had taught Antonius this obedience to women, that learned so well to be at their commandment. Now, because Fulvia was somewhat sour and crooked of condition, Antonius devised to make her pleasanter, and somewhat better disposed, and therefore he would play her many pretty youthful parts to make her merry. As he did once, when Caesar returned the last time of all conqueror out of Spain, every man went out to meet him, and so did Antonius with the rest. But on the sudden there ran a rumor through Italy, that Caesar was dead, and that his enemies came again with a great army. Thereupon he returned with speed to Rome, and took one of his men's gowns, and so apparelled came home to his house in a dark night, saying that he had brought Fulvia letters from Antonius. So he was let in, and brought to her muffled as he was for being known: but she, taking the matter heavily, asked him if Antonius were well. Antonius gave her the letters, and said never a word. So when she had opened the letters, and began to read them, Antonius ramped of her neck, and kissed her. We have told you this tale for example's sake only, and so could we also tell you of many suchlike as these. Now, when Caesar was returned from his last war in Spain, all the chiefest nobility of the city rode many days' journey from Rome to meet him, where Caesar made marvellous much of Antonius, above all the men that came unto him. For he always took him into his coach with him, [illegible] all Italy: and behind him, Brutus Albinus and Octavius, the son of his niece, who afterwards was called Caesar, and became emperor of Rome long time after. So, Caesar being afterwards chosen Consul the fift time, he immediately chose Antonius his colleague and companion: and desired, by deposing himself of his Consulship, to make Dolabella Consul in his room, and had already moved it to the Senate. But Antonius did stoutly withstand it, and openly reviled Dolabella in the Senate: and Dolabella also spared him as little. Thereupon Caesar being ashamed of the matter, he let it alone. Another time also, when Caesar attempted again to substitute Dolabella Consul in his place, Antonius cried out, that the signs of the birds were against it: so that at length Caesar was compelled to give him place, and to let Dolabella alone, who was marvellously offended with him. Now in truth Caesar made no great reckoning of either of them both. For it is reported that Caesar answered one that did accuse Antonius and Dolabella unto him for some matter of conspiracy: "Tush," said he, "they be not those fat fellows and fine combed men that I fear, but I mistrust rather these pale and lean men," meaning by Brutus and Cassius, who afterwards conspired his death, and slew him. Antonius unawares afterwards gave Caesar's enemies just occasion and color to do as they did: as you shall hear. The Romans by chance celebrated the feast called Lupercalia, and Caesar, being apparelled in his triumphing robe, was set in the Tribune where they use to make their orations to the people, and from thence did behold the sport of the runners. The manner of this running was this. On that day there are many young men of noble house, and those specially that be chief officers for that year, who, running naked up and down the city anointed with the oil of olive, for pleasure do strike them they meet in their way with white leather thongs they have in their hands. Antonius being one among the rest that was to run, leaving the ancient ceremonies and old customs of that solemnity, he ran to the tribune where Caesar was set, and carried a laurel crown in his hand, having a royal band or diadem wreathed about it, which in old time was the ancient mark and token of a king. When he was come to Caesar, he made his fellow-runners with him lift him up, and so he did put this laurel crown upon his head, [illegible] thereby that he deserved to be king. But Caesar, making as though he refused it, turned away his head. The people were so rejoiced at it, that they all clapped their hands for joy. Antonius again did put it on his head: Caesar again refused it, and thus they were striving off and on a great while together. As oft as Antonius did put this laurel crown unto him, a few of his followers rejoiced at it: and as

oft also as Caesar refused it, all the people together clapped their hands. And this was a wonderful thing, that they suffered all things subjects should do by commandment of their kings: and yet they could not abide the name of a king, detesting it as the utter destruction of their liberty. Caesar in a rage rose out of his seat, and, plucking down the collar of his gown from his neck, he showed it naked, bidding any man strike off his head that would. This laurel crown was afterwards put upon the head of one of Caesar's statues or images, the which one of the Tribunes plucked off. The people liked his doing therein so well, that they waited on him home to his house with great clapping of hands. Howbeit Caesar did turn them out of their offices for it. This was a good encouragement for Brutus and Cassius to conspire his death, who fell into a consort with their trustiest friends, to execute their enterprise: but yet stood doubtful whether they should make Antonius privy to it or not. All the rest liked of it, saving Trebonius only. He told them that, when they rode to meet Caesar at his return out of Spain, Antonius and he always keeping company, and lying together by the way, he felt his mind afar off: but Antonius, finding his meaning, would hearken no more unto it, and yet notwithstanding never made Caesar acquainted with this talk, but had faithfully kept it to himself. After that they consulted whether they should kill Antonius with Caesar. But Brutus would in nowise consent to it, saying, that venturing on such an enterprise as that, for the maintenance of law and justice, it ought to be clear from all villainy. Yet they, fearing Antonius' power and the authority of his office, appointed certain of the conspiracy, that, when Caesar were gone into the Senate, and while others should execute their enterprise, they should keep Antonius in a talk out of the Senate-house. Even as they had devised these matters, so were they executed: and Caesar was slain in the midst of the Senate. Antonius, being put in a fear withal, cast a slave's gown upon him, and hid himself. But afterwards, when it was told him that the murtherers slew no man else, and that they went only into the Capitol, he sent his son unto them for a pledge, and bade them boldly come down upon his word. The self same day he did bid Cassius to supper, and Lepidus also bade Brutus. The next morning the Senate was assembled, and Antonius himself preferred a law that all things past should be forgotten, and that they should appoint provinces unto Cassius and Brutus: the which the Senate confirmed, and further ordained that they should cancel none of Caesar's laws. Thus went Antonius out of the Senate more praised, and better esteemed, than ever man was: because it seemed to every man that he had cut off all occasion of civil wars, and that he had showed himself a marvellous wise governor of the commonwealth, for the appeasing of these matters of so great weight and importance. But now, the opinion he conceived of himself after he had a little felt the goodwill of the people towards him, hoping thereby to make himself the chiefest man if he might overcome Brutus, did easily make him alter his first mind. And therefore, when Caesar's body was brought to the place where it should be buried, he made a funeral oration in commendation of Caesar, according to the ancient custom of praising noblemen at their funerals. When he saw that the people were very glad and desirous also to hear Caesar spoken of, and his praises uttered, he mingled his oration with lamentable words, and by amplifying of matters did greatly move their hearts and affections unto pity and compassion. In fine, to conclude his oration, he unfolded before the whole assembly the bloody garments of the dead, thrust through in many places with their swords, and called the malefactors cruel and cursed murtherers. With these words he put the people into such a fury, that they presently took Caesar's body, and burnt it in the market-place with such tables and forms as they could get together. Then, when the fire was kindled, they took firebrands, and ran to the murtherers' houses to set them on fire, and to make them come out to fight. Brutus therefore and his accomplices, for safety of their persons, were driven to fly the city.

Now things remaining in this state at Rome, Octavius Caesar the younger came to Rome, who was the son of Julius Caesar's niece, as you have heard before, and was left his lawful heir by will, remaining, at the time of the death of his great uncle that was slain, in the city of Apollonia. This young man at his first arrival went to salute Antonius, as one of his late dead father Caesar's friends, who by his last will and testament had made him his heir: and withal, he was presently in hand with him for money and other things which were left of trust in his hands, because Caesar had by will bequeathed unto the people of Rome three-score and fifteen silver drachmas to be given to every man, the which he as heir stood charged withal. Antonius at the first made no reckoning of him, because he was very young: and said he lacked wit, and good friends to advise him, if he looked to take such a charge in hand as to undertake to be Caesar's heir. But when Antonius saw that he could not shake him off with those words, and that he was still in hand with him for his father's goods, but specially for the ready money, then he spake and

did what he could against him. And first of all it was he that did keep him from being Tribune of the people: and also, when Octavius Caesar began to meddle with the dedicating of the chair of gold, which was prepared by the Senate to honor Caesar with, he threatened to send him to prison, and moreover desisted not to put the people in an uproar. This young Caesar, seeing his doings, went unto Cicero and others, which were Antonius' enemies, and by them crept into favor with the Senate: and he himself sought the people's goodwill every manner of way, gathering together the old soldiers of the late deceased Caesar, which were dispersed in divers cities and colonies. Antonius being afraid of it talked with Octavius in the Capitol, and became his friend. But the very same night Antonius had a strange dream, who thought that [illegible] fell upon him, and burnt his right hand. Shortly after word was brought him, that Caesar lay in wait to kill him. Caesar cleared himself unto him, and told him there was no such matter: but he could not make Antonius believe the contrary. Whereupon they became further enemies than ever they were: insomuch that both of them made friends of either side to gather together all the old soldiers through Italy, that were dispersed in divers towns, and made them large promises, and sought also to win the legions on their side, which were already in arms. Cicero on the other side being at that time the chiefest man of authority and estimation in the city, he stirred up all men against Antonius: so that in the end he made the Senate pronounce him an enemy to his country, and appointed young Caesar's sergeants to carry axes before him, and such other signs as were incident to the dignity of a Consul or Praetor: and moreover sent Hirtius and Pansa, then Consuls, to drive Antonius out of Italy. These two Consuls together with Caesar, who also had an army, went against Antonius that besieged the city of Modena, and there overthrew him in battle: but both the Consuls were slain there. Antonius, flying upon this overthrow fell into great misery all at once: but the chiefest want of all other, and that pinched him most, was famine. Howbeit he was of such a strong nature, that by patience he would overcome any adversity, and, the heavier fortune lay upon him, the more constant showed he himself. Every man that feeleth want or adversity knoweth by virtue and discretion what he should do: but when indeed they are overlaid with extremity, and be sore oppressed, few have the hearts to follow that which they praise and commend, and much less to avoid that they reprove and mislike. But rather, to the contrary, they yield to their accustomed easy life: and through faint heart, and lack of courage, do change their first mind and purpose. And therefore it was a wonderful example to the soldiers to see Antonius, that was brought up in all fineness and superfluity, so easily to drink puddle water, and to eat wild fruits and roots: and moreover it is reported that, even as they passed the Alps, they did eat the barks of trees, and such beasts as never man tasted of their flesh before. Now their intent was to join with the legions that was on the other side of the mountains, under Lepidus' charge: whom Antonius took to be his friend, because he had holpen him to many things at Caesar's hand through his means. When he was come to the place where Lepidus was, he camped hard by him: and, when he saw that no man came to him to put him in any hope, he determined to venture himself, and to go unto Lepidus. Since the overthrow he had at Modena, he suffered his beard to grow at length and never clipped it, that it was marvellous long, and the hair of his head also without combing: and, besides all this, he went in a mourning gown, and after this sort came hard to the trenches of Lepidus' camp. Then he began to speak unto the soldiers, and many of them their hearts yearned for pity to see him so poorly arrayed, and some also through his words began to pity him: insomuch that Lepidus began to be afraid, and therefore commanded all the trumpets to sound together to stop the soldiers' ears, that they should not hearken to Antonius. This notwithstanding, the soldiers took the more pity of him, and spake secretly with him by Clodius' and Laelius' means, whom they sent unto him disguised in women's apparel, and gave him counsel that he should not be afraid to enter into their camp, for there were a great number of soldiers that would receive him, and kill Lepidus, if he would say the word. Antonius would not suffer them to hurt him, but the next morning he went with his army to wade a ford, at a little river that ran between them: and himself was the foremost man that took the river to get over, seeing a number of Lepidus' camp that gave him their hands, plucked up the stakes, and laid flat the bank of their trench to let him into their camp. When he was come into their camp, and that he had all the army at his commandment, he used Lepidus very courteously, embraced him, and called him father: and though indeed Antonius did all, and ruled the whole army, yet he always gave Lepidus the name and honor of the captain. Munatius Plancus, lying also in camp hard by with an army, understanding the report of Antonius' courtesy, he also came and joined with him.

Therefore he sent certain of his friends to Antonius, to make them friends again: and thereupon all three met together, (to wit, Caesar, Antonius, and Lepidus), in an island environed round about with a little river, and there remained three days together. Now, as touching all other matters, they were easily agreed, and did divide all the empire of Rome between them, as if it had been their own inheritance. But yet they could hardly agree whom they would put to death: for every one of them would kill their enemies, and save their kinsmen and friends. Yet at length, giving place to their greedy desire to be revenged of their enemies, they spurned all reverence of blood and holiness of friendship at their feet. For Caesar left Cicero to Antonius' will, Antonius also forsook Lucius Caesar, who was his uncle by his mother, and both of them together suffered Lepidus to kill his own brother Paulus. Yet some writers affirm, that Caesar and Antonius requested Paulus might be slain, and that Lepidus was contented with it. In my opinion there was never a more horrible, unnatural, and crueller change than this was. For, thus changing murther for murther, they did as well kill those whom they did forsake and leave unto others, as those also which others left unto them to kill: but so much more was their wickedness and cruelty great unto their friends, for that they put them to death being innocents, and having no cause to hate them. After this plot was agreed upon between them, the soldiers that were thereabouts would have this friendship and league betwixt them confirmed by marriage, and that Caesar should marry Claudia, the daughter of Fulvia, and Antonius' wife. This marriage also being agreed upon, they condemned three hundred of the chiefest citizens of Rome to be put to death by proscription. And Antonius also commanded them to whom he had given commission to kill Cicero, that they should strike off his head and right hand, with the which he had written the invective orations (called Philippics) against Antonius. So, when the murtherers brought him Cicero's head and hand cut off, he beheld them a long time with great joy, and laughed heartily, and that oftentimes, for the great joy he felt. Then, when he had taken his pleasure of the sight of them, he caused them to be set up in an open place, over the pulpit for orations (where when he was alive he had often spoken to the people), as if he had done the dead man hurt, and not blemished his own fortune, showing himself (to his great shame and infamy) a cruel man, and unworthy the office and authority he bare. His uncle Lucius Caesar also, as they sought for him to kill him, and followed him hard, fled unto his sister. The murtherers coming thither, forcing to break into her chamber, she stood at her chamber door with her arms abroad, crying out still: "You shall not kill Lucius Caesar, before you first kill me, that bare your captain in my womb." By this means she saved her brother's life. Now the government of these Triumviri grew odious and hateful to the Romans, for divers respects: but they most blamed Antonius, because he being elder than Caesar, and of more power and force than Lepidus, gave himself again to his former riot and excess, when he left to deal in the affairs of the commonwealth. But, setting aside the ill name he had for his insolency, he was yet much more hated in respect of the house he dwelt in, the which was the house of Pompey the Great: a man as famous for his temperance, modesty, and civil life, as for his three triumphs. For it grieved them to see the gates commonly shut against the captains, magistrates of the city, and also ambassadors of strange nations, which were sometimes thrust from the gate with violence: and that the house within was full of tumblers, antic dancers, jugglers, players, jesters, and drunkards, quaffing and guzzling, and that on them he spent and bestowed the most part of his money he got by all kind of possible extortions, bribery, and policy. For they did not only sell by the crier the goods of those whom they had outlawed and appointed to murther, slanderously deceived the poor widows and young orphans, and also raised all kind of imposts, subsidies, and taxes: but, understanding also that the holy Vestal nuns had certain goods and money put in their custody to keep, both of men's in the city, and those also that were abroad, they went thither, and took them away by force. Octavius Caesar perceiving that no money would serve Antonius' turn, he prayed that they might divide the money between them, and so did they also divide the army, for them both to go into Macedon to make war against Brutus and Cassius: and in the meantime they left the government of the city of Rome unto Lepidus. When they had passed over the seas, and that they began to make war, they being both camped by their enemies, to wit, Antonius against Cassius, and Caesar against Brutus: Caesar did no great matter, but Antonius had always the upper hand, and did all. For at the first battle Caesar was overthrown by Brutus, and lost his camp, and very hardly saved himself by flying from them that followed him. Howbeit he writeth himself in his commentaries that he fled before the charge was given, because of a dream one of his friends had. Antonius on the other side overthrew Cassius in battle, though some write that he was not there himself at the battle, but that he came after the overthrow whilst his men had the enemies in chase.

So Cassius at his earnest request was slain by a faithful servant of his own called Pindarus, whom he had enfranchised: because he knew not in time that Brutus had overcome Caesar. Shortly after they fought another battle again, in the which Brutus was overthrown, who afterwards also slew himself. Thus Antonius had the chiefest glory of all this victory, specially because Caesar was sick at that time. Antonius having found Brutus' body after this battle, blaming him much for the murther of his brother Caius, whom he had put to death in Macedon for revenge of Cicero's cruel death, and yet laying the fault more in Hortensius than in him, he made Hortensius to be slain on his brother's tomb. Furthermore, he cast his coat armor (which was wonderful rich and sumptuous) upon Brutus' body, and gave commandment to one of his slaves enfranchised, to defray the charge of his burial. But afterwards, Antonius hearing that his enfranchised bondman had not burnt his coat armor with his body, because it was very rich, and worth a great sum of money, and that he had also kept back much of the ready money appointed for his funeral and tomb, he also put him to death. After that Caesar was conveyed to Rome, and it was thought he would not live long, nor escape the sickness he had. Antonius on the other side went towards the east provinces and regions, to levy money: and first of all he went into Greece, and carried an infinite number of soldiers with him. Now, because every soldier was promised five thousand silver drachmas, he was driven of necessity to impose extreme tallages and taxations. At his first coming into Greece, he was not hard nor bitter unto the Grecians, but gave himself only to hear wise men dispute, to see plays, and also to note the ceremonies and sacrifices of Greece, ministering justice to every man: and it pleased him marvellously to hear them call him Philhellene, (as much to say, a lover of the Grecians), and specially the Athenians, to whom he did many great pleasures. Wherefore the Megarians, to exceed the Athenians, thinking to show Antonius a goodly sight, they prayed him to come and see their Senate-house and council hall. Antonius went thither to see it: so when he had seen it at his pleasure, they asked him, "My lord, how like you our hall?" "Methinks" (quote he) "it is little, old, and ready to fall down." Furthermore he took measure of the temple of Apollo Pythius, and promised the Senate to finish it. But when he was once come into Asia, having left Lucius Censorinus governor in Greece, and that he had felt the riches and pleasures of the east parts, and that princes, great lords, and kings came to wait at his gate for his coming out, and that queens and princesses to excel one another gave him very rich presents, and came to see him, curiously setting forth themselves, and using all art that might be to show their beauty, to win his favor the more, (Caesar in the mean space turmoiling his wits and body in civil wars at home, Antonius living merrily and quietly abroad), he easily fell again to his old licentious life.

Antonius being thus inclined, the last and extremest mischief of all other (to wit, the love of Cleopatra) lighted on him, who did waken and stir up many vices yet hidden in him, and were never seen to any: and, if any spark of goodness or hope of rising were left him, Cleopatra quenched it straight, and made it worse than before. The manner how he fell in love with her was this. Antonius, going to make war with the Parthians, sent to command Cleopatra to appear personally before him when he came into Cilicia, to answer unto such accusations as were laid against her, being this: that she had aided Cassius and Brutus in their war against him. The messenger sent unto Cleopatra to make this summons unto her was called Dellius: who when he had throughtly considered her beauty, the excellent grace and sweetness of her tongue, he nothing mistrusted that Antonius would do any hurt to so noble a lady, but rather assured himself that within few days she should be in favor with him. Thereupon he did her great honor, and persuaded her to come into Cilicia as honorably furnished as she could possible, and bade her not to be afraid at all of Antonius, for he was a more courteous lord than any that she had ever seen. Cleopatra, on the other side, believing Dellius' words, and guessing by the former access and credit she had with Julius Caesar and Cneius Pompey (the son of Pompey the Great) only for her beauty, she began to have good hope that she might more easily win Antonius. For Caesar and Pompey knew her when she was but a young thing, and knew not then what the world meant: but now she went to Antonius at the age when a woman's beauty is at the prime, and she also of best judgment. So she furnished herself with a world of gifts, store of gold and silver, and of riches and other sumptuous ornaments, as is credible enough she might bring from so great a house, and from so wealthy and rich a realm as Egypt was. But yet she carried nothing with her wherein she trusted more than in herself, and in the charms and enchantment of her passing beauty and grace. Therefore when she was sent unto by divers letters, both from Antonius himself, and also from his friends, she made so light of it and mocked Antonius so much, that she disdained to set forward otherwise, but to take her barge in the river of

Cydnus, the poop whereof was of gold, the sails of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of the music of flutes, howboys, citherns, viols, and such other instruments as they played upon in the barge. And now for the person of herself: she was laid under a pavilion of cloth of gold of tissue, apparelled and attired like the goddess Venus commonly drawn in picture: and hard by her, on either hand of her, pretty fair boys apparelled as painters do set forth god Cupid, with little fans in their hands, with the which they fanned wind upon her. Her ladies and gentlewomen also, the fairest of them were apparelled like the nymphs Nereids (which are the mermaids of the waters) and like the Graces, some steering the helm, others tending the tackle and ropes of the barge, out of the which there came a wonderful passing sweet savor of perfumes, that perfumed the wharf's side, pestered with innumerable multitudes of people. Some of them followed the barge all alongst the river-side: others also ran out of the city to see her coming in. So that in the end there ran such multitudes of people one after another to see her, that Antonius was left post alone in the market-place in his imperial seat to give audience: and there went a rumor in the people's mouths, that the goddess Venus was come to play with the god Bacchus, for the general good of all Asia. When Cleopatra landed, Antonius sent to invite her to supper to him. But she sent him word again, he should do better rather to come and sup with her. Antonius therefore, to show himself courteous unto her at her arrival, was contented to obey her, and went to supper to her: where he found such passing sumptuous fare, that no tongue can express it. But, amongst all other things, he most wondered at the infinite number of lights and torches hanged on the top of the house, giving light in every place, so artificially set and ordered by devices, some round, some square, that it was the rarest thing to behold that eye could discern, or that ever books could mention. The next night, Antonius feasting her contended to pass her in magnificence and fineness: but she overcame him in both. So that he himself began to scorn the gross service of his house, in respect of Cleopatra's sumptuousness and fineness. And, when Cleopatra found Antonius' jests and slents to be but gross and soldierlike in plain manner, she gave it him finely, and without fear taunted him throughly. Now her beauty (as it is reported) was not so passing, as unmatchable of other women, nor yet such as upon present view did enamor men with her: but so sweet was her company and conversation, that a man could not possibly but be taken. And, besides her beauty, the good grace she had to talk and discourse, her courteous nature that tempered her words and deeds, was a spur that pricked to the quick. Furthermore, besides all these, her voice and words were marvellous pleasant: for her tongue was an instrument of music to divers sports and pastimes, the which she easily turned to any language that pleased her. She spake unto few barbarous people by interpreter, but made them answer herself, or at the least the most part of them: as the Ethiopians, the Arabians, the Troglodytes, the Hebrews, the Syrians, the Medes, and the Parthians, and to many others also, whose languages she had learned. Whereas divers of her progenitors, the kings of Egypt, could scarce learn the Egyptian tongue only, and many of them forgot to speak the Macedonian. Now Antonius was so ravished with the love of Cleopatra, that though his wife Fulvia had great wars, and much ado with Caesar for his affairs, and that the army of the Parthians (the which the king's lieutenants had given to the only leading of Labienus) was now assembled in Mesopotamia ready to invade Syria: yet, as though all this had nothing touched him, he yielded himself to go with Cleopatra into Alexandria, where he spent and lost in childish sports (as a man might say) and idle pastimes the most precious thing a man can spend, as Antiphon saith: and that is, time. For they made an order between them, which they called *Amimetobion* (as much to say, no life comparable and matchable with it), one feasting each other by turns, and in cost exceeding all measure and reason. And, for proof hereof, I have heard my grandfather Lamprias report, that one Philotas a physician, born in the city of Amphissa, told him that he was at that present time in Alexandria, and studied physic: and that, having acquaintance with one of Antonius' cooks, he took him with him to Antonius' house, (being a young man desirious to see things), to show him the wonderful sumptuous charge and preparation of one only supper. When he was in the kitchen, and saw a world of diversities of meats, and, amongst others, eight wild boars roasted whole: he began to wonder at it, and said, "Sure you have a great number of guests to supper." The cook fell a-laughing, and answered him, "No" (quote he) "not many guests, nor above twelve in all: but yet all that is boiled or roasted must be served in whole, or else it would be marred straight. For Antonius peradventure will sup presently, or it may be a pretty while hence, or likely enough he will defer it longer, for that he hath drunk well today, or else hath had some other great matters in hand: and therefore we do not dress one supper only, but many suppers, because we are uncertain of the hour he will sup in."

But now again to Cleopatra. Plato writeth that there are four kinds of flattery, but Cleopatra divided it into many kinds. For she, were it in sport or in matters of earnest, still devised sundry new delights to have Antonius at commandment, never leaving him night nor day, nor once letting him go out of her sight. For she would play at dice with him, drink with him, and hunt commonly with him, and also be with him when he went to any exercise or activity of body. And sometime also, when he would go up and down the city disguised like a slave in the night, and would peer into poor men's windows and their shops, and scold and brawl with them within the house: Cleopatra would be also in a chamber-maid's array, and amble up and down the streets with him, so that oftentimes Antonius bare away both mocks and blows. Now, though most men misliked this manner, yet the Alexandrians were commonly glad of this jollity, and liked it well, saying very gallantly and wisely, that Antonius showed them a comical face, to wit, a merry countenance: and the Romans a tragical face, to say, a grim look. But to reckon up all the foolish sports they made, revelling in this sort, it were too fond a part of me, and therefore I will only tell you one among the rest. On a time he went to angle for fish, and when he could take none he was as angry as could be, because Cleopatra stood by. Wherefore he secretly commanded the fishermen, that when he cast in his line they should straight dive under the water, and put a fish on his hook which they had taken before: and so snatched up his angling rod, and brought up fish twice or thrice. Cleopatra found it straight, yet she seemed not to see it, but wondered at his excellent fishing: but, when she was alone by herself among her own people, she told them how it was, and bade them the next morning to be on the water to see the fishing. A number of people came to the haven, and got into the fisher-boats to see this fishing. Antonius then threw in his line, and Cleopatra straight commanded one of her men to dive under water before Antonius' men, and to put some old salt-fish upon his bait, like unto those that are brought out of the country of Pont. When he had hung the fish on his hook, Antonius, thinking he had taken a fish indeed, snatched up his line presently. Then they all fell a-laughing. Cleopatra laughing also, said unto him: "Leave us (my Lord) Egyptians (which dwell in the country of Pharus and Canopus) your angling rod: this is not thy profession: thou must hunt after conquering of realms and countries." Now Antonius delighting in these fond and childish pastimes, very ill news were brought him from two places. The first from Rome, that his brother Lucius and Fulvia his wife fell out first between themselves, and afterwards fell to open war with Caesar, and had brought all to nought, that they were both driven to fly out of Italy. The second news, as bad as the first: that Labienus conquered all Asia with the army of the Parthians, from the river of Euphrates, and from Syria, unto the countries of Lydia and Ionia. Then began Antonius with much ado a little to rouse himself, as if he had been wakened out of a deep sleep, and, as a man may say, coming out of a great drunkenness. So first of all he bent himself against the Parthians, and went as far as the country of Phoenicia: but there he received lamentable letters from his wife Fulvia. Whereupon he straight returned towards Italy with two hundred sail: and, as he went, took up his friends by the way that fled out of Italy to come to him. By them he was informed, that his wife Fulvia was the only cause of this war: who, being of a peevish, crooked, and troublesome nature, had purposely raised this uproar in Italy, in hope thereby to withdraw him from Cleopatra. But by good fortune his wife Fulvia, going to meet with Antonius, sickened by the way, and died in the city of Sicyon: and therefore Octavius Caesar and he were the easilier made friends together. For when Antonius landed in Italy, and that men saw Caesar asked nothing of him, and that Antonius on the other side laid all the fault and burden on his wife Fulvia: the friends of both parties would not suffer them to unrip any old matters, and to prove or defend who had the wrong or right, and who was the first procurer of this war, fearing to make matters worse between them: but they made them friends together, and divided the empire of Rome between them, making the sea Ionium the bounds of their division. For they gave all the provinces eastward unto Antonius: and the countries westward, unto Caesar: and left Africk unto Lepidus: and made a law, that they three one after another should make their friends Consuls, when they would not be themselves. This seemed to be a sound counsel, but yet it was to be confirmed with a straiter bond, which fortune offered thus. There was Octavia the eldest sister of Caesar, not by one mother, for she came of Ancharia, and Caesar himself afterwards of Attia. It is reported that he dearly loved his sister Octavia, for indeed she was a noble lady, and left the widow of her first husband Caius Marcellus, who died not long before: and it seemed also that Antonius had been widower ever since the death of his wife Fulvia. For he denied not that he kept Cleopatra, but so did he not confess that he had her as his wife: and so with reason he did defend the love he bare unto this Egyptian Cleopatra. Thereupon every man did set forward this marriage,

hoping thereby that this lady Octavia, having an excellent grace, wisdom, and honesty joined unto so rare a beauty, that when she were with Antonius (he loving her as so worthy a lady deserveth) she should be a good mean to keep good love and amity betwixt her brother and him.

Sextus Pompeius at that time kept in Sicily, and so made many an inroad into Italy with a great number of pinnaces and other pirates' ships, of the which were captains two notable pirates, Menas and Menecrates, who so scoured all the sea thereabouts, that none durst peep out with a sail. Furthermore, Sextus Pompeius had dealt very friendly with Antonius, for he had courteously received his mother, when she fled out of Italy with Fulvia: and therefore they thought good to make peace with him. So they met all three together by the mount of Misenum, upon a hill that runneth far into the sea: Pompey having his ships riding hard by at anker, and Antonius and Caesar their armies upon the shore side, directly over against him. Now, after they had agreed that Sextus Pompeius should have Sicily and Sardinia, with this condition, that he should rid the sea of all thieves and pirates, and make it safe for passengers, and withal that he should send a certain of wheat to Rome: one of them did feast another, and drew cuts who should begin. It was Pompeius' chance to invite them first. Whereupon Antonius asked him: "And where shall we sup?" "There," said Pompey, and showed him his admiral galley which had six banks of oars: "That" (said he) "is my father's house they have left me." He spake it to taunt Antonius, because he had his father's house, that was Pompey the Great. So he cast ankers enow into the sea to make his galley fast, and then built a bridge of wood to convey them to his galley from the head of Mount Misenum: and there he welcomed them, and made them great cheer. Now in the midst of the feast, when they fell to be merry with Antonius' love unto Cleopatra, Menas the Pirate came to Pompey, and, whispering in his ear, said unto him: "Shall I cut the cables of the ankers, and make thee lord not only of Sicily and Sardinia, but of the whole empire of Rome besides?" Pompey, having paused awhile upon it, at length answered him: "Thou shouldst have done it, and never have told it me, but now we must content us with that we have. As for myself, I was never taught to break my faith, nor to be counted a traitor." The other two also did likewise feast him in their camp, and then he returned into Sicily. Antonius, after this agreement made, sent Ventidius before into Asia to stay the Parthians, and to keep them they should come no further: and he himself in the meantime, to gratify Caesar, was contented to be chosen Julius Caesar's priest and sacrificer, and so they jointly together dispatched all great matters concerning the state of the empire. But in all other manner of sports and exercises, wherein they passed the time away the one with the other, Antonius was ever inferior unto Caesar, and alway lost, which grieved him much. With Antonius there was a soothsayer or astronomer of Egypt, that could cast a figure, and judge of men's nativities, to tell them what should happen to them. He, either to please Cleopatra, or else for that he found it so by his art, told Antonius plainly, that his fortune (which of itself was excellent good, and very great) was altogether blemished and obscured by Caesar's fortune: and therefore he counselled him utterly to leave his company, and to get him as far from him as he could. "For thy demon," said he, (that is to say, the good angel and spirit that keepeth thee) "is afraid of his: and, being courageous and high when he is alone, becometh fearful and timorous when he cometh near unto the other." Howsoever it was, the events ensuing proved the Egyptian's words true. For it is said that as often as they two drew cuts for pastime, who should have anything, or whether they played at dice, Antonius alway lost. Oftentimes, when they were disposed to see cock-fight, or quails that were taught to fight one with another, Caesar's cocks or quails did ever overcome. The which spited Antonius in his mind, although he made no outward show of it: and therefore he believed the Egyptian the better. In fine, he recommended the affairs of his house unto Caesar, and went out of Italy with Octavia his wife, whom he carried into Greece, after he had had a daughter by her.

Then began this pestilent plague and mischief of Cleopatra's love (which had slept a long time, and seemed to have been utterly forgotten, and that Antonius had given place to better counsel) again to kindle, and to be in force, so soon as Antonius came near unto Syria. And in the end, the horse of the mind, as Plato termeth it, that is so hard of rein, (I mean the unreined lust of concupiscence), did put out of Antonius' head all honest and commendable thoughts: for he sent Fonteius Capito to bring Cleopatra into Syria. Unto whom, to welcome her, he gave no trifling things: but unto that she had already he added the provinces of Phoenicia, those of the nethermost Syria, the Isle of Cyprus, and a great part of Cilicia, and that country of Jewry where the true balm is, and that part of Arabia where the Nabataeans do dwell, which stretcheth out towards the ocean. These great gifts much misliked the

Romans. But now, though Antonius did easily give away great seigniories, realms, and mighty nations unto some private men, and that also he took from other kings their lawful realms, (as from Antigonus king of the Jews, whom he openly beheaded, where never king before had suffered like death), yet all this did not so much offend the Romans, as the unmeasurable honors which he did unto Cleopatra. But yet he did much more aggravate their malice and ill-will towards him, because that, Cleopatra having brought him two twins, a son and a daughter, he named his son Alexander, and his daughter Cleopatra, and gave them to their surnames, the Sun to the one, and the Moon to the other.

Cleopatra knowing that Octavia would have Antonius from her, and fearing also that if with her virtue and honest behavior (besides the great power of her brother Caesar) she did add thereunto her modest kind love to please her husband, that she would then be too strong for her, and in the end win him away: she subtilly seemed to languish for the love of Antonius, piming her body for lack of meat. Furthermore, she every way so framed her countenance that, when Antonius came to see her, she cast her eyes upon him like a woman ravished for joy. Straight again, when he went from her, she fell a-weeping and blubbering, looked ruefully of the matter, and still found the means that Antonius should oftentimes find her weeping: and then, when he came suddenly upon her, she made as though she dried her eyes, and turned her face away, as if she were unwilling that he should see her weep. All these tricks she used, Antonius being in readiness to go into Syria to speak with the king of Medes. Then the flatterers that furthered Cleopatra's mind blamed Antonius, and told him that he was a hard-natured man, and that he had small love in him, that would see a poor lady in such torment for his sake, whose life depended only upon him alone. For Octavia, said they, that was married unto him as it were of necessity, because her brother Caesar's affairs so required it, hath the honor to be called Antonius' lawful spouse and wife: and Cleopatra, being born a queen of so many thousands of men, is only named Antonius' leman, and yet that she disdained not so to be called, if it might please him she might enjoy his company and live with him, but, if he once leave her, that then it is unpossible she should live. To be short, by these their flatteries and enticements they so wrought Antonius' effeminate mind that, fearing lest she would make herself away, he returned again unto Alexandria, and referred the king of Medes to the next year following, although he received news that the Parthians at that time were at civil w themselves. This he w wards and made peace with him. For he m. is daughter, which was very young, unto one of the sons that Cleopatra had by him: and then returned, being fully bent to make war with Caesar. When Octavia was returned to Rome from Athens, Caesar commanded her to go out of Antonius' house, and to dwell by herself, because he had abused her. Octavia answered him again, that she would not forsake her husband's house, and that if he had no other occasion to make war with him she prayed him then to take no thought for her: for, said she, it were too shameful a thing that two so famous captains should bring in civil wars among the Romans, the one for the love of a woman, and the other for the jealousy betwixt one another. Now, as she spake the word, so did she also perform the deed. For she kept still in Antonius' house, as if he had been there, and very honestly and honorably kept his children, not those only she had by him, but the other which her husband had by Fulvia. Furthermore, when Antonius sent any of his men to Rome to sue for any office in the commonwealth, she received him very courteously, and so used herself unto her brother that she obtained the thing she requested. Howbeit thereby, thinking no hurt, she did Antonius great hurt. For her honest love and regard to her husband made every man hate him, when they saw he did so unkindly use so noble a lady: but yet the greatest cause of their malice unto him was for the division of lands he made amongst his children in the city of Alexandria. And, to confess a troth, it was too arrogant and insolent a part, and done (as a man would say) in derision and contempt of the Romans. For he assembled all the people in the show-place, where young men do exercise themselves, and thereupon a high tribunal silvered he set two chairs of gold, the one for himself, and the other for Cleopatra, and lower chairs for his children: then he openly published before the assembly, that first of all he did establish Cleopatra queen of Egypt, of Cyprus, of Lydia, and of the lower Syria, and, at that time also, Caesarion king of the same realms. This Caesarion was supposed to be the son of Julius Caesar, who had left Cleopatra great with child. Secondly he called the sons he had by her, the kings of kings, and gave Alexander for his portion, Armenia, Media, and Parthia, when he had conquered the country: and unto Ptolemy for his portion, Phoenicia, Syria, and Cilicia. And therewithal he brought out Alexander in a long gown after the fashion of the Medes, with a high copped-tank hat on his head, narrow in the top, as the kings of the Medes and Armenians do use to wear them: and

Ptolemy apparelled in a cloak after the Macedonian manner, with slippers on his feet, and a broad hat, with a royal band or diadem. Such was the apparel and old attire of the ancient kings and successors of Alexander the Great. So, after his sons had done their humble duties, and kissed their father and mother, presently a company of Armenian soldiers, set there of purpose, compassed the one about, and a like company of the Macedonians the other. Now, for Cleopatra, she did not only wear at that time, but at all other times else when she came abroad, the apparel of the goddess Isis, and so gave audience unto all her subjects, as a new Isis. Octavius Caesar reporting all these things unto the Senate, and oftentimes accusing him to the whole people and assembly in Rome, he thereby stirred up all the Romans against him.

Then he went unto the city of Athens, and there gave himself again to see plays and pastimes, and to keep the theatres. Cleopatra, on the other side, being jealous of the honors which Octavia had received in this city, where indeed she was marvellously honored and beloved of the Athenians: to win the people's good-will also at Athens, she gave them great gifts: and they likewise gave her many great honors, and appointed certain ambassadors to carry the decree to her house, among the which Antonius was one, who as a citizen of Athens reported the matter unto her, and made an oration in the behalf of the city. Afterwards he sent to Rome to put his wife Octavia out of his house, who (as it is reported) went out of his house with all Antonius' children, saving the eldest of them he had by Fulvia, who was with his father, bewailing and lamenting her cursed hap that had brought her to this, that she was accounted one of the chiefest causes of this civil war. The Romans did pity her, but much more Antonius, and those specially that had seen Cleopatra, who neither excelled Octavia in beauty, nor yet in young years. Octavius Caesar understanding the sudden and wonderful great preparation of Antonius, he was not a little astonied at it (fearing he should be driven to fight that summer), because he wanted many things, and the great and grievous exactions of money did sorely oppress the people. For all manner of men else were driven to pay the fourth part of their goods and revenue: but the libertines, (to wit, those whose fathers or other predecessors had sometime been bondmen), they were sessed to pay the eighth part of all their goods at one payment. Hereupon there rose a wonderful exclamation and great uproar all Italy over: so that, among the greatest faults that ever Antonius committed, they blamed him most for that he delayed to give Caesar battle. For he gave Caesar leisure to make his preparations, and also to appease the complaints of the people. When such a great sum of money was demanded of them, they grudged at it, and grew to mutiny upon it: but, when they had once paid it, they remembered it no more. Furthermore, Titius and Plancus (two of Antonius' chiefest friends and that had been both of them Consuls), for the great injuries Cleopatra did them, because they hindered all they could that she should not come to this war, they went and yielded themselves unto Caesar, and told him where the testament was that Antonius had made, knowing perfectly what was in it. The will was in the custody of the Vestal nuns: of whom Caesar demanded for it. They answered him, that they would not give it him: but, if he would go and take it, they would not hinder him. Thereupon Caesar went thither, and having read it first to himself he noted certain places worthy of reproach: so, assembling all the Senate, he read it before them all. Whereupon divers were marvellously offended, and thought it a strange matter that he, being alive, should be punished for that he had appointed by his will to be done after his death. Caesar chiefly took hold of this that he ordained touching his burial: for he willed that his body, though he died at Rome, should be brought in funeral pomp through the midst of the marketplace, and that it should be sent into Alexandria unto Cleopatra. Furthermore, among divers other faults wherewith Antonius was to be charged for Cleopatra's sake, Calvisius, one of Caesar's friends, reproved him because he had frankly given Cleopatra all the libraries of the royal city of Pergamum, in the which she had above two hundred thousand several books. Again also, that, being on a time set at the table, he suddenly rose from the board and trod upon Cleopatra's foot, which was a sign given between them, that they were agreed of.

Now after that Caesar had made sufficient preparation, he proclaimed open war against Cleopatra, and made the people to abolish the power and empire of Antonius, because he had before given it up unto a woman. And Caesar said furthermore, that Antonius was not master of himself, but that Cleopatra had brought him beside himself by her charms and amorous poisons, and that they that should make war with them should be Mardian the Eunuch, Pothinus, and Iras, a woman of Cleopatra's bed-chamber, that frizzled her hair and dressed her head, and Charmion, the which were those that ruled all the affairs of Antonius's empire. Before this war, as it is reported, many signs and wonders fell out. First of all, the city of Pisaurum, which was made a colony

to Rome and replenished with people by Antonius, standing upon the shore side of the sea Adriatic, was by a terrible earthquake sunk into the ground. One of the images of stone which was set up in the honor of Antonius, in the city of Alba, did sweat many days together: and, though some wiped it away, yet it left not sweating still. In the city of Patras, whilst Antonius was there, the temple of Hercules was burnt with lightning. And at the city of Athens also, in a place where the war of the giants against the gods is set out in imagery, the statue of Bacchus with a terrible wind was thrown down in the theatre. It was said that Antonius came of the race of Hercules, as you have heard before, and in the manner of his life he followed Bacchus: and therefore he was called the new Bacchus. Furthermore, the same blustering storm of wind overthrew the great monstrous images at Athens, that were made in the honor of Eumenes and Attalus, the which men had names and entitled the Antonians, and yet they did hurt none of the other images which were many besides. The admiral galley of Cleopatra was called Antoniah, in the which there chanced a marvellous ill sign. Swallows had bred under the poop of her ship, and there came others after them that drave away the first, and plucked down their nests. Now, when all things were ready, and that they drew near to fight, it was found that Antonius had no less than five hundred good ships of war, among which there were many galleys that had eight and ten banks of oars, the which were sumptuously furnished, not so meet for fight as for triumph, a hundred thousand footmen, and twelve thousand horsemen, and had with him to aid him these kings and subjects following: Bocchus king of Libya, Tarcondemus king of high Cilicia, Archelaus king of Cappadocia, Philadephus king of Paphlagonia, Mithridates king of Commagena, and Sadala king of Thrace. All which were there every man in person. The residue that were absent sent their armies, as Polemon king of Pont, Malchus king of Arabia, Herodes king of Jewry: and, furthermore, Amyntas king of Lycaonia and of the Galatians: and, besides all these, he had all the aid the king of Medes sent unto him. Now for Caesar, he had two hundred and fifty ships of war, four-score thousand footmen, and well near as many horsemen as his enemy Antonius. Antonius for his part had all under his dominion from Armenia and the river of Euphrates unto the sea Ionium and Illyricum. Octavius Caesar had also for his part all that which was in our hemisphere, or half-part of the world, from Illyria unto the ocean sea upon the west: then all from the ocean unto Mare Siculum: and from Africk all that which is against Italy, as Gaul and Spain. Furthermore, all from the province of Cyrene to Ethiopia was subject unto Antonius. Now Antonius was made so subject to a woman's will, that, though he was a great deal the stronger by land, yet for Cleopatra's sake he would needs have this battle tried by sea: though he saw before his eyes, that, for lack of watermen, his captains did prest by force all sorts of men out of Greece that they could take up in the field, as travellers, muleteers, reapers, harvest men, and young boys, and yet could they not sufficiently furnish his galleys: so that the most part of them were empty, and could scant row, because they lacked watermen enow. But on the contrary side Caesar's ships were not built for pomp, high and great, only for a sight and bravery: but they were light of yarage, armed and furnished with watermen as many as they needed, and had them all in readiness in the havens of Tarentum and Brundusium. So Octavius Caesar sent unto Antonius, to will him to delay no more time, but to come on with his army into Italy: and that for his own part he would give him safe harbor, to land without any trouble, and that he would withdraw his army from the sea as far as one horse could run, until he had put his army ashore, and had lodged his men. Antonius on the other side bravely sent him word again, and challenged the combat of him man to man, though he were the elder: and that, if he refused him so, he would then fight a battle with him in the fields of Pharsalia, as Julius Caesar and Pompey had done before. Now, whilst Antonius rode at anker, lying idly in harbor at the head of Actium, in the place where the city of Nicopolis standeth at this present, Caesar had quickly passed the sea Ionium, and taken a place called Toryne, before Antonius understood that he had taken ship. Then began his men to be afraid, because his army by land was left behind. But Cleopatra making light of it, "And what danger, I pray you," said she, "if Caesar keep at Toryne?" The next morning by break of day, his enemies coming with full force of oars in battle against him, Antonius was afraid that if they came to join they would take and carry away his ships, that had no men of war in them. So he armed all his watermen, and set them in order of battle upon the fore-castle of their ships, and then lift up all his ranks of oars towards the element, as well on the one side as on the other, with the proes against the enemies, at the entry and mouth of the gulf which beginneth at the point of Actium, and so kept them in order of battle, as if they had been armed and furnished with watermen and soldiers. Thus Octavius Caesar, being finely deceived by this stratagem, retired presently, and therewithal Antonius very wisely

and suddenly did cut him off from fresh water. For, understanding that the places where Octavius Caesar landed had very little store of water, and yet very bad: he shut them in with strong ditches and trenches he cast, to keep them from sallying out at their pleasure, and so to go seek water farther off. Furthermore, he dealth very friendly and courteously with Domitius, and against Cleopatra's mind. For, he being sick of an ague when he went and took a little boat to go unto Caesar's camp, Antonius was very sorry for it, but yet he sent after him all his carriage, train, and men: and the same Domitius, as though he gave him to understand that he repented his open treason, he died immediately after. There were certain kings also that forsook him, and turned on Caesar's side: as Amyntas and Deiotarus. Furthermore his fleet and navy that was unfortunate in all things, and unready for service, compelled him to change his mind, and to hazard battle by land. And Canidius also, who had charge of his army by land, when time came to follow Antonius' determination, he turned him clean contrary, and counselled him to send Cleopatra back again, and himself to retire into Macedon, to fight there on the mainland. And furthermore told him, that Dicomes king of the Getae promised him to aid him with a great power: and that it should be no shame nor dishonor to him to let Caesar have the sea, (because himself and his men both had been well practised and exercised in battles by sea, in the war of Sicily against Sextus Pompeius), but rather that he should do against all reason, he having so great skill and experience of battles by land as he had, if he should not employ the force and valiantness of so many lusty armed footmen as he had ready, but would weaken his army by dividing them into ships. But now, notwithstanding all these good persuasions, Cleopatra forced him to put all to the hazard of battle by sea: considering with herself how she might fly and provide for her safety, not to help him to win the victory, but to fly more easily after the battle lost. Betwixt Antonius' camp and his fleet of ships there was a great high point of firm land that ran a good way into the sea, the which Antonius used often for a walk without mistrust of fear or danger. One of Caesar's men perceived it, and told his master that he would laugh if they could take up Antonius in the midst of his walk. Thereupon Caesar sent some of his men to lie in ambush for him, and they missed not much of taking of him: for they took him that came before him, because they discovered too soon, and so Antonius scaped very hardly. So, when Antonius had determined to fight by sea, he set all the other ships on fire but threescore ships of Egypt, and reserved only but the best and greatest galleys, from three banks unto ten banks of oars. Into them he put two-and-twenty thousand fighting men, with two thousand darters and slingers. Now, as he was setting his men in order of battle, there was a captain, and a valiant man, that had served Antonius in many battles and conflicts, and had all his body hacked and cut: who, as Antonius passed by him, cried out unto him and said: "O noble emperor, how cometh it to pass that you trust to these vile brittle ships? What, do you mistrust these wounds of mine and this sword? Let the Egyptians and Phoenicians fight by sea, and set us on the mainland, where we used to conquer, or to be slain on our feet." Antonius passed by him and said never a word, but only beckoned to him with his hand and head, as though he willed him to be of good courage, although indeed he had no great courage himself. For, when the masters of the galleys and pilots would have let their sails alone, he made them clap them on, saying to color the matter withal, that not one of his enemies should scape. All that day and the three days following, the sea rose so high and was so boisterous, that the battle was put off. The fifth day the storm ceased and the sea calmed again, and then they rowed with force of oars in battle one against the other, Antonius leading the right wing with Publicola, and Caelius the left, and Marcus Octavius and Marcus Justeius the midst. Octavius Caesar, on the other side, had placed Agrippa in the left wing of his army, and had kept the right wing for himself. For the armies by land, Canidius was general of Antonius' side, and Taurus of Caesar's side: who kept their men in battle ray the one before the other, upon the seaside, without stirring one against the other. Further, touching both the chieftains: Antonius, being in a swift pinnace, was carried up and down by force of oars through his army and spake to his people to encourage them to fight valiantly, as if they were on mainland, because of the steadiness and heaviness of their ships: and commanded the pilots and masters of the galleys that they should not stir, none otherwise than if they were at anker, and so to receive the first charge of their enemies, and that they should not go out of the strait of the gulf. Caesar betimes in the morning, going out of his tent to see his ships throughout, met a man by chance that drave an ass before him. Caesar asked the man what his name was. The poor man told him that his name was Eutychus, to say, Fortunate: and his ass's name Nicon, to say, Conqueror. Therefore Caesar after he had won the battle setting out the market-place with the spurs of the galleys he had taken, for a sign of his victory: he caused also the man and his ass to be set up in brass.

When he had visited the order of his army throughout, he took a little pinnace, and went to the right wing, and wondered when he saw his enemies lie still in the strait, and stirred not. For, discerning them afar off, men would have thought they had been ships riding at anker, and a good while he was so persuaded. So he kept his galleys eight furlong from his enemies. About noon there rose a little gale of wind from the sea, and then Antonius' men waxing angry with tarrying so long, and trusting to the greatness and height of their ships, as if they had been invincible, they began to march forward with their left wing. Caesar seeing that was a glad man, and began a little to give back from the right wing, to allure them to come farther out of the strait and gulf, to the end that he might with his light ships well manned with watermen turn and environ the galleys of the enemies, the which were heavy of yarage, both for their bigness as also for lack of watermen to row them. When the skirmish began, and that they came to join, there was no great hurt at the first meeting, neither did the ships vehemently hit one against the other, as they do commonly in fight by sea. For, on the one side, Antonius' ships for their heaviness could not have the strength and swiftness to make their blows of any force: and Caesar's ships, on the other side, took great heed not to rush and shock with the forecastles of Antonius' ships, whose proes were armed with great brazen spurs. Furthermore they durst not flank them, because their points were easily broken, which way so ever they came to set upon his ships, that were made of great main square pieces of timber, bound together with great iron pins: so that the battle was much like to a battle by land, or, to speak more properly, to the assault of a city. For there were always three or four of Caesar's ships about one of Antonius' ships, and the soldiers fought with their pikes, halberds, and darts, and threw pots and darts with fire. Antonius' ships on the other side bestowed among them, with their cross-bows and engines of battery, great store of shot from their high towers of wood that were upon their ships.

Howbeit the battle was yet of even hand, and the victory doubtful, being indifferent to both: when suddenly they saw the three-score ships of Cleopatra busy about their yard-masts, and hoising sail to fly. So they fled through the midst of them that were in fight, for they had been placed behind the great ships, and did marvellously disorder the other ships. For the enemies themselves wondered much to see them sail in that sort with full sail towards Peloponnesus. There Antonius showed plainly, that he had not only lost the courage and heart of an emperor, but also of a valiant man, and that he was not his own man, (proving that true which an old man spake in mirth, that the soul of a lover lived in another body, and not in his own): he was so carried away with the vain love of this woman, as if he had been glued unto her, and that she could not have removed without moving of him also. For, when he saw Cleopatra's ship under sail, he forgot, forsook, and betrayed them that fought for him, and embarked upon a galley with five banks of oars, to follow her that was already begun to overthrow him, and would in the end be his utter destruction. When she knew his galley afar off, she lift up a sign in the poop of her ship, and so Antonius coming to it was plucked up where Cleopatra was: howbeit he saw her not at his first coming, nor she him, but went and sat down alone in the prow of his ship, and said never a word, clapping his head between both his hands. In the meantime came certain light brigantines of Caesar's that followed him hard.

Antonius sent unto Canidius to return with his army into Asia by Macedon. Now, for himself, he determined to cross over into Africk, and took one of her carects or hulks loaden with gold and silver and other rich carriage, and gave it unto his friends: commanding them to depart, and to seek to save themselves. They answered him weeping, that they would neither do it, not yet forsake him. Then Antonius very courteously and lovingly did comfort them, and prayed them to depart: and wrote unto Theophilus governor of Corinth, that he would see them safe, and help to hide them in some secret place, until they had made their way and peace with Caesar. This Theophilus was the father of Hipparchus, who was had in great estimation about Antonius. He was the first of all his enfranchised bondmen that revolted from him and yielded unto Caesar, and afterwards went and dwelt at Corinth. And thus it stood with Antonius. Now, for his army by sea, that fought before the head or foreland of Actium, they held out a long time, and nothing troubled them more than a great boisterous wind that rose full in the proes of their ships, and yet with much ado his navy was at length overthrown, five hours within night. There were not slain above five thousand men: but yet there were three hundred ships taken, as Octavius Caesar writeth himself in his commentaries. Many plainly saw Antonius fly, and yet could very hardly believe it, that he, that had nineteen legions whole by land and twelve thousand horsemen upon the seaside, would so have forsaken them, and have fled so cowardly: as if he had not

oftentimes proved both the one and the other fortune, and that he had not been throughly acquainted with the diverse changes and fortunes of battles. And yet his soldiers still wished for him, and ever hoped that he would come by some means or other unto them. Furthermore they showed themselves so valiant and faithful unto him, that after they certainly knew he was fled they kept themselves whole together seven days. In the end Canidius, Antonius' lieutenant, flying by night, and forsaking his camp, when they saw themselves thus destitute of their heads and leaders, they yielded themselves unto the stronger.

Antonius being arrived in Libya, he sent Cleopatra before into Egypt from the city of Paraetonium: and he himself remained very solitary, having only two of his friends with him, with whom he wandered up and down, both of them orators, the one Aristocrates a Grecian, and the other Lucilius a Roman: of whom we have written in another place, that, at the battle where Brutus was overthrown by the city of Philippi, he came and willingly put himself into the hands of those that followed Brutus, saying that it was he: because Brutus in the meantime might have liberty to save himself. And, afterwards, because Antonius saved his life, he still remained with him: and was very faithful and friendly unto him till his death. But when Antonius heard that he whom he had trusted with the government of Libya, and unto whom he had given the charge of his army there, had yielded unto Caesar: he was so mad withal, that he would have slain himself for anger, had not his friends about him withstood him, and kept him from it. So he went unto Alexandria, and there found Cleopatra about a wonderful enterprise, and of great attempt. Betwixt the Red Sea and the sea between the lands that point upon the coast of Egypt there is a little piece of land, that divideth both the seas and separateth Africk from Asia: the which strait is so narrow at the end where the two seas are narrowest, that it is not above three hundred furlongs over. Cleopatra went about to lift her ships out of the one sea, and to hale them over the strait into the other sea: that, when her ships were come into the Gulf of Arabia, she might then carry all her gold and silver away, and so with a great company of men go and dwell in some place about the ocean sea far from the sea Mediterranean, to scape the danger and bondage of this war. But now, because the Arabians dwelling about the city of Petra did burn the first ships that were brought to land, and that Antonius thought that his army by land, which he left at Actium, was yet whole: she left off her enterprise, and determined to keep all the ports and passages of her realm. Antonius, he forsook the city and company of his friends, and built him a house in the sea, by the Isle of Pharos, upon certain forced mounts which he caused to be cast into the sea, and dwelt there, as a man that banished himself from all men's company: saying that he would lead Timon's life, because he had the like wrong offered him, that was before offered unto Timon: and that for the unthankfulness of those he had done good unto, and whom he took to be his friends, he was angry with all men, and would trust no man.

Canidius himself came to bring him news, that he had lost all his army by land at Actium: on the other side he was advertised also, that Herodes king of Jewry, who had also certain legions and bands with him, was revolted unto Caesar, and all the other kings in like manner: so that, saving those that were about him, he had none left him. All this notwithstanding did nothing trouble him, and it seemed that he was contented to forgo all his hope, and so to be rid of all his care and troubles. Thereupon he left his solitary house he had built by the sea which he called Timoneon, and Cleopatra received him into her royal palace. He was no sooner come thither, but he straight set all the city on rioting and banqueting again, and himself to liberality and gifts. He caused the son of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra to be enrolled (according to the manner of the Romans) amongst the number of young men: and gave Antyllus, his eldest son he had by Fulvia, the man's gown, the which was a plain gown without guard or embroidery of purple. For these things there was kept great feasting, banqueting, and dancing in Alexandria many days together. Indeed they did break their first order they had set down, which they call *Amimetobion* (as much to say, no life comparable), and did set up another, which they called *Synapothanumenon* (signifying the order and agreement of those that will die together), the which in exceeding sumptuousness and cost was not inferior to the first. For their friends made themselves to be enrolled in this order of those that would die together, and so made great feasts one to another: for every man, when it came to his turn, feasted their whole company and fraternity. Cleopatra in the meantime was very careful in gathering all sorts of poisons together, to destroy men. Now, to make proof of those poisons which made men die with least pain, she tried it upon condemned men in prison. For, when she saw the poisons that were sudden and vehement, and brought speedy death with grievous torments, and, in contrary manner, that such as were more mild and gentle had not that quick speed and

force to make one die suddenly, she afterwards went about to prove the stinging of snakes and adders, and made some to be applied unto men in her sight, some in one sort and some in another. So, when she had daily made divers and sundry proofs, she found none of them all she had proved so fit as the biting of an aspic, the which causeth only a heaviness of the head, without swooning or complaining, and bringeth a great desire also to sleep, with a little sweat in the face, and so by little and little taketh away the senses and vital powers, no living creature perceiving that the patients feel any pain. For they are so sorry when anybody awaketh them, and taketh them up, as those that being taken out of a sound sleep are very heavy and desirous to sleep. This notwithstanding, they sent ambassadors unto Octavius Caesar in Asia, Cleopatra requesting the realm of Egypt for their children, and Antonius praying that he might be suffered to live at Athens like a private man, if Caesar would not let him remain in Egypt. And, because they had no other men of estimation about them, for that some were fled, and, those that remained, they did not greatly trust them: they were enforced to send Euphronius the schoolmaster of their children.

Caesar would not grant unto Antonius' requests: but, for Cleopatra, he made her answer, that he would deny her nothing reasonable, so that she would either put Antonius to death, or drive him out of her country. Therewithal he sent Thyreus one of his men unto her, a very wise and discreet man, who, bringing letters of credit from a young lord unto a noble lady, and that besides greatly liked her beauty, might easily by his eloquence have persuaded her. He was longer in talk with her than any man else was, and the queen herself also did him great honor: insomuch as he made Antonius jealous of him. Whereupon Antonius caused him to be taken and well-favoredly whipped, and so sent him unto Caesar: and bade him tell him that he made him angry with him, because he showed himself proud and disdainful towards him, and now specially when he was easy to be angered, by reason of his present misery. "To be short, if this mislike thee," said he, "thou hast Hipparchus one of my enfranchised bondmen with thee: hang him if thou wilt, or whip him at thy pleasure, that we may cry quittance." From thenceforth Cleopatra, to clear herself of the suspicion he had of her, she made more of him than ever she did. For first of all, where she did solemnize the day of her birth very meanly and sparingly, fit for her present misfortune, she now in contrary manner did keep it with such solemnity, that she exceeded all measure of sumptuousness and magnificence: so that the guests that were bidden to the feasts, and came poor, went away rich. Now, things passing thus, Agrippa by divers letters sent one after another unto Caesar prayed him to return to Rome, because the affairs there did of necessity require his person and presence. Thereupon he did defer the war till the next year following: but, when winter was done, he returned again through Syria by the coast of Africk, to make wars against Antonius, and his other captains. When the city of Pelusium was taken, there ran a rumor in the city, that Seleucus, by Cleopatra's consent, had surrendered the same. But, to clear herself that she did not, Cleopatra brought Seleucus' wife and children unto Antonius, to be revenged of them at his pleasure. Furthermore, Cleopatra had long before made many sumptuous tombs and monuments, as well for excellency of workmanship as for height and greatness of building, joining hard to the temple of Isis. Thither she caused to be brought all the treasure and precious things she had of the ancient kings her predecessors: as gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory, and cinnamon, and besides all that, a marvellous number of torches, faggots, and flax. So Octavius Caesar being afraid to lose such a treasure and mass of riches, and that this woman for spite would set it afire, and burn it every whit: he always sent some one or other unto her from him, to put her in good comfort, whilst he in the meantime drew near the city with his army. So Caesar came, and pitched his camp hard by the city, in the place where they run and manage their horses. Antonius made a sally upon him, and fought very valiantly, so that he drave Caesar's horsemen back, fighting with his men even into their camp. Then he came again to the palace, greatly boasting of this victory, and sweetly kissed Cleopatra, armed as he was when he came from the fight, recommending one of his men of arms unto her, that had valiantly fought in this skirmish. Cleopatra to reward his manliness gave him an armor and head-piece of clean gold: howbeit the man at arms, when he had received this rich gift, stale away by night, and went to Caesar. Antonius sent again to challenge Caesar to fight with him hand to hand. Caesar answered him, that he had many other ways to die than so. Then Antonius, seeing there was no way more honorable for him to die than fighting valiantly, he determined to set up his rest, both by sea and land. So, being at supper (as it is reported), he commanded his officers and household servants that waited on him at his board, that they should fill his cups full, and make as much of him as they could: "For," said he, "you know not whether you shall do so much for me to-morrow or not, or whether you shall serve

another master: and it may be you shall see me no more, but a dead body." This notwithstanding, perceiving that his friends and men fell a-weeping to hear him say so: to salve that he had spoken, he added this more unto it, that he would not lead them to battle, where he thought not rather safely to return with victory, than valiantly to die with honor. Furthermore, the self same night within little of midnight, when all the city was quiet, full of fear and sorrow, thinking what would be the issue and end of this war: it is said that suddenly they heard a marvellous sweet harmony of sundry sorts of instruments of music, with the cry of a multitude of people, as they had been dancing, and had sung as they use in Bacchus' feasts, with movings and turnings after the manner of the Satyrs: and it seemed that this dance went through the city unto the gate that opened to the enemies, and that all the troop that made this noise they heard went out of the city at that gate. Now, such as in reason sought the depth of the interpretation of this wonder, thought that it was the god unto whom Antonius bare singular devotion to counterfeit and resemble him, that did forsake them. The next morning by break of day, he went to set those few footmen he had in order upon the hills adjoining unto the city: and there he stood to behold his galleys which departed from the haven, and rowed against the galleys of his enemies, and so stood still, looking what exploit his soldiers in them would do. But, when by force of rowing they were come near unto them, they first saluted Caesar's men, and then Caesar's men resaluted them also, and of two armies made but one, and then did all together row toward the city. When Antonius saw that his men did forsake him, and yielded unto Caesar, and that his footmen were broken and overthrown: he then fled into the city, crying out that Cleopatra had betrayed him unto them, with whom he had made war for her sake. Then she, being afraid of his fury, fled into the tomb which she caused to be made, and there locked the doors unto her, and shut all the springs of the locks with great bolts, and in the meantime sent unto Antonius to tell him that she was dead. Antonius, believing it, said unto himself: "What dost thou look for further, Antonius, sith spiteful fortune hath taken from thee the only joy thou hadst, for whom thou yet reservedst thy life?" When he had said these words, he went into a chamber and unarmed himself, and being naked said thus: "O Cleopatra, it grieveth me not that I have lost thy company, for I will not be long from thee: but I am sorry that, having been so great a captain and emperor, I am indeed condemned to be judged of less courage and noble mind than a woman." Now he had a man of his called Eros, whom he loved and trusted much, and whom he had long before caused to swear unto him, that he should kill him when he did command him: and then he willed him to keep his promise. His man drawing his sword lift it up as though he had meant to have stricken his master: but turning his head at one side he thrust his sword into himself, and fell down dead at his master's foot. Then said Antonius, "O noble Eros, I thank thee for this, and it is valiantly done of thee, to show me what I should do to myself, which thou couldst not do for me." Therewithal he took his sword, and thrust it into his belly, and so fell down upon a little bed. The wound he had killed him not presently, for the blood stinted a little when he was laid: and, when he came somewhat to himself again, he prayed them that were about him to dispatch him. But they all fled out of the chamber, and left him crying out and tormenting himself: until at last there came a secretary unto him called Diomedes, who was commanded to bring him into the tomb or monument where Cleopatra was. When he heard that she was alive, he very earnestly prayed his men to carry his body thither, and so he was carried in his men's arms into the entry of the monument. Notwithstanding, Cleopatra would not open the gates, but came to the high windows, and cast out certain chains and ropes, in the which Antonius was trussed: and Cleopatra her own self, with two women only, which she had suffered to come with her into these monuments, triced Antonius up. They that were present to behold it said they never saw so pitiful a sight. For they plucked up poor Antonius all bloody as he was, and drawing on with pangs of death, who holding up his hands to Cleopatra raised up himself as well as he could. It was a hard thing for these women to do, to lift him up: but Cleopatra stooping down with her head, putting to all her strength to her uttermost power, did lift him up with much ado, and never let go her hold, with the help of the women beneath that bade her be of good courage, and were as sorry to see her labor so, as she herself. So when she had gotten him in after that sort, and laid him on a bed, she rent her garments upon him, clapping her breast, and scratching her face and stomach. Then she dried up his blood that had berayed his face, and called him her lord, her husband, and emperor, forgetting her own misery and calamity, for the pity and compassion she took of him. Antonius made her cease her lamenting, and called for wine, either because he was athirst, or else for that he thought thereby to hasten his death. When he had drunk, he earnestly prayed her, and persuaded her, that she would seek to save her life, if she could possible, without reproach and dishonor: and that

chiefly she should trust Proculeius above any man else about Caesar. And, as for himself, that she should not lament nor sorrow for the miserable change of his fortune at the end of his days: but rather that she should think him the more fortunate for the former triumphs and honors he had received, considering that while he lived he was the noblest and greatest prince of the world, and that now he was overcome not cowardly, but valiantly, a Roman by another Roman. As Antonius gave the last gasp, Proculeius came that was sent from Caesar. For, after Antonius had thrust his sword in himself, as they carried him into the tombs and monuments of Cleopatra, one of his guard called Dercetaeus took his sword with the which he had striken himself, and hid it: then he secretly stale away, and brought Octavius Caesar the first news of his death, and showed him his sword that was bloodied. Caesar hearing these news straight withdrew himself into a secret place of his tent, and there burst out with tears, lamenting his hard and miserable fortune that had been his friend and brother-in-law, his equal in the empire, and companion with him in sundry great exploits and battles. Then he called for all his friends, and showed them the letters Antonius had written to him, and his answers also sent him again, during their quarrel and strife: and how fiercely and proudly the other answered him, to all just and reasonable matters he wrote unto him. After this, he sent Proculeius, and commanded him to do what he could possible to get Cleopatra alive, fearing lest otherwise all the treasure would be lost: and furthermore, he thought that if he could take Cleopatra, and bring her alive to Rome, she would marvellously beautify and set out his triumph. But Cleopatra would never put herself into Proculeius' hands, although they spake together. For Proculeius came to the gates that were very thick and strong, and surely barred, but yet there were some cranews through the which her voice might be heard, and so they without understood, that Cleopatra demanded the kingdom of Egypt for her sons: and that Proculeius answered her, that she should be of good cheer, and not be afraid to refer all unto Caesar. After he had viewed the place very well, he came and reported her answer unto Caesar. Who immediately sent Gallus to speak once again with her, and bade him purposely hold her with talk, whilst Proculeius did set up a ladder against that high window by the which Antonius was triced up, and came down into the monument with two of his men, hard by the gate where Cleopatra stood to hear what Gallus said unto her. One of her women which was shut in her monuments with her saw Proculeius by chance as he came down, and shrieked out. "O poor Cleopatra, thou art taken." Then, when she saw Proculeius behind her as she came from the gate, she thought to have stabbed herself in with a short dagger she wore of purpose by her side. But Proculeius came suddenly upon her, and taking her by both the hands said unto her: "Cleopatra, first thou shalt do thyself great wrong, and secondly unto Caesar, to deprive him of the occasion and opportunity openly to show his bounty and mercy, and to give his enemies cause to accuse the most courteous and noble prince that ever was, and to appeach him, as though he were a cruel and merciless man that were not to be trusted." So even as he spake the word he took her dagger from her, and shook her clothes for fear of any poison hidden about her. Afterwards Caesar sent one of his enfranchised men called Epaphroditus, whom he straightly charged to look well unto her, and to beware in any case that she made not herself away: and, for the rest, to use her with all the courtesy possible.

Many princes, great kings, and captains did crave Antonius' body of Octavius Caesar, to give him honorable burial: but Caesar would never take it from Cleopatra, who did sumptuously and royally bury him with her own hands, whom Caesar suffered to take as much as she would to bestow upon his funerals. Now was she altogether overcome with sorrow and passion of mind, for she had knocked her breast so pitifully, that she had martyred it, and in divers places had raised ulcers and inflammations, so that she fell into a fever withal: whereof she was very glad, hoping thereby to have good color to abstain from meat, and that so she might have died easily without any trouble. She had a physician called Olympus, whom she made privy of her intent, to the end he should help her to rid her out of her life: as Olympus writeth himself, who wrote a book of all these things. But Caesar mistrusted the matter, by many conjectures he had, and therefore did put her in fear, and threatened her to put her children to shameful death. With these threats Cleopatra for fear yielded straight, as she would have yielded unto strokes, and afterwards suffered herself to be cured and dieted as they listed. Shortly after, Caesar came himself in person to see her, and to comfort her. Cleopatra being laid upon a little low bed in poor state, when she saw Caesar come into her chamber, she suddenly rose up, naked in her smock, and fell down at his feet marvellously disfigured: both for that she had plucked her hair from her head, as also for that she had martyred all her face with her nails, and besides, her voice was small and trembling, her eyes sunk into her head with continual blubbering,

and moreover they might see the most part of her stomach torn in sunder. To be short, her body was not much better than her mind: yet her good grace and comeliness and the force of her beauty was not altogether defaced. But, notwithstanding this ugly and pitiful state of hers, yet she showed herself within by her outward looks and countenance. When Caesar had made her lie down again, and sat by her bedside, Cleopatra began to clear and excuse herself for that she had done, laying all to the fear she had of Antonius: Caesar, in contrary manner, reproved her in every point. Then she suddenly altered her speech, and prayed him to pardon her, as though she were afraid to die, and desirous to live. At length, she gave him a brief and memorial of all the ready money and treasure she had. But by chance there stood Seleucus by, one of her treasurers, who, to seem a good servant, came straight to Caesar to disprove Cleopatra, that she had not set in all, but kept many things back of purpose. Cleopatra was in such a rage with him, that she flew upon him, and took him by the hair of the head, and boxed him well-favoredly. Caesar fell a-laughing, and parted the fray. "Alas," said she, "O Caesar, is not this a great shame and reproach, that thou having vouchsafed to take the pains to come unto me, and hast done me this honor, poor wretch and caitiff creature brought into this pitiful and miserable state, and that mine own servants should come now to accuse me: though it may be I have reserved some jewels and trifles meet for women, but not for me (poor soul) to set out myself withal, but meaning to give some pretty presents and gifts unto Octavia and Livia, that, they making means and intercession for me to thee, thou mightest yet extend thy favor and mercy upon me?" Caesar was glad to hear her say so, persuading himself thereby that she had yet a desire to save her life. So he made her answer, that he did not only give her that to dispose of at her pleasure which she had kept back, but further promised to use her more honorably and bountifully than she would think for: and so he took his leave of her, supposing he had deceived her, but indeed he was deceived himself. There was a young gentleman Cornelius Dolabella, that was one of Caesar's very great familiars, and besides did bear no evil will unto Cleopatra. He sent her word secretly as she had requested him, that Caesar determined to take his journey through Syria, and that within three days he would send her away before with her children. When this was told Cleopatra, she requested Caesar that it would please him to suffer her to offer the last oblations of the dead unto the soul of Antonius. This being granted her, she was carried to the place where his tomb was, and there falling down on her knees, embracing the tomb with her women, the tears running down her cheeks, she began to speak in this sort: "O my dear Lord Antonius, not long sithence I buried thee here, being a freewoman: and now I offer unto thee the funeral sprinklings and oblations, being a captive and prisoner, and yet I am forbidden and kept from tearing and murthering this captive body of mine with blows, which they carefully guard and keep, only to triumph of thee: look therefore henceforth for no other honors, offerings, nor sacrifices from me, for these are the last which Cleopatra can give thee, sith now they carry her away. Whilst we lived together, nothing could sever our companies: but now at our death I fear me they will make us change our countries. For as thou being a Roman has been buried in Egypt, even so wretched creature I, an Egyptian, shall be buried in Italy, which shall be all the good that I have received by thy country. If therefore the gods where thou art now have any power and authority, sith our gods here have forsaken us, suffer not thy true friend and lover to be carried away alive, that in me they triumph of thee: but receive me with thee, and let me be buried in one self tomb with thee. For though my griefs and miseries be infinite, yet none hath grieved me more, now that I could less bear withal, than this small time which I have been driven to live alone without thee." Then, having ended these doleful plaints, and crowned the tomb with garlands and sundry nosegays, and marvellous lovingly embraced the same, she commanded they should prepare her bath, and when she had bathed and washed herself she fell to her meat, and was sumptuously served. Now whilst she was at dinner there came a countryman, and brought her a basket. The soldiers that warded at the gates asked him straight what he had in his basket. He opened the basket, and took out the leaves that covered the figs, and showed them that they were figs he brought. They all of them marvelled to see so goodly figs. The countryman laughed to hear them, and bade them take some if they would. They believed he told them truly, and so bade him carry them in. After Cleopatra had dined, she sent a certain table written and sealed unto Caesar, and commanded them all to go out of the tombs where she was, but the two women: then she shut the doors to her. Caesar, when he received this table, and began to read her lamentation and petition, requesting him that he would let her be buried with Antonius, found straight what she meant, and thought to have gone thither himself: howbeit he sent one before in all haste that might be, to see what it was. Her death was very sudden. For those whom Caesar sent unto

her ran thither in all haste possible, and found the soldiers standing at the gate, mistrusting nothing, nor understanding of her death. But when they had opened the doors they found Cleopatra stark dead, laid upon a bed of gold, attired and arrayed in her royal robes, and one of her two women, which was called Iras, dead at her feet: and her other woman called Charmion half-dead, and trembling, trimming the diadem which Cleopatra ware upon her head. One of the soldiers, seeing her, angrily said unto her: "Is that well done, Charmion?" "Very well," said she again, "and meet for a princess descended from the race of so many noble kings." She said no more, but fell dead hard by the bed. Some report that this aspic was brought unto her in the basket with figs, and that she had commanded them to hide it under the figleaves, that, when she should think to take out the figs, the aspic should bite her before she should see her: howbeit that, when she would have taken away the leaves for the figs, she perceived it, and said, "Art thou here then?" And so, her arm being naked, she put it to the aspic to be bitten. Others say again, she kept it in a box, and that she did prick and thrust it with a spindle of gold, so that the aspic, being angered withal, leapt out with great fury, and bit her in the arm. Howbeit few can tell the troth. For they report also, that she had hidden poison in a hollow razor which she carried in the hair of her head: and yet was there no mark seen of her body, or any sign discerned that she was poisoned, neither also did they find this serpent in her tomb. But it was reported only, that there were seen certain fresh steps or tracks where it had gone, on the tomb side toward the sea, and specially by the door side. Some say also, that they found two little pretty bitings in her arm, scant to be discerned: the which it seemeth Caesar himself gave credit unto, because in his triumph he carried Cleopatra's image, with an aspic biting of her arm. And thus goeth the report of her death. Now Caesar, though he was marvellous sorry for the death of Cleopatra, yet he wondered at her noble mind and courage, and therefore commanded she should be nobly buried, and laid by Antonius: and willed also that her two women should have honorable burial. Cleopatra died being eight-and-thirty years old, after she had reigned two-and-twenty years, and governed above fourteen of them with Antonius. And for Antonius, some say that he lived three-and-fifty years: and others say, six-and-fifty.

Questions:

1. Antony's life is closely bound up with great events in the history of the Roman Empire How much interest does Plutarch show here in the course of the Roman Empire?
2. What is Plutarch's attitude toward Antony? Does he pity him? Does he attempt to condone his actions? Does he make Antony a hero?
3. Cleopatra turned the whole course of Antony's career. Does Plutarch make us feel Cleopatra's fascination sufficiently to account for her influence on Antony?
4. Shakespeare used North's translation of Plutarch's Antony in writing his play, *Antony and Cleopatra*. Some of Plutarch's description, Shakespeare altered hardly more than by putting it into blank verse. Do you consider Plutarch's description as good as Shakespeare apparently did?

THE END OF GENERAL GORDON

LYTTON STRACHEY

DURING the year 1883 a solitary English gentleman was to be seen, wandering, with a thick book under his arm, in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. His unassuming figure, short and slight, with its half-gliding, half-tripping motion, gave him a boyish aspect, which contrasted, oddly, but not unpleasantly, with the touch of grey on his hair and whiskers. There was the same contrast—enigmatic and attractive—between the sun-burnt brick-red complexion—the hue of the seasoned traveller—and the large blue eyes, with their look of almost childish sincerity. To the friendly inquirer, he would explain, in a low, soft, and very distinct voice, that he was engaged in elucidating four questions—the site of the crucifixion, the line of division between the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, the identification of Gibeon, and the position of the Garden of Eden. He was also, he would add, most anxious to discover the spot where the Ark first touched ground, after the subsidence of the Flood: he believed, indeed, that he had solved that problem, as a reference to some passages in the book which he was carrying would show.

This singular person was General Gordon, and his book was the Holy Bible.

In such complete retirement from the world and the ways of men, it might have seemed that a life of inordinate activity had found at last a longed-for, a final peacefulness. For month after month, for an entire year, the General lingered by the banks of the

Jordan. But then the enchantment was suddenly broken. Once more adventure claimed him; he plunged into the whirl of high affairs; his fate was mingled with the frenzies of Empire and the doom of peoples. And it was not in peace and rest, but in ruin and horror, that he reached his end.

The circumstances of that tragic history, so famous, so bitterly debated, so often and so controversially described, remain full of suggestion for the curious examiner of the past. There emerges from those obscure, unhappy records an interest, not merely political and historical, but human and dramatic. One catches a vision of strange characters, moved by mysterious impulses, interacting in queer complication, and hurrying at last—so it almost seems—like creatures in a puppet show to a predestined catastrophe. The characters, too, have a charm of their own: they are curiously English. What other nation on the face of the earth could have produced Mr. Gladstone and Sir Evelyn Baring and Lord Hartington and General Gordon? Alike in their emphasis and their lack of emphasis, in their eccentricity and their conventionality, in their matter-of-factness and their romance, these four figures seem to embody the mingling contradictions of the English spirit. As for the *mise-en-scène,* it is perfectly appropriate. But first let us glance at the earlier adventures of the hero of the piece.

Charles George Gordon was born in 1833. His father, of Highland and military descent, was himself a lieutenant-general; his mother came of a family of merchants, distinguished for their sea-voyages into remote regions of the globe. As a boy, Charlie was remarkable for his high spirits, pluck, and love of mischief. Destined for the artillery, he was sent to the Academy at Woolwich, where some other characteristics made their appearance. On one occasion, when the cadets had been forbidden to leave the dining-room and the senior corporal stood with outstretched arms in the doorway to prevent their exit, Charlie Gordon put his head down, and, butting the officer in the pit of the stomach, projected him down a flight of stairs and through a glass door at the bottom. For this act of insubordination he was nearly dismissed; while the captain of his company predicted that he would never make an officer. A little later, when he was eighteen, it came to the knowledge of the authorities that bullying was rife at the Academy. The newcomers were questioned and one of them said that Charlie Gordon had hit him over the head with a clothes-brush. He had worked well, and his record was on the whole a good one; but the authorities took a serious view of the case, and held back his commission for six months. It was owing to this delay that he went into the Royal Engineers, instead of the Royal Artillery.

He was sent to Pembroke, to work at the erection of fortifications; and at Pembroke those religious convictions, which never afterwards left him, first gained a hold upon his mind. Under the influence of his sister Augusta and of a "very religious captain of the name of Drew," he began to reflect upon his sins, look up texts, and hope for salvation. Though he had never been confirmed—he never *was* confirmed—he took the sacrament every Sunday; and he eagerly perused the *Priceless Diamond,* Scott's *Commentaries,* and *The Remains of the Rev. R. McCheyne.*

> No novels or worldly books [he wrote to his sister] come up to the *Commentaries* of Scott. . . . I remember well when you used to get them in numbers, and I used to laugh at them; but, thank God, it is different with me now. I feel much happier and more contented than I used to do. I did not like Pembroke, but now I would not wish for any prettier place. I have got a horse and gig, and Drew and myself drive all about the country. I hope my dear father and mother think of eternal things. . . . Dearest Augusta, pray for me, I beg of you.

He was twenty-one; the Crimean War broke out; and before the year was over he had managed to get himself transferred to Balaclava. During the siege of Sebastopol he behaved with conspicuous gallantry. Upon the declaration of peace, he was sent to Bessarabia to assist in determining the frontier between Russia and Turkey, in accordance with the Treaty of Paris; and upon this duty he was occupied for nearly two years. Not long after his return home, in 1860, war was declared upon China. Captain Gordon was dispatched to the scene of operations, but the fighting was over before he arrived. Nevertheless, he was to remain for the next four years in China, where he was to lay the foundations of an extraordinary renown.

Though he was too late to take part in the capture of the Taku Forts, he was in time to witness the destruction of the Summer Palace at Pekin—the act by which Lord Elgin, in the name of European civilization, took vengeance upon the barbarism of the East.

The war was over; but the British army remained in the country, until the payment of an indemnity by the Chinese Government was completed. A camp was formed at Tientsin, and Gordon was occupied in setting up huts for the troops. While he was thus engaged, he had a slight attack of small-pox. "I'm glad to say," he told his sister, "that this disease has

brought me back to my Savior, and I trust in future to be a better Christian than I have been hitherto."

Curiously enough a similar circumstance had, more than twenty years earlier, brought about a singular succession of events which were now upon the point of opening the way to Gordon's first great adventure. In 1837, a village school master near Canton had been attacked by illness; and, as in the case of Gordon, illness had been followed by a religious revulsion. Hong-siu-tsuen—for such was his name—saw visions, went into ecstasies, and entered into relations with the Deity. Shortly afterwards he fell in with a Methodist missionary from America, who instructed him in the Christian religion. The new doctrine, working upon the mystical ferment already in Hong's mind, produced a remarkable result. He was, he declared, the prophet of God; he was more—he was the Son of God; he was *Tien Wang,* the Celestial King; he was the younger brother of Jesus. The times were propitious, and proselytes soon gathered around him. Having conceived a grudge against the Government, owing to his failure in an examination, Hong gave a political turn to his teaching, which soon developed into a propaganda of rebellion against the rule of the Manchus and the Mandarins. The authorities took fright, attempted to suppress Hong by force, and failed. The movement spread. By 1850 the rebels were overrunning the populous and flourishing delta of the Yang-tse-Kiang, and had become a formidable force. In 1853 they captured Nankin, which was henceforth their capital. The *Tien Wang* established himself in a splendid palace, and proclaimed his new evangel. His theogony included the wife of God, or the celestial Mother, the wife of Jesus, or the celestial daughter-in-law, and a sister of Jesus, whom he married to one of his lieutenants, who thus became the celestial son-in-law; the Holy Ghost, however, was eliminated. His mission was to root out Demons and Manchus from the face of the earth, and to establish *Taiping,* the reign of eternal peace. In the meantime, retiring into the depths of his palace, he left the further conduct of earthly operations to his lieutenants, upon whom he bestowed the title of "Wangs" (kings), while he himself, surrounded by thirty wives and one hundred concubines, devoted his energies to the spiritual side of his mission. The Taiping Rebellion, as it came to be called, had now reached its furthest extent. The rebels were even able to occupy, for more than a year, the semi-European city of Shanghai. But then the tide turned. The latent forces of the Empire gradually asserted themselves. The rebels lost ground, their armies were defeated, and in 1859 Nankin itself was besieged and the Celestial King trembled in his palace. The end seemed to be at hand, when there was a sudden twist of Fortune's wheel. The war of 1860, the invasion of China by European armies, their march into the interior, and their occupation of Pekin, not only saved the rebels from destruction but allowed them to recover the greater part of what they had lost. Once more they seized upon the provinces of the delta, once more they menaced Shanghai. It was clear that the imperial army was incompetent, and the Shanghai merchants determined to provide for their own safety as best they could. They accordingly got together a body of troops, partly Chinese and partly European and under European officers, to which they entrusted the defense of the town. This small force, which, after a few preliminary successes, received from the Chinese Government the title of the "Ever Victorious Army," was able to hold the rebels at bay, but it could do no more. For two years Shanghai was in constant danger. The Taipings, steadily growing in power, were spreading destruction far and wide. The Ever Victorious Army was the only force capable of opposing them, and the Ever Victorious Army was defeated more often than not. Its first European leader had been killed; his successor quarrelled with the Chinese governor, Li Hung Chang, and was dismissed. At last it was determined to ask the general at the head of the British army of occupation for the loan of an officer to command the force. The English, who had been at first inclined to favor the Taipings, on religious grounds, were now convinced, on practical grounds, of the necessity of suppressing them. It was in these circumstances that, early in 1863, the command of the Ever Victorious Army was offered to Gordon. He accepted it, received the title of general from the Chinese authorities, and entered forthwith upon his new task. He was just thirty.

In eighteen months, he told Li Hung Chang, the business would be finished; and he was as good as his word. The difficulties before him were very great. A vast tract of country was in the possession of the rebels—an area, at the lowest estimate, of 14,000 square miles with a population of twenty millions. For centuries this low-lying plain of the Yang-tse delta, rich in silk and tea, fertilized by elaborate irrigation, and covered with great walled cities, had been one of the most flourishing districts in China. Though it was now being rapidly ruined by the depredations of the Taipings, its strategic strength was obviously enormous. Gordon, however, with the eye of a born general, perceived that he could convert the very feature of the country which, on the face of it, most favored an army on the defense—its complicated geographical system of interlacing roads and waterways, canals, lakes and rivers—to a means of

offense warfare. The force at his disposal was small, but it was mobile. He had a passion for map-making, and had already, in his leisure hours, made a careful survey of the country round Shanghai; he was thus able to execute a series of maneuvers which proved fatal to the enemy. By swift marches and countermarches, by sudden attacks and surprises, above all by the dispatch of armed steamboats up the circuitous waterways into positions from which they could fall upon the enemy in reverse, he was able gradually to force back the rebels, to cut them off piece-meal in the field, and to seize upon their cities. But, brilliant as these operations were, Gordon's military genius showed itself no less unmistakably in other directions. The Ever Victorious Army, recruited from the riff-raff of Shanghai, was an ill-disciplined, ill-organized body of about three thousand men, constantly on the verge of mutiny, supporting itself on plunder, and, at the slightest provocation, melting into thin air. Gordon, by sheer force of character, established over this incoherent mass of ruffians an extraordinary ascendancy. He drilled them with rigid severity; he put them into a uniform, armed them systematically, substituted pay for loot, and was even able, at last, to introduce regulations of a sanitary kind. There were some terrible scenes, in which the general, alone, faced the whole furious army, and quelled it: scenes of rage, desperation, towering courage, and summary execution. Eventually he attained to an almost magical prestige. Walking at the head of his troops, with nothing but a light cane in his hand, he seemed to pass through every danger with the scatheless equanimity of a demi-god. The Taipings themselves were awed into a strange reverence. More than once their leaders, in a frenzy of fear and admiration, ordered the sharp-shooters not to take aim at the advancing figure of the faintly smiling Englishman.

It is significant that Gordon found it easier to win battles and to crush mutineers than to keep on good terms with the Chinese authorities. He had to act in coöperation with a large native force; and it was only natural that the general at the head of it should grow more and more jealous and angry as the Englishman's successes revealed more and more clearly his own incompetence. At first, indeed, Gordon could rely upon the support of the governor. Li Hung Chang's experience of Europeans had been hitherto limited to low-class adventurers, and Gordon came as a revelation.

> It is a direct blessing from Heaven [he noted in his diary] the coming of this British Gordon. . . . He is superior in manner and bearing to any of the foreigners whom I have come into contact with, and does not show outwardly that conceit which makes most of them repugnant in my sight.

A few months later, after he had accompanied Gordon on a victorious expedition, the mandarin's enthusiasm burst forth.

> What a sight for tired eyes [he wrote], what an elixir for a heavy heart—to see this splendid Englishman fight! . . . If there is anything that I admire nearly as much as the superb scholarship of Tseng Kuo-fan it is the military qualities of this fine officer. He is a glorious fellow!

In his emotion, Li Hung Chang addressed Gordon as his brother, declaring that he "considered him worthy to fill the place of the brother who is departed. Could I have said more in all the words of the world?" Then something happened which impressed and mystified the sensitive Chinaman.

> The Englishman's face was first filled with a deep pleasure, and then he seemed to be thinking of something depressing and sad; for the smile went from his mouth and there were tears in his eyes when he thanked me for what I had said. Can it be that he has, or has had, some great trouble in his life, and that he fights recklessly to forget it, or that Death has no terrors for him?

But, as time went on, Li Hung Chang's attitude began to change. "General Gordon," he notes in July, "must control his tongue, even if he lets his mind run loose." The Englishman had accused him of intriguing with the Chinese general, and of withholding money due to the Ever Victorious Army. "Why does he not accord me the honors that are due to me, as head of the military and civil authority in these parts?" By September the governor's earlier transports have been replaced by a more judicial frame of mind.

> With his many faults, his pride, his temper, and his never-ending demand for money, Gordon is a noble man, and in spite of all I have said to him or about him, I will ever think most highly of him. . . . He is an honest man, but difficult to get on with.

Disagreements of this kind might perhaps have been tided over till the end of the campaign: but an unfortunate incident suddenly led to a more serious quarrel. Gordon's advance had been fiercely contested, but it had been constant; he had captured several important towns; and in October he laid siege

to the city of Soochow, once one of the most famous and splendid in China. In December, its fall being obviously imminent, the Taiping leaders agreed to surrender it, on condition that their lives were spared. Gordon was a party to the agreement, and laid special stress upon his presence with the imperial forces as a pledge of its fulfilment. No sooner, however, was the city surrendered than the rebel "Wangs" were assassinated. In his fury, it is said that Gordon searched everywhere for Li Hung Chang with a loaded pistol in his hand. He was convinced of the complicity of the governor, who, on his side, denied that he was responsible for what had happened.

> I asked him why I should plot, and go round a mountain, when a mere order, written with five strokes of the quill, would have accomplished the same thing. He did not answer, but he insulted me, and said he would report my treachery, as he called it, to Shanghai and England. Let him do so; he cannot bring the crazy Wangs back.

The agitated mandarin hoped to placate Gordon by a large gratuity and an imperial medal; but the plan was not successful.

> General Gordon [he writes] called upon me in his angriest mood. He repeated his former speeches about the Wangs. I did not attempt to argue with him. . . . He refused the 10,000 taels, which I had ready for him, and, with an oath, said that he did not want the Throne's medal. This is showing the greatest disrespect.

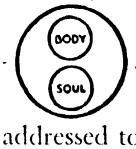
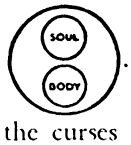
Gordon resigned his command; and it was only with the utmost reluctance that he agreed at last to resume it. An arduous and terrible series of operations followed; but they were successful, and by June, 1846, the Ever Victorious Army, having accomplished its task, was disbanded. The imperial forces now closed round Nankin: the last hopes of the Tien Wang had vanished. In the recesses of his seraglio, the Celestial King, judging that the time had come for the conclusion of his mission, swallowed gold leaf until he ascended to Heaven. In July, Nankin was taken, the remaining chiefs were executed, and the rebellion was at an end. The Chinese Government gave Gordon the highest rank in its military hierarchy, and invested him with the yellow jacket and the peacock's feather. He rejected an enormous offer of money; but he could not refuse a great gold medal, specially struck in his honor by order of the Emperor. At the end of the year he returned to England, where the conqueror of the Taipings was made a Companion of the Bath.

That the English authorities should have seen fit to recognize Gordon's services by the reward usually reserved for industrious clerks was typical of their attitude towards him until the very end of his career. Perhaps if he had been ready to make the most of the wave of popularity which greeted him on his return—if he had advertised his fame and, amid high circles, played the part of Chinese Gordon in a becoming manner—the results would have been different. But he was by nature *farouche;* his soul revolted against dinner-parties and stiff shirts; and the presence of ladies—especially of fashionable ladies—filled him with uneasiness. He had, besides, a deeper dread of the world's contaminations. And so, when he was appointed to Gravesend to supervise the erection of a system of forts at the mouth of the Thames, he remained there quietly for six years, and at last was almost forgotten. The forts, which were extremely expensive and quite useless, occupied his working hours; his leisure he devoted to acts of charity and to religious contemplation. The neighborhood was a poverty-stricken one, and the kind Colonel, with his tripping step and simple manner, was soon a familiar figure in it, chatting with the seamen, taking provisions to starving families, or visiting some bedridden old woman to light her fire. He was particularly fond of boys. Ragged street arabs and rough sailor-lads crowded about him. They were made free of his house and garden; they visited him in the evenings for lessons and advice; he helped them, found them employment, corresponded with them when they went out into the world. They were, he said, his *Wangs*. It was only by a singular austerity of living that he was able to afford such a variety of charitable expenses. The easy luxuries of his class and station were unknown to him: his clothes verged upon the shabby; and his frugal meals were eaten at a table with a drawer, into which the loaf and plate were quickly swept at the approach of his poor visitors. Special occasions demanded special sacrifices. When, during the Lancashire famine, a public subscription was opened, finding that he had no ready money, he remembered his Chinese medal, and, after effacing the inscription, dispatched it as an anonymous gift.

Except for his boys and his paupers, he lived alone. In his solitude, he ruminated upon the mysteries of the universe; and those religious tendencies, which had already shown themselves, now became a fixed and dominating factor in his life. His reading was confined almost entirely to the Bible; but the Bible he read and re-read with an untiring, an unending, assiduity. There, he was convinced, all truth was to be found; and he was equally convinced that he

could find it. The doubts of philosophers, the investigations of commentators, the smiles of men of the world, the dogmas of churches—such things meant nothing to the Colonel. Two facts alone were evident: there was the Bible, and there was himself; and all that remained to be done was for him to discover what were the Bible's instructions, and to act accordingly. In order to make this discovery it was only necessary for him to read the Bible over and over again; and therefore, for the rest of his life, he did so.

The faith that he evolved was mystical and fatalistic; it was also highly unconventional. His creed, based upon the narrow foundations of Jewish Scripture, eked out occasionally by some English evangelical manual, was yet wide enough to ignore every doctrinal difference, and even, at moments, to transcend the bounds of Christianity itself. The just man was he who submitted to the Will of God, and the Will of God, inscrutable and absolute, could be served aright only by those who turned away from earthly desires and temporal temptations, to rest themselves whole-heartedly upon the indwelling Spirit. Human beings were the transitory embodiments of souls who had existed through an infinite past and would continue to exist through an infinite future. The world was vanity; the flesh was dust and ashes.

> A man [Gordon wrote to his sister] who knows not the secret, who has not the indwelling of God revealed to him, is like this— 
>
> .
>
> He takes the promises and curses as addressed to him as one man, and will not hear of there being any birth before his natural birth, in any existence except with the body he is in. The man to whom the secret (the indwelling of God) is revealed is like this— 
>
> . He applies the promises to one and the curses to the other, if disobedient, which he must be, except the soul is enabled by God to rule. He then sees he is not of this world; for when he speaks of himself he quite disregards the body his soul lives in, which is earthy.

Such conceptions are familiar enough in the history of religious thought: they are those of the hermit and the fakir; and it might have been expected that, when once they had taken hold upon his mind, Gordon would have been content to lay aside the activities of his profession, and would have relapsed at last into the complete retirement of holy meditation. But there were other elements in his nature, which urged him towards a very different course. He was no simple quietist. He was an English gentleman, an officer, a man of energy and action, a lover of danger and the audacities that defeat danger, a passionate creature, flowing over with the self-assertiveness of independent judgment and the arbitrary temper of command. Whatever he might find in his pocket-Bible, it was not for such as he to dream out his days in devout obscurity. But, conveniently enough, he found nothing in his pocket-Bible indicating that he should. What he did find was that the Will of God was inscrutable and absolute; that it was a man's duty to follow where God's hand led; and, if God's hand led towards violent excitements and extraordinary vicissitudes, that it was not only futile, it was impious, to turn another way. Fatalism is always apt to be a double-edged philosophy; for while, on the one hand, it reveals the minutest occurrences as the immutable result of a rigid chain of infinitely predestined causes, on the other, it invests the wildest incoherencies of conduct or of circumstance with the sanctity of eternal law. And Gordon's fatalism was no exception. The same doctrine that led him to dally with omens, to search for prophetic texts, and to append, in brackets, the apotropaic initials *D.V.* after every statement in his letters implying futurity, led him also to envisage his moods and his desires, his passing reckless whims and his deep unconscious instincts, as the mysterious manifestations of the indwelling God. That there was danger lurking in such a creed he was very well aware. The grosser temptations of the world—money and the vulgar attributes of power—had, indeed, no charms for him; but there were subtler and more insinuating allurements which it was not so easy to resist. More than one observer declared that ambition was, in reality, the essential motive in his life—ambition, neither for wealth nor titles, but for fame and influence, for the swaying of multitudes, and for that kind of enlarged and intensified existence "where breath breathes most—even in the mouths of men." Was it so? In the depths of Gordon's soul there were intertwining contradictions—intricate recesses where egoism and renunciation melted into one another, where the flesh lost itself in the spirit, and the spirit in the flesh. What *was* the Will of God? The question, which first became insistent during his retirement at Gravesend, never afterwards left him: it might almost be said that he spent the remainder of his life in searching for the answer to it. In all his Odysseys,

in all his strange and agitated adventures, a day never passed on which he neglected the voice of eternal wisdom as it spoke through the words of Paul or Solomon, of Jonah or Habakkuk. He opened his Bible, he read, and then he noted down his reflections upon scraps of paper, which, periodically pinned together, he dispatched to one or other of his religious friends, and particularly his sister Augusta. The published extracts from these voluminous outpourings lay bare the inner history of Gordon's spirit, and revealed the pious visionary of Gravesend in the restless hero of three continents.

His seclusion came to an end in a distinctly providential manner. In accordance with a stipulation in the Treaty of Paris, an international commission had been appointed to improve the navigation of the Danube; and Gordon, who had acted on a similar body fifteen years earlier, was sent out to represent Great Britain. At Constantinople, he chanced to meet the Egyptian minister, Nubar Pasha. The governorship of the Equatorial Provinces of the Sudan was about to fall vacant; and Nubar offered the post to Gordon, who accepted it.

> For some wise design [he wrote to his sister] God turns events one way or another, whether man likes it or not, as a man driving a horse turns it to right or left without consideration as to whether the horse likes that way or not. To be happy, a man must be like a well-broken, willing horse, ready for anything. Events will go as God likes.

And then followed six years of extraordinary, desperate, unceasing, and ungrateful labor. The unexplored and pestilential region of Equatoria, stretching southwards to the great lakes and the sources of the Nile, had been annexed to Egypt by the Khedive Ismail, who, while he squandered his millions on Parisian ballet-dancers, dreamt strange dreams of glory and empire. Those dim tracts of swamp and forest in Central Africa were—so he declared—to be "opened up," they were to receive the blessings of civilization, they were to become a source of eternal honor to himself and Egypt. The slave-trade, which flourished there, was to be put down; the savage inhabitants were to become acquainted with freedom, justice, and prosperity. Incidentally, a government monopoly in ivory was to be established, and the place was to be made a paying concern. Ismail, hopelessly in debt to a horde of European creditors, looked to Europe to support him in his schemes. Europe, and, in particular, England, with her passion for extraneous philanthropy, was not averse. Sir Samuel Baker became the first Governor of Equatoria, and now Gordon was to carry on the good work. In such circumstances it was only natural that Gordon should consider himself a special instrument in God's hand. To put his disinterestedness beyond doubt, he reduced his salary, which had been fixed at £10,000, to £2000. He took over his new duties early in 1874, and it was not long before he had a first hint of disillusionment. On his way up the Nile, he was received in state at Khartoum by the Egyptian Governor-General of the Sudan, his immediate official superior. The function ended in a prolonged banquet, followed by a mixed ballet of soldiers and completely naked young women, who danced in a circle, beat time with their feet, and accompanied their gestures with a curious sound of clucking. At last the Austrian Consul, overcome by the exhilaration of the scene, flung himself in a frenzy among the dancers; the Governor-General, shouting with delight, seemed about to follow suit, when Gordon abruptly left the room, and the party broke up in confusion.

When, fifteen hundred miles to the southward, Gordon reached the seat of his government, and the desolation of the tropics closed over him, the agonizing nature of his task stood fully revealed. For the next three years he struggled with enormous difficulties—with the confused and horrible country, the appalling climate, the maddening insects and the loathsome diseases, the indifference of subordinates and superiors, the savagery of the slave-traders, the hatred of the inhabitants. One by one the small company of his European staff succumbed. With a few hundred Egyptian soldiers, he had to suppress insurrections, make roads, establish fortified posts, and enforce the government monopoly of ivory. All this he accomplished; he even succeeded in sending enough money to Cairo to pay for the expenses of the expedition. But a deep gloom had fallen upon his spirit. When, after a series of incredible obstacles had been overcome, a steamer was launched upon the unexplored Albert Nyanza, he turned his back upon the lake, leaving the glory of its navigation to his Italian lieutenant, Gessi. "I wish," he wrote, "to give a practical proof of what I think regarding the inordinate praise which is given to an explorer." Among his distresses and self-mortifications, he loathed the thought of all such honors, and remembered the attentions of English society with a snarl.

> When, D. V., I get home, I do not dine out. My reminiscences of these lands will not be more pleasant to me than the China ones. What I shall have done will be what I have done. Men think giving dinners is conferring a favour on

you . . . Why not give dinners to those who need them?

No! His heart was set upon a very different object.

> To each is allotted a distinct work, to each a destined goal; to some the seat at the right-hand or left of the Savior. (It was not His to give; it was already given—Matthew xx. 23. Again, Judas went to *"his own place"*—Acts i. 25.) It is difficult to the flesh to accept "Ye are dead, ye have naught to do with the world." How difficult for any one to be circumcised from the world, to be as indifferent to its pleasures, its sorrows, and its comforts as a corpse is! That is to know the resurrection.

But the Holy Book was not his only solace. For now, under the parching African sun, we catch glimpses, for the first time, of Gordon's hand stretching out towards stimulants of a more material quality. For months together, we are told, he would drink nothing but pure water; and then . . . water that was not so pure. In his fits of melancholy, he would shut himself up in his tent for days at a time, with a hatchet and a flag placed at the door to indicate that he was not to be disturbed for any reason whatever; until at last the cloud would lift, the signals would be removed, and the Governor would reappear, brisk and cheerful. During one of these retirements, there was grave danger of a native attack upon the camp. Colonel Long, the Chief-of-Staff, ventured, after some hesitation, to ignore the flag and hatchet, and to enter the forbidden tent. He found Gordon seated at a table, upon which were an open Bible and an open bottle of brandy. Long explained the circumstances, but could obtain no answer beyond the abrupt words—"You are commander of the camp,"—and was obliged to retire, nonplussed, to deal with the situation as best he could. On the following morning Gordon, cleanly shaven, and in the full-dress uniform of the Royal Engineers, entered Long's hut with his usual tripping step, exclaiming—"Old fellow, now don't be angry with me. I was very low last night. Let's have a good breakfast—a little b. and s. Do you feel up to it?" And, with these veering moods and dangerous restoratives, there came an intensification of the queer and violent elements in the temper of the man. His eccentricities grew upon him. He found it more and more uncomfortable to follow the ordinary course. Official routine was an agony to him. His caustic and satirical humor expressed itself in a style that astounded government departments. While he gibed at his superiors, his subordinates learnt to dread the explosions of his wrath. There were moments when his passion became utterly ungovernable; and the gentle soldier of God, who had spent the day in quoting texts for the edification of his sister, would slap the face of his Arab aide-de-camp in a sudden access of fury or set upon his Alsatian servant and kick him till he screamed.

At the end of three years, Gordon resigned his post in Equatoria, and prepared to return home. But again Providence intervened: the Khedive offered him, as an inducement to remain in the Egyptian service, a position of still higher consequence—the governor-generalship of the whole Sudan; and Gordon once more took up his task. Another three years were passed in grappling with vast revolting provinces, with the ineradicable iniquities of the slave-trade, with all the complications of weakness and corruption incident to an oriental administration extending over almost boundless tracts of savage territory which had never been effectively subdued. His headquarters were fixed in the palace at Khartoum; but there were various interludes in his government. Once, when the Khedive's finances had become peculiarly embroiled, he summoned Gordon to Cairo, to preside over a commission which should set matters to rights. Gordon accepted the post, but soon found that his situation was untenable. He was between the devil and the deep sea—between the unscrupulous cunning of the Egyptian pashas and the immeasurable immensity of the Khedive's debts to his European creditors. The pashas were anxious to use him as a respectable mask for their own nefarious dealings; and the representatives of the European creditors, who looked upon him as an irresponsible intruder, were anxious simply to get rid of him as soon as they could. One of these representatives was Sir Evelyn Baring, whom Gordon now met for the first time. An immediate antagonism flashed out between the two men. But their hostility had no time to mature; for Gordon, baffled on all sides, and deserted even by the Khedive, precipitately returned to his governor-generalship. Whatever else Providence might have decreed, it had certainly not decided that he should be a financier.

His tastes and his talents were indeed of a very different kind. In his absence, a rebellion had broken out in Darfour—one of the vast outlying provinces of his government—where a native chieftain, Zobeir, had erected, on a basis of slave-traffic, a dangerous military power. Zobeir himself had been lured to Cairo, where he was detained in a state of semi-captivity; but his son, Suleiman, ruled in his stead, and was now defying the Governor-General. Gordon determined upon a hazardous stroke. He mounted a

camel, and rode, alone, in the blazing heat, across eighty-five miles of desert, to Suleiman's camp. His sudden apparition dumbfounded the rebels; his imperious bearing over-awed them; he signified to them that in two days they must disarm and disperse; and the whole host obeyed. Gordon returned to Khartoum in triumph. But he had not heard the last of Suleiman. Flying southwards from Darfour to the neighboring province of Bahr-el-Ghazal, the young man was soon once more at the head of a formidable force. A prolonged campaign, of extreme difficulty and danger, followed. Eventually, Gordon, summoned again to Cairo, was obliged to leave to Gessi the task of finally crushing the revolt. After a brilliant campaign, Gessi forced Suleiman to surrender, and then shot him as a rebel. The deed was to exercise a curious influence upon Gordon's fate.

Though Suleiman had been killed and his power broken, the slave-trade still flourished in the Sudan. Gordon's efforts to suppress it resembled the palliatives of an empiric treating the superficial symptoms of some profound constitutional disease. The root of the malady lay in the slave-markets of Cairo and Constantinople: the supply followed the demand. Gordon, after years of labor, might here and there stop up a spring or divert a tributary, but, somehow or other, the waters would reach the river-bed. In the end, he himself came to recognize this. "When you have got the ink that has soaked into blotting-paper out of it," he said, "then slavery will cease in these lands." And yet he struggled desperately on; it was not for him to murmur. "I feel my own weakness, and look to Him who is Almighty, and I leave the issue without inordinate care to Him."

Relief came at last. The Khedive Ismail was deposed; and Gordon felt at liberty to send in his resignation. Before he left Egypt, however, he was to experience yet one more remarkable adventure. At his own request, he set out on a diplomatic mission to the Negus of Abyssinia. The mission was a complete failure. The Negus was intractable, and, when his bribes were refused, furious. Gordon was ignominiously dismissed; every insult was heaped on him; he was arrested, and obliged to traverse the Abyssinian Mountains in the depths of winter under the escort of a savage troop of horse. When, after great hardships and dangers, he reached Cairo, he found the whole official world up in arms against him. The pashas had determined at last that they had no further use for this honest and peculiar Englishman. It was arranged that one of his confidential dispatches should be published in the newspapers; naturally, it contained indiscretions; there was a universal outcry—the man was insubordinate, and mad. He departed under a storm of obloquy. It seemed impossible that he should ever return to Egypt.

On his way home, he stopped in Paris, saw the English ambassador, Lord Lyons, and speedily came into a conflict with him over Egyptian affairs. There ensued a heated correspondence, which was finally closed by a letter from Gordon, ending as follows:—

> I have some comfort in thinking that in ten or fifteen years' time it will matter little to either of us. A black box, six feet six by three feet wide will then contain all that is left of Ambassador, or Cabinet Minister, or of your humble and obedient servant.

He arrived in England early in 1880 ill and exhausted; and it might have been supposed that after the terrible activities of his African exile he would have been ready to rest. But the very opposite was the case: the next three years were the most *mouvementés* of his life. He hurried from post to post, from enterprise to enterprise, from continent to continent, with a vertiginous rapidity. He accepted the private secretaryship to Lord Ripon, the new Viceroy of India, and, three days after his arrival at Bombay, he resigned. He had suddenly realized that he was not cut out for a private secretary, when, on an address being sent in from some deputation, he was asked to say that the Viceroy had read it with interest. "You know perfectly," he said to Lord William Beresford, "that Lord Ripon has never read it, and I can't say that sort of thing, so I will resign, and you take in my resignation." He confessed to Lord William that the world was not big enough for him, that there was "no king or country big enough"; and then he added, hitting him on the shoulder, "Yes, that is flesh, that is what I hate, and what makes me wish to die."

Two days later, he was off for Pekin. "Everyone will say I am mad," were his last words to Lord William Beresford; "but you say I am not." The position in China was critical; war with Russia appeared to be imminent; and Gordon had been appealed to, in order to use his influence on the side of peace. He was welcomed by many old friends of former days, among them Li Hung Chang, whose diplomatic views coincided with his own. Li's diplomatic language, however, was less unconventional. In an interview with the ministers, Gordon's expressions were such that the interpreter shook with terror, upset a cup of tea, and finally refused to translate the dreadful words; upon which Gordon snatched up a dictionary, and, with his finger on the word "idiocy," showed it to the startled mandarins. A few weeks later, Li Hung Chang was in power, and peace was assured. Gordon had spent two and a half days in

Pekin, and was whirling through China, when a telegram arrived from the home authorities, who viewed his movements with uneasiness, ordering him to return at once to England. "It did not produce a twitter in me," he wrote to his sister; "I died long ago, and it will not make any difference to me; I am prepared to follow the unrolling of the scroll." The world, perhaps, was not big enough for him; and yet how clearly he recognized that he was "a poor insect!" "My heart tells me that, and I am glad of it."

On his return to England, he telegraphed to the Government of the Cape of Good Hope, which had become involved in a war with the Basutos, offering his services; but his telegram received no reply. Just then, Sir Howard Elphinstone was appointed to the command of the Royal Engineers in Mauritius. It was a thankless and insignificant post; and, rather than accept it, Elphinstone was prepared to retire from the army—unless some other officer could be induced, in return for £800, to act as his substitute. Gordon, who was an old friend, agreed to undertake the work—upon one condition: that he should receive nothing from Elphinstone; and accordingly he spent the next year in that remote and unhealthy island, looking after the barrack repairs and testing the drains. While he was thus engaged, the Cape Government, whose difficulties had been increasing, changed its mind, and early in 1882 begged for Gordon's help. Once more he was involved in great affairs: a new field of action opened before him; and then, in a moment, there was another shift of the kaleidoscope, and again he was thrown upon the world. Within a few weeks, after a violent quarrel with the Cape authorities, his mission had come to an end. What should he do next? To what remote corner or what enormous stage, to what self-sacrificing drudgeries, or what resounding exploits, would the hand of God lead him now? He waited, in an odd hesitation. He opened the Bible, but neither the prophecies of Hosea nor the epistles to Timothy gave him any advice. The King of the Belgians asked if he would be willing to go to the Congo. He was perfectly willing; he would go whenever the King of the Belgians sent for him; his services, however, were not required yet. It was at this juncture that he betook himself to Palestine. His studies there were embodied in a correspondence with the Rev. Mr. Barnes, filling over two thousand pages of manuscript—a correspondence which was only put an end to when, at last, the summons from the King of the Belgians came. He hurried back to England; but it was not to the Congo that he was being led by the hand of God.

Gordon's last great adventure, like his first, was occasioned by a religious revolt. At the very moment when, apparently for ever, he was shaking the dust of Egypt from his feet, Mohammed Ahmed was starting upon his extraordinary career in the Sudan. The time was propitious for revolutions. The effete Egyptian Empire was hovering upon the verge of collapse. The enormous territories of the Sudan were seething with discontent. Gordon's administration had, by its very vigor, only helped to precipitate the inevitable disaster. His attacks upon the slave-trade, his establishment of a government monopoly in ivory, his hostility to the Egyptian officials, had been so many shocks, shaking to its foundations the whole rickety machine. The result of all his efforts had been, on the one hand, to fill the most powerful classes in the community—the dealers in slaves and ivory—with a hatred of the government, and on the other to awaken among the mass of the inhabitants a new perception of the dishonesty and incompetence of their Egyptian masters. When, after Gordon's removal, the rule of the pashas once more asserted itself over the Sudan, a general combustion became inevitable: the first spark would set off the blaze. Just then it happened that Mohammed Ahmed, the son of an insignificant priest in Dongola, having quarrelled with the sheikh from whom he was receiving religious instruction, set up as an independent preacher, with his headquarters at Abba Island, on the Nile, a hundred and fifty miles above Khartoum. Like Hong-siu-tsuen, he began as a religious reformer, and ended as a rebel king. It was his mission, he declared, to purge the true faith of its worldliness and corruptions, to lead the followers of the Prophet into the paths of chastity, simplicity, and holiness; with the puritanical zeal of a Calvin, he denounced junketings and merry-makings, songs and dances, lewd living and all the delights of the flesh. He fell into trances, he saw visions, he saw the Prophet and Jesus, and the Angel Izrail accompanying him and watching over him forever. He prophesied, and performed miracles, and his fame spread through the land.

There is an ancient tradition in the Mohammedan world, telling of a mysterious being, the last in succession of the twelve holy Imams, who, untouched by death and withdrawn into the recesses of a mountain, was destined, at the appointed hour, to come forth again among men. His title was the Mahdi, the guide; some believed that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah; others that he would be Christ himself. Already various Mahdis had made their appearance; several had been highly successful, and two, in medieval times, had founded dynasties in Egypt. But who could tell whether all these were not

impostors? Might not the twelfth Imam be still waiting, in mystical concealment, ready to emerge, at any moment, at the bidding of God? There were signs by which the true Mahdi might be recognized—unmistakable signs, if one could but read them aright. He must be of the family of the prophet; he must possess miraculous powers of no common kind; and his person must be overflowing with a peculiar sanctity. The pious dwellers beside those distant waters, where holy men by dint of a constant repetition of one of the ninety-nine names of God, secured the protection of guardian angels, and where groups of devotees, shaking their heads with a violence which would unseat the reason of less athletic worshippers, attained to an extraordinary beatitude, heard with awe of the young preacher whose saintliness was almost more than mortal and whose miracles brought amazement to the mind. Was he not also of the family of the prophet? He himself had said so; and who would disbelieve the holy man? When he appeared in person, every doubt was swept away. There was a strange splendor in his presence, an overpowering passion in the torrent of his speech. Great was the wickedness of the people, and great was their punishment! Surely their miseries were a visible sign of the wrath of the Lord. They had sinned, and the cruel tax-gatherers had come among them, and the corrupt governors, and all the oppressions of the Egyptians. Yet these things, too, should have an end. The Lord would raise up his chosen deliverer: the hearts of the people would be purified, and their enemies would be laid low. The accursed Egyptian would be driven from the land. Let the faithful take heart and make ready. How soon might not the long-predestined hour strike, when the twelfth Imam, the guide, the Mahdi, would reveal himself to the World? In that hour, the righteous would triumph and the guilty be laid low for ever. Such was the teaching of Mohammed Ahmed. A band of enthusiastic disciples gathered round him, eagerly waiting for the revelation which would crown their hopes. At last, the moment came. One evening, at Abba Island, taking aside the foremost of his followers, the Master whispered the portentous news. He was the Mahdi.

The Egyptian governor-general at Khartoum, hearing that a religious movement was on foot, grew disquieted, and dispatched an emissary to Abba Island to summon the impostor to his presence.The emissary was courteously received. Mohammed Ahmed, he said, must come at once to Khartoum. "Must!" exclaimed the Mahdi, starting to his feet, with a strange look in his eyes. The look was so strange that the emissary thought it advisable to cut short the interview and to return to Khartoum empty-handed. Thereupon the governor-general sent two hundred soldiers to seize the audacious rebel by force. With his handful of friends, the Mahdi fell upon the soldiers and cut them to pieces. The news spread like wild-fire through the country: the Mahdi had arisen, the Egyptians were destroyed. But it was clear to the little band of enthusiasts at Abba Island that their position on the river was no longer tenable. The Mahdi, deciding upon a second hegira, retreated southwestward, into the depths of Kordofan.

The retreat was a triumphal progress. The country, groaning under alien misgovernment and vibrating with religious excitement, suddenly found in this rebellious prophet a rallying point, a hero, a deliverer. And now another element was added to the forces of insurrection. The Baggara tribes of Kordofan, cattle-owners and slave-traders, the most warlike and vigorous of the inhabitants of the Sudan, threw in their lot with the Mahdi. Their powerful emirs, still smarting from the blows of Gordon, saw that the opportunity for revenge had come. A holy war was proclaimed against the Egyptian misbelievers. The followers of the Mahdi, dressed, in token of a new austerity of living, in the "jibbeh," or white smock of coarse cloth, patched with variously shaped and colored patches, were rapidly organized into a formidable army. Several attacks from Khartoum were repulsed; and at last the Mahdi felt strong enough to advance against the enemy. While his lieutenants led detachments into the vast provinces lying to the west and the south—Darfour and Bahr-el-Ghazal—he himself marched upon El Obeid, the capital of Kordofan. It was in vain that reinforcements were hurried from Khartoum to the assistance of the garrison: there was some severe fighting; the town was completely cut off; and, after a six months' siege, it surrendered. A great quantity of guns and ammunition and £100,000 in specie fell into the hands of the Mahdi. He was master of Kordofan; he was at the head of a great army; he was rich; he was worshipped. A dazzling future opened before him. No possibility seemed too remote, no fortune too magnificent. A vision of universal empire hovered before his eyes. Allah, whose servant he was, who had led him thus far, would lead him onward still, to the glorious end.

For some months he remained at El Obeid, consolidating his dominion. In a series of circular letters, he described his colloquies with the Almighty and laid down the rule of living which his followers were to pursue. The faithful, under pain of severe punishment, were to return to the ascetic simplicity of ancient times. A criminal code was drawn up, meting out executions, mutilations, and floggings with a barbaric zeal. The blasphemer was to be instantly

hanged, the adulterer was to be scourged with whips of rhinoceros hide, the thief was to have his right hand and his left foot hacked off in the market-place. No more were marriages to be celebrated with pomp and feasting, no more was the youthful warrior to swagger with flowing hair; henceforth the believer must banquet on dates and milk, and his head must be kept shaved. Minor transgressions were punished by confiscation of property, or by imprisonment and chains. But the rhinoceros whip was the favorite instrument of chastisement. Men were flogged for drinking a glass of wine, they were flogged for smoking; if they swore, they received eighty lashes for every expletive; and after eighty lashes it was a common thing to die. Before long, flogging grew to be so everyday an incident that the young men made a game of it, as a test of their endurance of pain. With this Spartan ferocity there was mingled the glamor and the mystery of the East. The Mahdi himself, his four khalifas, and the principal emirs, masters of sudden riches, surrounded themselves with slaves and women, with trains of horses and asses, with bodyguards and gleaming arms. There were rumors of debaucheries in high places; of the Mahdi, forgetful of his own ordinances, revelling in the recesses of his harem, and quaffing date syrup mixed with ginger out of the silver cups looted from the church of the Christians. But that imposing figure had only to show itself for the tongue of scandal to be stilled. The tall, broad-shouldered, majestic man, with the dark face and black beard and great eyes—who could doubt that he was the embodiment of a superhuman power? Fascination dwelt in every movement, every glance. The eyes, painted with antimony, flashed extraordinary fires; the exquisite smile revealed, beneath the vigorous lips, white upper teeth with a V-shaped space between them—the certain sign of fortune. His turban was folded with faultless art; his jibbeh, speckless, was perfumed with sandalwood, musk, and attar of roses. He was at once all courtesy and all command. Thousands followed him; thousands prostrated themselves before him; thousands, when he lifted up his voice in solemn worship, knew that the heavens were opened and that they had come near to God. Then all at once the *onbeia*—the elephant's tusk trumpet—would give out its enormous sound. The *nahas*—the brazen war-drums—would summon, with their weird rolling, the whole host to arms. The green flag and the red flag and the black flag would rise over the multitude. The great army would move forward, colored, glistening, dark, violent, proud, beautiful. The drunkenness, the madness, of religion would blaze on every face; and the Mahdi, immovable on his charger, would let the scene grow under his eyes in silence.

El Obeid fell in January, 1883. Meanwhile events of the deepest importance had occurred in Egypt. The rise of Arábi had synchronized with that of the Mahdi. Both movements were nationalist; both were directed against alien rulers who had shown themselves unfit to rule. While the Sudanese were shaking off the yoke of Egypt, the Egyptians themselves grew impatient of their own masters—the Turkish and Circassian pashas who filled with their incompetence all the high offices of state. The army, led by Ahmed Arábi, a colonel of fellah origin, mutinied, the Khedive gave way, and it seemed as if a new order were about to be established. A new order was indeed upon the point of appearing: but it was of a kind undreamt of in Arábi's philosophy. At the critical moment, the English Government intervened. An English fleet bombarded Alexandria, an English army landed under Lord Wolseley and defeated Arábi and his supporters at Tel-el-kebir. The rule of the pashas was nominally restored; but henceforth, in effect, the English were masters of Egypt.

Nevertheless, the English themselves were slow to recognize that fact. Their government had intervened unwillingly; the occupation of the country was a merely temporary measure; their army was to be withdrawn so soon as a tolerable administration had been set up. But a tolerable administration, presided over by the pashas, seemed long in coming, and the English army remained. In the meantime the Mahdi had entered El Obeid, and his dominion was rapidly spreading over the greater part of the Sudan.

Then a terrible catastrophe took place. The pashas, happy once more in Cairo, pulling the old strings and growing fat over the old flesh-pots, decided to give the world an unmistakable proof of their renewed vigor. They would tolerate the insurrection in the Sudan no longer; they would destroy the Mahdi, reduce his followers to submission, and reestablish their own beneficent rule over the whole country. To this end they collected together an army of ten thousand men, and placed it under the command of Colonel Hicks, a retired English officer. He was ordered to advance and suppress the rebellion. In these proceedings the English Government refused to take any part. Unable, or unwilling, to realize that, so long as there was an English army in Egypt, they could not avoid the responsibilities of supreme power, they declared that the domestic policy of the Egyptian administration was no concern of theirs. It was a fatal error—an error which they themselves, before many weeks were over, were to be forced by the hard logic of events to admit. The pashas, left to their own devices, mismanaged the Hicks expedition to their

hearts' content. The miserable troops, swept together from the relics of Arábi's disbanded army, were dispatched to Khartoum in chains. After a month's drilling they were pronounced to be fit to attack the fanatics of the Sudan. Colonel Hicks was a brave man; urged on by the authorities in Cairo, he shut his eyes to the danger ahead of him, and marched out from Khartoum in the direction of El Obeid at the beginning of September, 1883. Abandoning his communications, he was soon deep in the desolate wastes of Kordofan. As he advanced, his difficulties increased; the guides were treacherous, the troops grew exhausted, the supply of water gave out. He pressed on, and at last, on November 5th, not far from El Obeid, the harassed, fainting, almost desperate army plunged into a vast forest of gum-trees and mimosa scrub. There was a sudden, an appalling yell; the Mahdi, with forty thousand of his finest men, sprang from their ambush. The Egyptians were surrounded, and immediately overpowered. It was not a defeat, but an annihilation. Hicks and his European staff were slaughtered; the whole army was slaughtered; three hundred wounded wretches crept away into the forest alive.

The consequences of this event were felt in every part of the Sudan. To the westward, in Darfour, the Governor, Slatin Pasha, after a prolonged and valiant resistance, was forced to surrender, and the whole province fell into the hands of the rebels. Southwards, in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, Lupton Bey was shut up in a remote station, while the country was overrun. The Mahdi's triumphs were beginning to penetrate even into the tropical regions of Equatoria; the tribes were rising, and Emin Pasha was preparing to retreat towards the great lakes. On the East, Osman Digna pushed the insurrection right up to the shores of the Red Sea, and laid siege to Suakin. Before the year was over, with the exception of a few isolated and surrounded garrisons, the Mahdi was absolute lord of a territory equal to the combined area of Spain, France, and Germany; and his victorious armies were rapidly closing around Khartoum.

When the news of the Hicks disaster reached Cairo, the pashas calmly announced that they would collect another army of ten thousand men, and again attack the Mahdi; but the English Government understood at last the gravity of the case. They saw that a crisis was upon them, and that they could no longer escape the implications of their position in Egypt. What were they to do? Were they to allow the Egyptians to become more and more deeply involved in a ruinous, perhaps ultimately a fatal, war with the Mahdi? And, if not, what steps were they to take? A small minority of the party then in power in England—the Liberal Party—were anxious to withdraw from Egypt altogether and at once. On the other hand, another and a more influential minority, with representatives in the cabinet, were in favor of a more active intervention in Egyptian affairs—of the deliberate use of the power of England to give to Egypt internal stability and external security; they were ready, if necessary, to take the field against the Mahdi with English troops. But the great bulk of the party, and the cabinet, with Mr. Gladstone at their head, preferred a middle course. Realizing the impracticability of an immediate withdrawal, they were nevertheless determined to remain in Egypt not a moment longer than was necessary, and, in the meantime, to interfere as little as possible in Egyptian affairs. From a campaign in the Sudan conducted by an English army they were altogether averse. If, therefore, the English army was not to be used, and the Egyptian army was not fit to be used against the Mahdi, it followed that any attempt to reconquer the Sudan must be abandoned; the remaining Egyptian troops must be withdrawn, and in future military operations must be limited to those of a strictly defensive kind. Such was the decision of the English Government. Their determination was strengthened by two considerations: in the first place, they saw that the Mahdi's rebellion was largely a nationalist movement, directed against an alien power, and, in the second place, the policy of withdrawal from the Sudan was the policy of their own representative in Egypt, Sir Evelyn Baring, who had lately been appointed consul-general at Cairo. There was only one serious obstacle in the way—the attitude of the pashas at the head of the Egyptian Government. The infatuated old men were convinced that they would have better luck next time, that another army and another Hicks would certainly destroy the Mahdi, and that, even if the Mahdi were again victorious, yet another army and yet another Hicks would no doubt be forthcoming, and that *they* would do the trick, or, failing that . . . but they refused to consider eventualities any further. In the face of such opposition, the English Government, unwilling as they were to interfere, saw that there was no choice open to them but to exercise pressure. They therefore instructed Sir Evelyn Baring, in the event of the Egyptian Government refusing to withdraw from the Sudan, to insist upon the Khedive's appointing other ministers who would be willing to do so.

Meanwhile, not only the Government, but the public in England were beginning to realize the alarming nature of the Egyptian situation. It was some time before the details of the Hicks expedition were fully known, but when they were, and when the appalling character of the disaster was understood, a thrill of

horror ran through the country. The newspapers became full of articles on the Sudan, of personal descriptions of the Mahdi, of agitated letters from colonels and clergymen demanding vengeance, and of serious discussions of future policy in Egypt. Then, at the beginning of the new year, alarming messages began to arrive from Khartoum. Colonel Coetlogon, who was in command of the Egyptian troops, reported a menacing concentration of the enemy. Day by day, hour by hour, affairs grew worse. The Egyptians were obviously outnumbered; they could not maintain themselves in the field; Khartoum was in danger; at any moment, its investment might be complete. And, with Khartoum once cut off from communication with Egypt, what might not happen? Colonel Coetlogon began to calculate how long the city would hold out. Perhaps it could not resist the Mahdi for a month, perhaps for more than a month; but he began to talk of the necessity of a speedy retreat. It was clear that a climax was approaching, and that measures must be taken to forestall it at once. Accordingly, Sir Evelyn Baring, on receipt of final orders from England, presented an ultimatum to the Egyptian Government: the ministry must either sanction the evacuation of the Sudan, or it must resign. The ministry was obstinate, and, on January 7, 1884, it resigned, to be replaced by a more pliable body of pashas. On the same day, General Gordon arrived at Southampton.

He was over fifty, and he was still, by the world's measurements, an unimportant man. In spite of his achievements, in spite of a certain celebrity—for "Chinese Gordon" was still occasionally spoken of—he was unrecognized and almost unemployed. He had spent a life-time in the dubious services of foreign governments, punctuated by futile drudgeries at home; and now, after a long idleness, he had been sent for—to do what?—to look after the Congo for the King of the Belgians. At his age, even if he survived the work and the climate, he could hardly look forward to any subsequent appointment; he would return from the Congo, old and worn out, to a red-brick villa and extinction. Such were General Gordon's prospects on January 7, 1884. By January 18th, his name was on every tongue, he was the favorite of the nation, he had been declared to be the one man living capable of coping with the perils of the hour, he had been chosen, with unanimous approval, to perform a great task, and he had left England on a mission which was to bring him not only a boundless popularity but an immortal fame. The circumstances which led to a change so sudden and so remarkable are less easily explained than might have been wished. An ambiguity hangs over them—an ambiguity which the discretion of eminent persons has certainly not diminished. But some of the facts are clear enough.

The decision to withdraw from the Sudan had no sooner been taken than it had become evident that the operation would be a difficult and hazardous one, and that it would be necessary to send to Khartoum an emissary armed with special powers and possessed of special ability, to carry it out. Towards the end of November, somebody at the War Office—it is not clear who—had suggested that this emissary should be General Gordon. Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, had thereupon telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring asking whether, in his opinion, the presence of General Gordon would be useful in Egypt; Sir Evelyn Baring had replied that the Egyptian Government were averse to this proposal, and the matter had dropped. There was no further reference to Gordon in the official dispatches until after his return to England. Nor, before that date, was any allusion made to him, as a possible unraveller of the Sudan difficulty, in the press. In all the discussions which followed the news of the Hicks disaster, his name is only to be found in occasional and incidental references to his work in the Sudan. The *Pall Mall Gazette,* which, more than any other newspaper, interested itself in Egyptian affairs, alluded to Gordon once or twice as a geographical expert; but, in an enumeration of the leading authorities on the Sudan, left him out of account altogether. Yet it was from the *Pall Mall Gazette* that the impulsion which projected him into a blaze of publicity finally came. Mr. Stead, its enterprising editor, went down to Southampton the day after Gordon's arrival there, and obtained an interview. Now when he was in the mood—after a little b. and s., especially—no one was more capable than Gordon, with his facile speech and his free-and-easy manners, of furnishing good copy for a journalist; and Mr. Stead made the most of his opportunity. The interview, copious and pointed, was published next day in the most prominent part of the paper, together with a leading article, demanding that the General should be immediately dispatched to Khartoum with the widest powers. The rest of the press, both in London and in the provinces, at once took up the cry. General Gordon was a capable and energetic officer, he was a noble and God-fearing man, he was a national asset, he was a statesman in the highest sense of the word; the occasion was pressing and perilous; General Gordon had been for years governor-general of the Sudan; General Gordon alone had the knowledge, the courage, the virtue, which would save the situation; General Gordon must go to Khartoum. So, for a week, the papers sang in chorus. But already those in high places had

taken a step. Mr. Stead's interview appeared on the afternoon of January 9th, and on the morning of January 10th, Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring proposing, for a second time, that Gordon's services should be utilized in Egypt. But Sir Evelyn Baring, for the second time, rejected the proposal.

While these messages were flashing to and fro, Gordon himself was paying a visit to the Rev. Mr. Barnes at the Vicarage of Heavitree, near Exeter. The conversation ran chiefly on Biblical and spiritual matters —on the light thrown by the Old Testament upon the geography of Palestine, and on the relations between man and his Maker; but there were moments when topics of a more worldly interest arose. It happened that Sir Samuel Baker, Gordon's predecessor in Equatoria, lived in the neighborhood. A meeting was arranged, and the two ex-governors, with Mr. Barnes in attendance, went for a drive together. In the carriage, Sir Samuel Baker, taking up the tale of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* dilated upon the necessity of his friend's returning to the Sudan as governor-general. Gordon was silent; but Mr. Barnes noticed that his blue eyes flashed, while an eager expression passed over his face. Late that night, after the Vicar had retired to bed, he was surprised by the door suddenly opening, and by the appearance of his guest swiftly tripping into the room. "You saw me today?" the low voice abruptly questioned. —"You mean in the carriage?" replied the startled Mr. Barnes,—"Yes," came the reply; "you saw *me*—that was *myself*—the self I want to get rid of." There was a sliding movement, the door swung to, and the Vicar found himself alone again.

It was clear that a disturbing influence had found its way into Gordon's mind. His thoughts, wandering through Africa, flitted to the Sudan; they did not linger at the Congo. During the same visit, he took the opportunity of calling upon Dr. Temple, the Bishop of Exeter, and asking him, merely as a hypothetical question, whether, in his opinion, Sudanese converts to Christianity might be permitted to keep three wives. His Lordship answered that this would be uncanonical.

A few days later, it appeared that the conversation in the carriage at Heavitree had borne fruit. Gordon wrote a letter to Sir Samuel Baker, further elaborating the opinions on the Sudan which he had already expressed in his interview with Mr. Stead; the letter was clearly intended for publication, and published it was, in the *Times* of January 14th. On the same day, Gordon's name began once more to buzz along the wires in secret questions and answers to and from the highest quarters.

"Might it not be advisable," telegraphed Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, "to put a little pressure on Baring, to induce him to accept the assistance of General Gordon?" Mr. Gladstone replied, also by a telegram, in the affirmative; and on the 15th Lord Wolseley telegraphed to Gordon begging him to come to London immediately. Lord Wolseley, who was one of Gordon's oldest friends, was at that time adjutant-general of the forces; there was a long interview; and, though the details of the conversation have never transpired, it is known that, in the course of it, Lord Wolseley asked Gordon if he would be willing to go to the Sudan, to which Gordon replied that there was only one objection—his prior engagement to the King of the Belgians. Before nightfall, Lord Granville by private telegram, had "put a little pressure on Baring." "He had," he said, "heard indirectly that Gordon was ready to go at once to the Sudan on the following rather vague terms. His mission to be to report to Her Majesty's Government on the military situation, and to return without any further engagement. He would be under you for instructions and will send letters through you under flying seal. . . . He might be of use," Lord Granville added, "in informing you and us of the situation. It would be popular at home, but there may be countervailing objections. Tell me," such was Lord Granville's concluding injunction, "your real opinion." It was the third time of asking, and Sir Evelyn Baring resisted no longer.

> Gordon [he telegraphed on the 16th] would be the best man if he will pledge himself to carry out the policy of withdrawing from the Sudan as quickly as is possible consistently with saving life. He must also understand that he must take his instructions from the British representative in Egypt. . . . I would rather have him than any one else, provided there is a perfectly clear understanding with him as to what his position is to be and what line of policy he is to carry out. Otherwise, not. . . . Whoever goes should be distinctly warned that he will undertake a service of great difficulty and danger.

In the meantime, Gordon with the Sudan upon his lips, with the Sudan in his imagination, had hurried to Brussels, to obtain from the King of the Belgians a reluctant consent to the postponement of his Congo mission. On the 17th he was recalled to London by a telegram from Lord Wolseley. On the 18th the final decision was made. "At noon," Gordon told the Rev. Mr. Barnes, "Wolseley came to me and took me to the Ministers. He went in and talked to the Ministers, and came back and said: 'Her Majesty's Government want you to undertake this. Government are determined to evacuate the Sudan, for they will not guaran-

tee future government. Will you go and do it?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Go in.' I went in and saw them. They said: 'Did Wolseley tell you your orders?' I said: 'You will not guarantee future government of the Sudan, and you wish me to go up and evacuate now.' They said: 'Yes,' and it was all over."

Such was the sequence of events which ended in General Gordon's last appointment. The precise motives of those responsible for these transactions are less easy to discern. It is difficult to understand what the reasons could have been which induced the Government, not only to override the hesitations of Sir Evelyn Baring, but to overlook the grave and obvious dangers involved in sending such a man as Gordon to the Sudan. The whole history of his life, the whole bent of his character, seemed to disqualify him for the task for which he had been chosen. He was before all things a fighter, an enthusiast, a bold adventurer; and he was now to be entrusted with the conduct of an inglorious retreat. He was alien to the subtleties of civilized statesmanship, he was unamenable to official control, he was incapable of the skilful management of delicate situations; and he was now to be placed in a position of great complexity, requiring at once a cool judgment, a clear perception of fact, and a fixed determination to carry out a line of policy laid down from above. He had, it is true, been governor-general of the Sudan; but he was now to return to the scene of his greatness as the emissary of a defeated and humbled power; he was to be a fugitive where he had once been a ruler; the very success of his mission was to consist in establishing the triumph of those forces which he had spent years in trampling under foot. All this should have been clear to those in authority, after a very little reflection. It was clear enough to Sir Evelyn Baring, though, with characteristic reticence, he had abstained from giving expression to his thoughts. But, even if a general acquaintance with Gordon's life and character were not sufficient to lead to these conclusions, he himself had taken care to put their validity beyond reasonable doubt. Both in his interview with Mr. Stead and in his letter to Sir Samuel Baker, he had indicated unmistakably his own attitude towards the Sudan situation. The policy which he advocated, the state of feeling in which he showed himself to be, were diametrically opposed to the declared intentions of the Government. He was by no means in favor of withdrawing from the Sudan: he was in favor, as might have been supposed, of vigorous military action. It might be necessary to abandon, for the time being, the more remote garrisons in Darfour and Equatoria; but Khartoum must be held at all costs. To allow the Mahdi to enter Khartoum would not merely mean the return of the whole of the Sudan to barbarism, it would be a menace to the safety of Egypt herself. To attempt to protect Egypt against the Mahdi by fortifying her southern frontier was preposterous. "You might as well fortify against a fever." Arabia, Syria, the whole Mohammedan world, would be shaken by the Mahdi's advance. "In self-defence," Gordon declared to Mr. Stead, "the policy of evacuation cannot possibly be justified." The true policy was obvious. A strong man —Sir Samuel Baker, perhaps—must be sent to Khartoum, with a large contingent of Indian and Turkish troops and with two millions of money. He would very soon overpower the Mahdi, whose forces would "fall to pieces themselves." For in Gordon's opinion it was "an entire mistake to regard the Mahdi as in any sense a religious leader"; he would collapse as soon as he was face to face with an English general. Then the distant regions of Darfour and Equatoria could once more be occupied; their original sultans could be reinstated; the whole country would be placed under civilized rule; and the slave-trade would be finally abolished. These were the views which Gordon publicly expressed on January 9th and on January 14th; and it certainly seems strange that on January 10th and on January 14th, Lord Granville should have proposed, without a word of consultation with Gordon himself, to send him on a mission which involved, not the reconquest, but the abandonment, of the Sudan. Gordon, indeed, when he was actually approached by Lord Wolseley, had apparently agreed to become the agent of a policy which was exactly the reverse of his own. No doubt, too, it is possible for a subordinate to suppress his private convictions and to carry out loyally, in spite of them, the orders of his superiors. But how rare are the qualities of self-control and wisdom which such a subordinate must possess! And how little reason there was to think that General Gordon possessed them!

In fact, the conduct of the Government wears so singular an appearance that it has seemed necessary to account for it by some ulterior explanation. It has often been asserted that the true cause of Gordon's appointment was the clamor in the press. It is said—among others, by Sir Evelyn Baring himself, who has given something like an official sanction to this view of the case—that the Government could not resist the pressure of the newspapers and the feeling in the country which it indicated; that ministers, carried off their feet by a wave of "Gordon cultus," were obliged to give way to the inevitable. But this suggestion is hardly supported by an examination of the facts. Already, early in December, and many weeks before Gordon's name had begun to figure in the newspapers, Lord Granville had made his first effort to induce

Sir Evelyn Baring to accept Gordon's services. The first newspaper demand for a Gordon mission appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the afternoon of January 9th; and the very next morning Lord Granville was making his second telegraphic attack upon Sir Evelyn Baring. The feeling in the press did not become general until the 11th, and on the 14th Lord Granville, in his telegram to Mr. Gladstone, for the third time proposed the appointment of Gordon. Clearly, on the part of Lord Granville at any rate, there was no extreme desire to resist the wishes of the press. Nor was the Government as a whole by any means incapable of ignoring public opinion: a few months were to show that, plainly enough. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that if ministers had been opposed to the appointment of Gordon, he would never have been appointed. As it was, the newspapers were in fact forestalled, rather than followed, by the Government.

How, then, are we to explain the Government's action? Are we to suppose that its members, like the members of the public at large, were themselves carried away by a sudden enthusiasm, a sudden conviction that they had found their savior, that General Gordon was the man—they did not quite know why, but that was of no consequence—the one man to get them out of the whole Sudan difficulty—they did not quite know how, but that was of no consequence either—if only he were sent to Khartoum? Doubtless even cabinet ministers are liable to such impulses; doubtless it is possible that the cabinet of that day allowed itself to drift, out of mere lack of consideration, and judgment, and foresight, along the rapid stream of popular feeling towards the inevitable cataract. That may be so; yet there are indications that a more definite influence was at work. There was a section of the Government which had never become quite reconciled to the policy of withdrawing from the Sudan. To this section—we may call it the imperialist section—which was led, inside the cabinet, by Lord Hartington, and outside by Lord Wolseley, the policy which really recommended itself was the very policy which had been outlined by General Gordon in his interview with Mr. Stead and his letter to Sir Samuel Baker. They saw that it might be necessary to abandon some of the outlying parts of the Sudan to the Mahdi; but the prospect of leaving the whole province in his hands was highly distasteful to them; above all, they dreaded the loss of Khartoum. Now, supposing that General Gordon in response to a popular agitation in the press, were sent to Khartoum, what would follow? Was it not at least possible that, once there, with his views and his character, he would, for some reason or other, refrain from carrying out a policy of pacific retreat? Was it not possible that in that case he might so involve the English Government that it would find itself obliged, almost imperceptibly perhaps, to substitute for its policy of withdrawal a policy of advance? Was it not possible that General Gordon might get into difficulties, that he might be surrounded and cut off from Egypt? If that were to happen, how could the English Government avoid the necessity of sending an expedition to rescue him? And, if an English expedition went to the Sudan, was it conceivable that it would leave the Mahdi as it found him? In short, would not the dispatch of General Gordon to Khartoum involve, almost inevitably, the conquest of the Sudan by British troops, followed by a British occupation? And, behind all these questions, a still larger question loomed. The position of the English in Egypt itself was still ambiguous; the future was obscure; how long, in reality, would an English army remain in Egypt? Was not one thing, at least, obvious—that if the English were to conquer and occupy the Sudan, their evacuation of Egypt would become impossible?

With our present information, it would be rash to affirm that all, or any, of these considerations were present to the minds of the imperialist section of the Government. Yet it is difficult to believe that a man such as Lord Wolseley, for instance, with his knowledge of affairs and his knowledge of Gordon, could have altogether overlooked them. Lord Hartington, indeed, may well have failed to realize at once the implications of General Gordon's appointment—for it took Lord Hartington some time to realize the implications of anything; but Lord Hartington was very far from being a fool; and we may well suppose that he instinctively, perhaps subconsciously, apprehended the elements of a situation which he never formulated to himself. However that may be, certain circumstances are significant. It is significant that the go-between who acted as the Government's agent in its negotiations with Gordon was an imperialist—Lord Wolseley. It is significant that the "ministers" whom Gordon finally interviewed, and who actually determined his appointment, were by no means the whole of the cabinet, but a small section of it, presided over by Lord Hartington. It is significant, too, that Gordon's mission was represented both to Sir Evelyn Baring, who was opposed to his appointment, and to Mr. Gladstone, who was opposed to an active policy in the Sudan, as a mission merely "to report"; while, no sooner was the mission actually decided upon, than it began to assume a very different complexion. In his final interview with the "ministers," Gordon, we know (though he said nothing about it to the Rev. Mr. Barnes), threw out the suggestion

that it might be as well to make him the governor-general of the Sudan. The suggestion, for the moment, was not to be taken up; but it is obvious that a man does not propose to become a governor-general in order to make a report.

We are in the region of speculations; one other presents itself. Was the movement in the press during that second week of January a genuine movement, expressing a spontaneous wave of popular feeling? Or was it a cause of that feeling, rather than an effect? The engineering of a newspaper agitation may not have been an impossibility—even so long ago as 1884. One would like to know more than one is ever likely to know of the relations of the imperialist section of the Government with Mr. Stead.

But it is time to return to the solidity of fact. Within a few hours of his interview with the ministers, Gordon had left England for ever. At eight o'clock in the evening, there was a little gathering of elderly gentlemen at Victoria Station. Gordon, accompanied by Colonel Stewart, who was to act as his second-in-command, tripped on to the platform. Lord Granville bought the necessary tickets; the Duke of Cambridge opened the railway-carriage door. The General jumped into the train; and then Lord Wolseley appeared, carrying a leather bag, in which were two hundred pounds in gold collected from friends at the last moment, for the contingencies of the journey. The bag was handed through the window. The train started. As it did so, Gordon leant out, and addressed a last whispered question to Lord Wolseley. Yes it had been done, Lord Wolseley had seen to it himself; next morning, every member of the cabinet would receive a copy of Dr. Samuel Clarke's *Scripture Promises*. That was all. The train rolled out of the station.

Before the travellers reached Cairo, steps had been taken which finally put an end to the theory—if it had ever been seriously held—that the purpose of the mission was simply the making of a report. On the very day of Gordon's departure, Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring as follows: "Gordon suggests that it may be announced in Egypt that he is on his way to Khartoum to arrange for the future of settlement of the Sudan for the best advantage of the people." Nothing was said of reporting. A few days later, Gordon himself telegraphed to Lord Granville suggesting that he should be made governor-general of the Sudan, in order to "accomplish the evacuation," and to "restore to the various Sultans of the Sudan their independence." Lord Granville at once authorized Sir Evelyn Baring to issue, if he thought fit, a proclamation to this effect in the name of the Khedive. Thus the mission "to report" had already swollen into a governor-generalship, with the object, not merely of effecting the evacuation of the Sudan, but also of setting up "various Sultans" to take the place of the Egyptian Government.

In Cairo, in spite of the hostilities of the past, Gordon was received with every politeness. He was at once proclaimed governor-general of the Sudan, with the widest powers. He was on the point of starting off again on his journey southwards, when a singular and important incident occurred. Zobeir, the rebel chieftain of Darfour, against whose forces Gordon had struggled for years, and whose son, Suleiman, had been captured and executed by Gessi, Gordon's lieutenant, was still detained at Cairo. It so fell out that he went to pay a visit to one of the ministers at the same time as the new governor-general. The two men met face to face, and, as he looked into the savage countenance of his old enemy, an extraordinary shock of inspiration ran through Gordon's brain. He was seized, as he explained in a State paper, which he drew up immediately after the meeting, with a "mystic feeling" that he could trust Zobeir. It was true that Zobeir was "the greatest slave-hunter who ever existed"; it was true that he had a personal hatred of Gordon, owing to the execution of Suleiman—"and one cannot wonder at it, if one is a father"; it was true that, only a few days previously, on his way to Egypt, Gordon himself had been so convinced of the dangerous character of Zobeir that he had recommended by telegram his removal to Cyprus. But such considerations were utterly obliterated by that one moment of electric impact, of personal vision; henceforward there was a rooted conviction in Gordon's mind that Zobeir was to be trusted, that Zobeir must join him at Khartoum, that Zobeir's presence would paralyze the Mahdi, that Zobeir must succeed him in the government of the country after the evacuation. Did not Sir Evelyn Baring, too, have the mystic feeling? Sir Evelyn Baring confessed that he had not. He distrusted mystic feelings. Zobeir, no doubt, might possibly be useful; but before deciding upon so important a matter it was necessary to reflect and to consult.

In the meantime, failing Zobeir, something might perhaps be done with the Emir Abdul-Shakour, the heir of the Darfour Sultans. The Emir, who had been living in domestic retirement in Cairo, was with some difficulty discovered, given £2000, an embroidered uniform, together with the largest decoration that could be found, and informed that he was to start at once with General Gordon for the Sudan, where it would be his duty to occupy the province of Darfour, after driving out the forces of the Mahdi. The poor man begged for a little delay; but no delay could be granted. He hurried to the railway

station in his frock-coat and fez, and rather the worse for liquor. Several extra carriages for his twenty-three wives and a large quantity of luggage had then to be hitched on to the Governor-General's train; and at the last moment some commotion was caused by the unaccountable disappearance of his embroidered uniform. It was found, but his troubles were not over. On the steamer, General Gordon was very rude to him, and he drowned his chagrin in hot rum and water. At Assuan he disembarked, declaring that he would go no further. Eventually, however, he got as far as Dongola, whence, after a stay of a few months, he returned with his family to Cairo.

In spite of this little contretemps, Gordon was in the highest spirits. At last his capacities had been recognized by his countrymen; at last he had been entrusted with a task great enough to satisfy even his desires. He was already famous; he would soon be glorious. Looking out once more over the familiar desert, he felt the searchings of his conscience stilled by the manifest certainty that it was for this that Providence had been reserving him through all these years of labor and of sorrow—for this! What was the Mahdi to stand up against him? A thousand schemes, a thousand possibilities sprang to life in his pullulating brain. A new intoxication carried him away. *"Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question."* Little though he knew it, Gordon was a disciple of Baudelaire. *"Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau du Temps qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers terre, il faut vous enivrer sans trêve."* Yes, but how feeble were those gross resources of the miserable Abdul-Shakour! Rum? Brandy? Oh, he knew all about them; they were nothing. He tossed off a glass. They were nothing at all. The true drunkenness lay elsewhere. He seized paper and pencil, and dashed down a telegram to Sir Evelyn Baring. Another thought struck him and another telegram followed. And another, and yet another. He had made up his mind; he would visit the Mahdi in person, and alone. He might do that; or he might retire to the equator. He would decidedly retire to the equator, and hand over the Bahr-el-Ghazal province to the King of the Belgians. A whole flock of telegrams flew to Cairo from every stopping-place. Sir Evelyn Baring was patient and discreet; he could be trusted with such confidences; but unfortunately Gordon's strange exhilaration found other outlets. At Berber, in the course of a speech to the assembled chiefs, he revealed the intention of the Egyptian Government to withdraw from the Sudan. The news was everywhere in a moment, and the results were disastrous. The tribesmen, whom fear and interest had still kept loyal, perceived that they need look no more for help or punishment from Egypt, and began to turn their eyes towards the rising sun.

Nevertheless, for the moment the prospect wore a favorable appearance. The Governor-General was welcomed at every stage of his journey, and on February 18th he made a triumphal entry into Khartoum. The feeble garrison, the panic-stricken inhabitants, hailed him as a deliverer. Surely they need fear no more, now that the great English pasha had come among them. His first acts seemed to show that a new and happy era had begun. Taxes were remitted, the bonds of the usurers were destroyed, the victims of Egyptian injustice were set free from the prisons; the immemorial instruments of torture—the stocks and the whips and the branding-irons—were broken to pieces in the public square. A bolder measure had been already taken. A proclamation had been issued sanctioning slavery in the Sudan. Gordon, arguing that he was powerless to do away with the odious institution, which, as soon as the withdrawal was carried out, would inevitably become universal, had decided to reap what benefit he could from the public abandonment of an unpopular policy. At Khartoum the announcement was received with enthusiasm, but it caused considerable perturbation in England. The Christian hero, who had spent so many years of his life in suppressing slavery, was now suddenly found to be using high powers to set it up again. The Anti-Slavery Society made a menacing movement, but the Government showed a bold front, and the popular belief in Gordon's infallibility carried the day.

He himself was still radiant. Nor, amid the jubilation and the devotion which surrounded him, did he forget higher things. In all this turmoil, he told his sister, he was "supported." He gave injunctions that his Egyptian troops should have regular morning and evening prayers; "they worship one God," he said, "Jehovah." And he ordered an Arabic text, "God rules the hearts of all men," to be put up over the chair of state in his audience chamber. As the days went by, he began to feel at home again in the huge palace which he knew so well. The glare and the heat of that southern atmosphere, the movement of the crowded city, the dark-faced populace, the soldiers and the suppliants, the reawakened consciousness of power, the glamor and the mystery of the whole strange scene—these things seized upon him, engulfed him, and worked a new transformation in his intoxicated heart. England, with its complications and its policies, became an empty vision to him; Sir Evelyn Baring with his cautions

and sagacities, hardly more than a tiresome name. He was Gordon Pasha, he was the Governor-General, he was the ruler of the Sudan. He was among his people—his own people, and it was to them only that he was responsible—to them, and to God. Was he to let them fall without a blow into the clutches of a sanguinary impostor? Never! He was there to prevent that. The distant governments might mutter something about "evacuation"; his thoughts were elsewhere. He poured them into his telegrams, and Sir Evelyn Baring sat aghast. The man who had left London a month before to "report upon the best means of effecting the evacuation of the Sudan," was now openly talking of "smashing up the Mahdi" with the aid of British and Indian troops. Sir Evelyn Baring counted up on his fingers the various stages of this extraordinary development in General Gordon's opinions. But he might have saved himself the trouble, for, in fact, it was less a development than a reversion. Under the stress of the excitements and the realities of his situation at Khartoum, the policy which Gordon was now proposing to carry out had come to tally, in every particular, with the policy which he had originally advocated with such vigorous conviction in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Nor was the adaption of that policy by the English Government by any means out of the question. For, in the meantime, events had been taking place in the Eastern Sudan, in the neighborhood of the Red Sea port of Suakin, which were to have a decisive effect upon the prospects of Khartoum. General Baker, the brother of Sir Samuel Baker, attempting to relieve the beleaguered garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar, had rashly attacked the forces of Osman Digna, had been defeated, and obliged to retire. Sinkat and Tokar had then fallen into the hands of the Mahdi's general. There was a great outcry in England, and a wave of warlike feeling passed over the country. Lord Wolseley at once drew up a memorandum advocating the annexation of the Sudan. In the House of Commons even Liberals began to demand vengeance and military action, whereupon the Government dispatched Sir Gerald Graham with a considerable British force to Suakin. Sir Gerald Graham advanced, and in the battles of El Teb and Tamai inflicted two bloody defeats upon the Mahdi's forces. It almost seemed as if the Government was now committed to a policy of interference and conquest; as if the imperialist section of the cabinet were at last to have their way. The dispatch of Sir Gerald Graham coincided with Gordon's sudden demand for British and Indian troops with which to "smash up the Mahdi." The business, he assured Sir Evelyn Baring, in a stream of telegrams could very easily be done. It made him sick, he said, to see himself held in check and the people of the Sudan tyrannized over by "a feeble lot of stinking Dervishes." Let Zobeir at once be sent down to him, and all would be well. The original sultans of the country had unfortunately proved disappointing. Their place should be taken by Zobeir. After the Mahdi had been smashed up, Zobeir should rule the Sudan as a subsidized vassal of England, on a similar footing to that of the Ameer of Afghanistan. The plan was perhaps feasible; but it was clearly incompatible with the policy of evacuation, as it had been hitherto laid down by the English Government. Should they reverse that policy? Should they appoint Zobeir, reinforce Sir Gerald Graham, and smash up the Mahdi? They could not make up their minds. So far as Zobeir was concerned, there were two counterbalancing considerations: on the one hand, Sir Evelyn Baring now declared that he was in favor of the appointment; but, on the other hand, would English public opinion consent to a man, described by Gordon himself as "the greatest slave-hunter who ever existed," being given an English subsidy and the control of the Sudan? While the cabinet was wavering, Gordon took a fatal step. The delay was intolerable, and one evening, in a rage, he revealed his desire for Zobeir—which had hitherto been kept a profound official secret—to Mr. Power, the English consul at Khartoum, and the special correspondent of the *Times*. Perhaps he calculated that the public announcement of his wishes would oblige the Government to yield to them; if so, he was completely mistaken, for the result was the very reverse. The country, already startled by the proclamation in favor of slavery, could not swallow Zobeir. The Anti-Slavery Society set on foot a violent agitation, opinion in the House of Commons suddenly stiffened, and the cabinet, by a substantial majority, decided that Zobeir should remain in Cairo. The imperialist wave had risen high, but it had not risen high enough; and now it was rapidly subsiding. The Government's next action was decisive. Sir Gerald Graham and his British army were withdrawn from the Sudan.

The critical fortnight during which these events took place was the first fortnight of March. By the close of it, Gordon's position had undergone a rapid and terrible change. Not only did he find himself deprived, by the decision of the Government, both of the hope of Zobeir's assistance and of the prospect of smashing up the Mahdi, with the aid of British troops; the military movements in the Eastern Sudan produced, at the very same moment, a yet more fatal consequence. The adherents of the Mahdi had been

maddened, they had not been crushed by Sir Gerald Graham's victories. When, immediately afterwards, the English withdrew to Suakin, from which they never again emerged, the inference seemed obvious: they had been defeated, and their power was at an end. The warlike tribes to the north and the north-east of Khartoum had long been wavering. They now hesitated no longer, and joined the Mahdi. From that moment—it was less than a month from Gordon's arrival at Khartoum—the situation of the town was desperate. The line of communications was cut. Though it still might be possible for occasional native messengers, or for a few individuals on an armed steamer, to win their way down the river into Egypt, the removal of a large number of persons—the loyal inhabitants or the Egyptian garrison—was henceforward an impossibility. The whole scheme of the Gordon mission had irremediably collapsed; worse still, Gordon himself, so far from having effected the evacuation of the Sudan, was surrounded by the enemy. "The question now is," Sir Evelyn Baring told Lord Granville on March 24th, "how to get General Gordon and Colonel Stewart away from Khartoum."

The actual condition of the town, however, was not, from a military point of view, so serious as Colonel Coetlogon, in the first moments of panic after the Hicks disaster, had supposed. Gordon was of opinion that it was capable of sustaining a siege of many months. With his usual vigor, he had already begun to prepare an elaborate system of earthworks, mines, and wire entanglements. There was a five or six months' supply of food, there was a great quantity of ammunition, the garrison numbered about 8000 men. There were, besides, nine small paddle-wheel steamers, hitherto used for purposes of communication along the Nile, which, fitted with guns and protected by metal plates, were of considerable military value. "We are all right," Gordon told his sister on March 15th. "We shall, D.V., go on for months." So far, at any rate, there was no cause for despair. But the effervescent happiness of three weeks since had vanished. Gloom, doubt, disillusionment, had swooped down again upon their victim.

> Either I must believe He does all things in mercy and love, or else I disbelieve His existence, there is no half way in the matter. What holes do I not put myself into! And for what? So mixed are my ideas. I believe ambition put me here in this ruin.

Was not that the explanation of it all? "Our Lord's promise is not for the fulfilment of earthly wishes; therefore, if things come to ruin here He's still faithful, and is carrying out His great work of divine wisdom." How could he have forgotten that? But he would not transgress again. "I owe all to God, and nothing to myself, for, humanly speaking, I have done very foolish things. However, if I am humbled, the better for me."

News of the changed circumstances at Khartoum was not slow in reaching England, and a feeling of anxiety began to spread. Among the first to realize the gravity of the situation was Queen Victoria. "It is alarming," she telegraphed to Lord Hartington on March 25th. "General Gordon is in danger; you are bound to try to save him. . . . You have incurred fearful responsibility." With an unerring instinct, Her Majesty forestalled and expressed the popular sentiment. During April when it had become clear that the wire between Khartoum and Cairo had been severed, when, as time passed, no word came northward, save vague rumors of disaster, when at last a curtain of impenetrable mystery closed over Khartoum, the growing uneasiness manifested itself in letters to the newspapers, in leading articles, and in a flood of subscriptions towards a relief fund. At the beginning of May, the public alarm reached a climax. It now appeared to be certain, not only that General Gordon was in imminent danger, but that no steps had yet been taken by the Government to save him. On the 5th, there was a meeting of protest and indignation at St. James's Hall; on the 9th there was a mass meeting in Hyde Park; on the 11th there was a meeting at Manchester. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts wrote an agitated letter to the *Times* begging for further subscriptions. Somebody else proposed that a special fund should be started, with which "to bribe the tribes to secure the General's personal safety." A country vicar made another suggestion. Why should not public prayers be offered up for General Gordon in every church in the kingdom? He himself had adopted that course last Sunday. "Is not this," he concluded, "what the godly man, the true hero, himself would wish to be done?" It was all of no avail. General Gordon remained in peril; the Government remained inactive. Finally, a vote of censure was moved in the House of Commons; but that too proved useless. It was strange. The same executive which, two months before, had trimmed its sails so eagerly to the shifting gusts of popular opinion, now, in spite of a rising hurricane, held on its course. A new spirit, it was clear—a determined, an intractable spirit—had taken control of the Sudan situation. What was it? The explana-

tion was simple, and it was ominous. Mr. Gladstone had intervened.

The old statesman was now entering upon the penultimate period of his enormous career. He who had once been the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories, had at length emerged, after a life-time of transmutations, as the champion of militant democracy. He was at the apex of his power. His great rival was dead; he stood preeminent in the eye of the nation; he enjoyed the applause, the confidence, the admiration, the adoration, even, of multitudes. Yet—such was the peculiar character of the man, and such the intensity of the feelings which he called forth—at this very moment, at the height of his popularity, he was distrusted and loathed; already an unparalleled animosity was gathering its forces against him. For, indeed, there was something in his nature which invited—which demanded—the clashing reactions of passionate extremes. It was easy to worship Mr. Gladstone; to see in him the perfect model of the upright man—the man of virtue and of religion—the man whose whole life had been devoted to the application of high principles to affairs of state—the man, too, whose sense of right and justice was invigorated and ennobled by an enthusiastic heart. It was also easy to detest him as a hypocrite, to despise him as a demagogue, and to dread him as a crafty manipulator of men and things for the purposes of his own ambition. It might have been supposed that one or other of these conflicting judgments must have been palpably absurd, that nothing short of gross prejudice or wilful blindness, on one side or the other, could reconcile such contradictory conceptions of a single human being. But it was not so; "the elements" were "so mixed" in Mr. Gladstone that his bitterest enemies (and his enemies were never mild) and his warmest friends (and his friends were never tepid) could justify, with equal plausibility, their denunciations or their praises. What, then, was the truth? In the physical universe there are no chimeras. But man is more various than nature; was Mr. Gladstone, perhaps, a chimera of the spirit? Did his very essence lie in the confusion of incompatibles? His very essence? It eludes the hand that seems to grasp it. One is baffled, as his political opponents were baffled fifty years ago. The soft serpent coils harden into quick strength that has vanished, leaving only emptiness and perplexity behind. Speech was the fibre of his being; and, when he spoke, the ambiguity of ambiguity was revealed. The long, winding, intricate sentences, with their vast burden of subtle and complicated qualifications, befogged the mind like clouds, and like clouds, too, dropped thunderbolts. Could it not then at least be said of him with certainty that his was a complex character? But here also there was a contradiction. In spite of the involutions of his intellect and the contortions of his spirit it is impossible not to perceive a strain of naïveté in Mr. Gladstone. He adhered to some of his principles—that of the value of representative institutions, for instance,—with a faith which was singularly liberal; his views upon religion were uncritical to crudeness; he had no sense of humor. Compared with Disraeli's, his attitude towards life strikes one as that of an ingenuous child. His very egoism was simple-minded: through all the labyrinth of his passions there ran a single thread. But the center of the labyrinth? Ah! the thread might lead there, through those wandering mazes, at last. Only, with the last corner turned, the last step taken, the explorer might find that he was looking down into the gulf of a crater. The flame shot out on every side, scorching and brilliant, but in the midst there was a darkness.

That Mr. Gladstone's motives and ambitions were not merely those of a hunter after popularity was never shown more clearly than in that part of his career which, more than any other, has been emphasised by his enemies—his conduct towards General Gordon. He had been originally opposed to Gordon's appointment, but he had consented to it partly, perhaps, owing to the persuasion that its purpose did not extend beyond the making of a "report." Gordon once gone, events had taken their own course; the policy of the Government began to slide, automatically, down a slope at the bottom of which lay the conquest of the Sudan and the annexation of Egypt. Sir Gerald Graham's bloody victories awoke Mr. Gladstone to the true condition of affairs; he recognized the road he was on and its destination; but there was still time to turn back. It was he who had insisted upon the withdrawal of the English army from the Eastern Sudan. The imperialists were sadly disappointed. They had supposed that the old lion had gone to sleep, and suddenly he had come out of his lair, and was roaring. All their hopes now centered upon Khartoum. General Gordon was cut off; he was surrounded, he was in danger; he must be relieved. A British force must be sent to save him. But Mr. Gladstone was not to be caught napping a second time. When the agitation rose, when popular sentiment was deeply stirred, when the country, the press, the sovereign herself, declared that the national honor was involved with the fate of General Gordon, Mr. Gladstone remained immovable. Others might picture the triumphant rescue of a Christian hero from the clutches of heathen savages; before *his* eyes was the vision of battle,

murder, and sudden death, the horrors of defeat and victory, the slaughter and the anguish of thousands, the violence of military domination, the enslavement of a people. The invasion of the Sudan, he had flashed out in the House of Commons, would be a war of conquest against a people struggling to be free. "Yes, those people are [illegible] to be free, and they are rightly struggling to be free." Mr. Gladstone—it was one of his old-fashioned simplicities—believed in liberty. If, indeed, it should turn out to be the fact that General Gordon was in serious danger, then, no doubt, it would be necessary to send a relief expedition to Khartoum. But he could see no sufficient reason to believe that it was the fact. Communications, it was true, had been interrupted between Khartoum and Cairo but no news was not necessarily bad news, and the little information that had come through from General Gordon seemed to indicate that he could hold out for months. So his agile mind worked, spinning its familiar web of possibilities and contingencies and fine distinctions. General Gordon, he was convinced, might be hemmed in, but he was not surrounded. Surely, it was the duty of the Government to take no rash step, but to consider and to inquire and, when it acted, to act upon reasonable conviction. And then, there was another question. If it was true—and he believed it was true—that General Gordon's line of retreat was open, why did not General Gordon use it? Perhaps he might be unable to withdraw the Egyptian garrison, but it was not for the sake of the Egyptian garrison that the relief expedition was proposed; it was simply and solely to secure the personal safety of General Gordon. And General Gordon had it in his power to secure his personal safety himself; and he refused to do so; he lingered on in Khartoum, deliberately, wilfully, in defiance of the obvious wishes of his superiors. Oh! it was perfectly clear what General Gordon was doing: he was trying to force the hand of the English Government. He was hoping that if he remained long enough at Khartoum he would oblige the English Government to send an army into the Sudan which should smash up the Mahdi. That, then, was General Gordon's calculation! Well, General Gordon would learn that he had made a mistake. Who was he that he should dare to imagine that he could impose his will upon Mr. Gladstone? The old man's eyes glared. If it came to a struggle between them—well, they should see! As the weeks passed, the strange situation grew tenser. It was like some silent deadly game of bluff. And who knows what was passing in the obscure depths of that terrifying spirit? What mysterious mixture of remorse, rage and jealousy? Who was it that was ultimately responsible for sending General Gordon to Khartoum? But then, what did that matter? Why did not the man come back? He was a Christian hero, was he? Were there no other Christian heroes in the world? A Christian hero! Let him wait till the Mahdi's ring was really round him, till the Mahdi's spear was really about to fall! That would be the test of heroism! If he slipped back then, with his tail between his legs—! The world would judge.

One of the last telegrams sent by Gordon before the wire was cut seemed to support exactly Mr. Gladstone's diagnosis of the case. He told Sir Evelyn Baring that, since the Government refused to send either an expedition or Zobeir, he would "consider himself free to act according to circumstances." "Eventually," he said, "you will be forced to smash up the Mahdi," and he declared that if the Government persisted in its present line of conduct, it would be branded with an "indelible disgrace." The message was made public, and it happened that Mr. Gladstone saw it for the first time in a newspaper, during a country visit. Another of the guests, who was in the room at the moment, thus describes the scene. "He took up the paper, his eye instantly fell on the telegram, and he read it through. As he read, his face hardened and whitened, the eyes burned as I have seen them once or twice in the House of Commons when he was angered—burned with a deep fire, as if they would have consumed the sheet on which Gordon's message was printed, or as if Gordon's words had burnt into his soul which was looking out in wrath and flame. He said not a word. For perhaps two or three minutes he sat still, his face all the while like the face you may read of in Milton—like none other I ever saw. Then he rose, still without a word, and was seen no more that morning."

It is curious that Gordon himself never understood the part that Mr. Gladstone was playing in his destiny. His *Khartoum Journals* put this beyond a doubt. Except for one or two slight and jocular references to Mr. Gladstone's minor idiosyncrasies—the shape of his collars, and his passion for felling trees—Gordon leaves him unnoticed, while he lavishes his sardonic humor upon Lord Granville. But in truth Lord Granville was a nonentity. The error shows how dim the realities of England had grown to the watcher in Khartoum. When he looked towards home, the figure that loomed largest upon his vision was—it was only natural that it should have been so—the nearest. It was upon Sir Evelyn Baring that he fixed his gaze. For him Sir Evelyn Baring was the embodiment of England—or rather

the embodiment of the English official classes, of English diplomacy, of the English Government with its hesitations, its insincerities, its double-faced schemes. Sir Evelyn Baring, he almost came to think at moments, was the prime mover, the sole contriver, of the whole Sudan imbroglio. In this he was wrong; for Sir Evelyn Baring, of course, was an intermediary, without final responsibility or final power; but Gordon's profound antipathy, his instinctive distrust, were not without their justification. He could never forget that first meeting in Cairo, six years earlier, when the fundamental hostility between the two men had leapt to the surface. "When oil mixes with water," he said, "we will mix together." Sir Evelyn Baring thought so too; but *he* did not say so; it was not his way. When he spoke, he felt no temptation to express everything that was in his mind. In all he did, he was cautious, measured, unimpeachably correct. It would be difficult to think of a man more completely the antithesis of Gordon. His temperament, all in monochrome, touched in with cold blues and indecisive greys, was eminently unromantic. He had a steely colorlessness, and a steely pliability, and a steely strength. Endowed beyond most men with the capacity of foresight, he was endowed as very few men have ever been with that staying-power which makes the fruit of foresight attainable. His views were long, and his patience was even longer. He progressed imperceptibly; he constantly withdrew; the art of giving way he practiced with the refinement of a virtuoso. But, though the steel recoiled and recoiled, in the end it would spring forward. His life's work had in it an element of paradox. It was passed entirely in the East; and the East meant very little to him; he took no interest in it. It was something to be looked after. It was also a convenient field for the talents of Sir Evelyn Baring. Yet it must not be supposed that he was cynical; perhaps he was not quite great enough for that. He looked forward to a pleasant retirement—a country place—some literary recreations. He had been careful to keep up his classics. His ambition can be stated in a single phrase; it was, to become an institution; and he achieved it. No doubt, too, he deserved it. The greatest of poets, in a bitter mood, has described the characteristics of a certain class of persons, whom he did not like. "They," he says,

> "that have power to hurt and will do none,
> That do not do the things they most do show,
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
> Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow,
> They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
> And husband nature's riches from expense;
> They are the lords and owners of their faces. . . ."

The words might have been written for Sir Evelyn Baring.

Though, as a rule, he found it easy to despise those with whom he came into contact, he could not altogether despise General Gordon. If he could have, he would have disliked him less. He had gone as far as his caution had allowed him in trying to prevent the fatal appointment; and then, when it had become clear that the Government was insistent, he had yielded with a good grace. For a moment, he had imagined that all might yet be well; that he could impose himself, by the weight of his position and the force of his sagacity, upon his self-willed subordinate; that he could hold him in a leash at the end of the telegraph wire to Khartoum. Very soon he perceived that this was a miscalculation. To his disgust, he found that the telegraph wire, far from being an instrument of official discipline, had been converted by the agile strategist at the other end of it into a means of extending his own personality into the deliberations of Cairo. Every morning Sir Evelyn Baring would find upon his table a great pile of [illegible] from Khartoum—twenty or thirty at least; and as the day went on, the pile would grow. When a sufficient number had accumulated he would read them all through, with the greatest care. There upon the table, the whole soul of Gordon lay before him—in its incoherence, its eccentricity, its impulsiveness, its romance; the jokes, the slang, the appeals to the prophet Isaiah, the whirl of contradictory policies—Sir Evelyn Baring did not know which exasperated him most. He would not consider whether, or to what degree, the man was a maniac; no he would not. A subacid smile was the only comment he allowed himself. His position, indeed, was an extremely difficult one, and all his dexterity would be needed if he was to emerge from it with credit. On one side of him was a veering and vacillating Government; on the other, a frenzied enthusiast. It was his business to interpret to the first the wishes, or rather the inspirations, of the second, and to convey to the second the decisions, or rather the indecisions, of the first. A weaker man would have floated helplessly on the ebb and flow of the cabinet's wavering policies; a rasher man would have plunged headlong into Gordon's schemes. He did neither; with a singular courage and a singular caution he progressed along a razor-edge. He devoted all his energies to the double task of evolving a reasonable policy out of Gordon's intoxicated telegrams, and of inducing the divided ministers at home to give their sanction to what he had evolved. He might have succeeded, if he had not had to reckon with yet another irreconcilable; Time was a vital element in the

situation, and Time was against him. When the tribes round Khartoum rose, the last hope of a satisfactory solution vanished. He was the first to perceive the altered condition of affairs; long before the Government, long before Gordon himself, he understood that the only remaining question was that of the extrication of the Englishmen from Khartoum. He proposed that a small force should be dispatched at once across the desert from Suakin to Berber, the point on the Nile nearest to the Red Sea, and thence up the river to Gordon; but, after considerable hesitation, the military authorities decided that this was not a practicable plan. Upon that, he foresaw, with perfect lucidity, the inevitable development of events. Sooner or later, it would be absolutely necessary to send a relief expedition to Khartoum; and, from that premise, it followed, without a possibility of doubt, that it was the duty of the Government to do so at once. This he saw quite clearly; but he also saw that the position in the cabinet had now altered, that Mr. Gladstone had taken the reins into his own hands. And Mr. Gladstone did not wish to send a relief expedition. What was Sir Evelyn Baring to do? Was he to pit his strength against Mr. Gladstone's? To threaten : ? To stake his whole future upon General Gordon's fate? For a moment he wavered; he seemed to hint that unless the Government sent a message to Khartoum promising a relief expedition before the end of the year, he would be unable to be a party to their acts. The Government refused to send any such message; and he perceived, as he tells us, that "it was evidently useless to continue the correspondence any further." After all, what could he do? He was still only a secondary figure; his resignation would be accepted; he would be given a colonial governorship, and Gordon would be no nearer safety. But then, could he sit by, and witness a horrible catastrophe, without lifting a hand? Of all the odious dilemmas which that man had put him into, this, he reflected, was the most odious. He slightly shrugged his shoulders. No; he might have "power to hurt," but he would "do none." He wrote a dispatch—a long, balanced, guarded, grey dispatch, informing the Government that he "ventured to think" that it was "a question worthy of consideration, whether the naval and military authorities should not take some preliminary steps in the way of preparing boats, etc., so as to be able to move, should the necessity arise." Then, within a week, before the receipt of the Government's answer, he left Egypt. From the end of April till the beginning of September—during the most momentous period of the whole crisis—he was engaged in London upon a financial conference, while his place was taken in Cairo by a substitute. With a characteristically convenient unobtrusiveness, Sir Evelyn Baring had vanished from the scene.

Meanwhile, far to the southward, over the widespreading lands watered by the Upper Nile and its tributaries, the power and the glory of him who had once been Mohammed Ahmed were growing still. In the Bahr-el-Ghazal, the last embers of resistance were stamped out with the capture of Lupton Bey, and through the whole of that vast province—three times the size of England—every trace of the Egyptian Government was obliterated. Still further south the same fate was rapidly overtaking Equatoria, where Emin Pasha, withdrawing into the unexplored depths of Central Africa, carried with him the last vestiges of the old order. The Mahdi himself still lingered in his headquarters at El Obeid; but, on the rising of the tribes round Khartoum, he had decided that the time for an offensive movement had come, and had dispatched an army of thirty thousand men to lay siege to the city. At the same time, in a long and elaborate proclamation, in which he asserted, with all the elegance of oriental rhetoric, both the sanctity of his mission and the invincibility of his troops, he called upon the inhabitants to surrender. Gordon read aloud the summons to the assembled townspeople; with one voice they declared that they were ready to resist. This was a false Mahdi, they said; God would defend the right; they put their trust in the Governor-General. The most learned sheikh in the town drew up a theological reply, pointing out that the Mahdi did not fulfil the requirements of the ancient prophets. At his appearance, had the Euphrates dried up and revealed a hill of gold? Had contradiction and difference ceased upon the earth? And moreover, did not the faithful know that the true Mahdi was born in the year of the prophet 255, from which it surely followed that he must be now 1046 years old? And was it not clear to all men that this pretender was not a tenth of that age? These arguments were certainly forcible; but the Mahdi's army was more forcible still. The besieged sallied out to the attack; they were defeated; and the rout that followed was so disgraceful that two of the commanding officers were, by Gordon's orders, executed as traitors. From that moment the regular investment of Khartoum began. The Arab generals decided to starve the town into submission. When, after a few weeks of doubt, it became certain that no British force was on its way from Suakin to smash up the Mahdi, and when, at the end of May, Berber, the last connecting link between Khartoum and the outside world, fell into the hands of the enemy, Gordon set his teeth, and sat down to wait

and to hope, as best he might. With unceasing energy he devoted himself to the strengthening of his defenses and the organization of his resources—to the digging of earthworks, the manufacture of ammunition, the collection and the distribution of food. Every day there were sallies and skirmishes; every day his little armored steamboats paddled up and down the river, scattering death and terror as they went. Whatever the emergency, he was ready with devices and expedients. When the earthworks were still uncompleted he procured hundreds of yards of cotton, which he dyed the color of earth, and spread out in long sloping lines, so as to deceive the Arabs, while the real works were being prepared further back. When a lack of money began to make itself felt, he printed and circulated a paper coinage of his own. To combat the growing discontent and disaffection of the townspeople he instituted a system of orders and medals; the women were not forgotten; and his popularity redoubled. There was terror in the thought that harm might come to the Governor-General. Awe and reverence followed him; wherever he went, he was surrounded by a vigilant and jealous guard, like some precious idol, some mascot of victory. How could he go away? How could he desert his people? It was impossible. It would be, as he himself exclaimed in one of his latest telegrams to Sir Evelyn Baring, "the climax of meanness," even to contemplate such an act. Sir Evelyn Baring thought differently. In his opinion it was General Gordon's plain duty to have come away from Khartoum. To stay involved inevitably a relief expedition—a great expense of treasure and the loss of valuable lives; to come away would merely mean that the inhabitants of Khartoum would be "taken prisoner by the Mahdi." So Sir Evelyn Baring put it; but the case was not quite so simple as that. When Berber fell, there had been a massacre lasting for days—an appalling orgy of loot and lust and slaughter; when Khartoum itself was captured, what followed was still more terrible. Decidely, it was no child's play to be "taken prisoner by the Mahdi." And Gordon was actually there among those people, in closest intercourse with them, responsible, beloved. Yes, no doubt. But was that, in truth, his only motive? Did he not wish in reality, by lingering in Khartoum, to force the hand of the Government? To oblige them, whether they would or no, to send an army to smash up the Mahdi? And was that fair? Was *that* his duty? He might protest, with his last breath, that he had "tried to do his duty"; Sir Evelyn Baring, at any rate, would not agree.

But Sir Evelyn Baring was inaudible, and Gordon now cared very little for his opinions. Is it possible that, if only for a moment, in his extraordinary predicament, he may have listened to another and a very different voice—a voice of singular quality, a voice which—for so one would fain imagine—may well have wakened some familiar echoes in his heart? One day, he received a private letter from the Mahdi. The letter was accompanied by a small bundle of clothes.

> In the name of God! [wrote the Mahdi] herewith a suit of clothes, consisting of a coat (jibbeh), an overcoat, a turban, a cap, a girdle, and beads. This is the clothing of those who have given up the world and its vanities, and who look for the world to come, for everlasting happiness in Paradise. If you truly desire to come to God and seek to live a godly life, you must at once wear this suit, and come out to accept your everlasting good fortune.

Did the words bear no meaning to the mystic of Gravesend? But he was an English gentleman, an English officer. He flung the clothes to the ground, and trampled on them in the sight of all. Then alone, he went up to the roof of his high palace and turned the telescope once more, almost mechanically, towards the north.

But nothing broke the immovability of that hard horizon; and, indeed, how was it possible that help should come to him now? He seemed to be utterly abandoned. Sir Evelyn Baring had disappeared into his financial conference. In England, Mr. Gladstone had held firm, had outfaced the House of Commons, had ignored the press. He appeared to have triumphed. Though it was clear that no preparations of any kind were being made for the relief of Gordon, the anxiety and agitation of the public, which had risen so suddenly to such a height of vehemence, had died down. The dangerous beast had been quelled by the stern eye of its master. Other questions became more interesting—the Reform Bill, the Russians, the House of Lords. Gordon, silent in Khartoum, had almost dropped out of remembrance. And yet, help did come after all. And it came from an unexpected quarter. Lord Hartington had been for some time convinced that he was responsible for Gordon's appointment; and his conscience was beginning to grow uncomfortable.

Lord Hartington's conscience was of a piece with the rest of him. It was not, like Mr. Gladstone's, a salamander-conscience—an intangible, dangerous creature, that loved to live in the fire; nor, like Sir Evelyn Baring's, a diplomatic conscience; it was a commonplace affair. Lord Hartington himself would have been disgusted by any mention of it. If he had

been obliged, he would have alluded to it distantly; he would have muttered that it was a bore not to do the proper thing. He was usually bored—for one reason or another; but this particular form of boredom he found more intense than all the rest. He would take endless pains to avoid it. Of course, the whole thing was a nuisance—an obvious nuisance; and everyone else must feel just as he did about it. And yet people seemed to have got it into their heads that he had some kind of special faculty in such matters—that there was some peculiar value in his judgment on a question of right and wrong. He could not understand why it was; but whenever there was a dispute about cards in a club, it was brought to *him* to settle. It was most odd. But it was true. In public affairs, no less than in private, Lord Hartington's decisions carried an extraordinary weight. The feeling of his idle friends in high society was shared by the great mass of the English people; here was a man they could trust. For indeed he was built upon a pattern which was very dear to his countrymen. It was not simply that he was honest: it was that his honesty was an English honesty—an honesty which naturally belonged to one who, so it seemed to them, was the living image of what an Englishman should be. In Lord Hartington they saw, embodied and glorified, the very qualities which were nearest to their hearts—impartiality, solidity, common sense—the qualities by which they themselves longed to be distinguished, and by which, in their happier moments, they believed they were. If ever they began to have misgivings, there, at any rate, was the example of Lord Hartington to encourage them and guide them—Lord Hartington, who was never [illegible], who was never excited, and who had no imagination at all. Everything they knew about him fitted into the picture, adding to their admiration and respect. His fondness for field sports gave them a feeling of security; and certainly there could be no nonsense about a man who confessed to two ambitions—to become prime minister and to win the Derby—and who put the second above the first. They loved him for his casualness—for his inexactness—for refusing to make life a cut-and-dried business—for ramming an official dispatch of high importance into his coat-pocket, and finding it there, still unopened, at Newmarket, several days later. They loved him for his hatred of fine sentiments; they were delighted when they heard that at some function, on a florid speaker's avowing that "this was the proudest moment of his life," Lord Hartington had growled in an undertone "the proudest moment of *my* life was when my pig won the prize at Skipton fair." Above all, they loved him for being dull. It was the greatest comfort—with Lord Hartington they could always be absolutely certain that he would never, in any circumstances, be either brilliant or subtle, or surprising, or impassioned, or profound. As they sat, listening to his speeches, in which considerations of stolid plainness succeeded one another with complete flatness, they felt, involved and supported by the colossal tedium, that their confidence was finally assured. They looked up, and took their fill of the sturdy obvious presence. The inheritor of a splendid dukedom might almost have passed for a farm hand. Almost, but not quite. For an air, that was difficult to explain, of preponderating authority lurked in the solid figure; and the lordly breeding of the House of Cavendish was visible in the large, long, bearded, unimpressionable face.

One other characteristic—the necessary consequence, or indeed, it might almost be said, the essential expression, of all the rest—completes the portrait: Lord Hartington was slow. He was slow in movement, slow in apprehension, slow in thought and the communication of thought, slow to decide, and slow to act. More than once this disposition exercised a profound effect upon his career. A private individual may, perhaps, be slow with impunity; but a statesman who is slow—whatever the force of his character and the strength of his judgment—can hardly escape unhurt from the hurrying of Time's winged chariot, can hardly hope to avoid some grave disaster or some irretrievable mistake. The fate of General Gordon, so intricately interwoven with such a mass of complicated circumstance—with the policies of England and of Egypt, with the fanaticism of the Mahdi, with the irreproachability of Sir Evelyn Baring, with Mr. Gladstone's mysterious passions—was finally determined by the fact that Lord Hartington was slow. If he had been even a very little quicker—if he had been quicker by two days . . . but it could not be. The ponderous machinery took so long to set itself in motion; the great wheels and levers, once started, revolved with such a laborious, such a painful deliberation, that at last their work was accomplished—surely, firmly, completely, in the best English manner, and too late.

Seven stages may be discerned in the history of Lord Hartington's influence upon the fate of General Gordon. At the end of the first stage, he had become convinced that he was responsible for Gordon's appointment to Khartoum. At the end of the second, he had perceived that his conscience would not allow him to remain inactive in the face of Gordon's danger. At the end of the third, he had made an attempt to induce the cabinet to send an expedition to Gordon's relief. At the end of the fourth, he had realized

that the cabinet had decided to postpone the relief of Gordon indefinitely. At the end of the fifth, he had come to the conclusion that he must put pressure upon Mr. Gladstone. At the end of the sixth, he had attempted to put pressure upon Mr. Gladstone, and had not succeeded. At the end of the seventh, he had succeeded in putting pressure upon Mr. Gladstone; the relief expedition had been ordered; he could do no more. The turning-point in this long and extraordinary process occurred towards the end of April, when the cabinet, after the receipt of Sir Evelyn Baring's final dispatch, decided to take no immediate measures for Gordon's relief. From that moment it was clear that there was only one course open to Lord Hartington—to tell Mr. Gladstone that he would resign unless a relief expedition was sent. But it took him more than three months to come to this conclusion. He always found the proceedings at cabinet meetings particularly hard to follow. The interchange of question and answer, of proposal and counter-proposal, the crowded counsellors, Mr. Gladstone's subleties, the abrupt and complicated resolutions—these things invariably left him confused and perplexed. After the crucial cabinet at the end of April, he came away in a state of uncertainty as to what had occurred; he had to write to Lord Granville to find out; and by that time, of course, the Government's decision had been telegraphed to Egypt. Three weeks later, in the middle of May, he had grown so uneasy that he felt himself obliged to address a circular letter to the cabinet, proposing that preparations for a relief expedition should be set on foot at once. And then he began to understand that nothing would ever be done until Mr. Gladstone, by some means or other, had been forced to give his consent. A singular combat followed. The slippery old man perpetually eluded the cumbrous grasp of his antagonist. He delayed, he postponed, he raised interminable difficulties, he prevaricated, he was silent, he disappeared. Lord Hartington was dauntless. Gradually, inch by inch, he drove the Prime Minister into a corner. But in the meantime many weeks had passed. On July 1st, Lord Hartington was still remarking that he "really did not feel that he knew the mind or intention of the Government in respect of the relief of General Gordon." The month was spent in a succession of stubborn efforts to wring from Mr. Gladstone some definite statement upon the question. It was useless. On July 31st, Lord Hartington did the deed. He stated that, unless an expedition was sent, he would resign. It was, he said, "a question of personal honour and good faith, and I don't see how I can yield upon it." His conscience had worked itself to rest at last.

When Mr. Gladstone read the words, he realized that the game was over. Lord Hartington's position in the Liberal Party was second only to his own; he was the leader of the rich and powerful whig aristocracy; his influence with the country was immense. Nor was he the man to make idle threats of resignation; he said he would resign, and resign he would: the collapse of the Government would be the inevitable result. On August 5th, therefore, Parliament was asked to make a grant of £300,000 in order "to enable Her Majesty's Government to undertake operations for the relief of General Gordon, should they become necessary." The money was voted; and even then, at that last hour, Mr. Gladstone made another, final, desperate twist. Trying to save himself by the proviso which he had inserted into the resolution, he declared that he was still unconvinced of the necessity of any operations at all. "I nearly," he wrote to Lord Hartington, "but not quite, adopt words received today from Granville. 'It is clear, I think, that Gordon has our messages, and does not choose to answer them.'" Nearly, but not quite! The qualification was masterly; but it was of no avail. This time, the sinuous creature was held by too firm a grasp. On August 26th, Lord Wolseley was appointed to command the relief expedition; and on September 9th, he arrived in Egypt.

The relief expedition had begun; and at the same moment a new phase opened at Khartoum. The annual rising of the Nile was now sufficiently advanced to enable one of Gordon's small steamers to pass over the cataracts down to Egypt in safety. He determined to seize the opportunity of laying before the authorities in Cairo and London, and the English public at large, an exact account of his position. A cargo of documents, including Colonel Stewart's diary of the siege and a personal appeal for assistance addressed by Gordon to all the European powers, was placed on board the *Abbas;* four other steamers were to accompany her until she was out of danger from attacks by the Mahdi's troops; after which he was to proceed alone into Egypt. On the evening of September 9th, just as she was about to start, the English and French consuls asked for permission to go with her—a permission which Gordon, who had long been anxious to provide for their safety, readily granted. Then Colonel Stewart made the same request; and Gordon consented with the same alacrity. Colonel Stewart was the second in command at Khartoum; and it seems strange that he should have made a proposal which would leave Gordon in a position of the gravest anxiety without a single European subordinate. But his motives were to be veiled for ever in a tragic obscurity. The *Abbas* and her con-

voy set out. Henceforward the Governor-General was alone. He had now, definitely and finally, made his decision. Colonel Stewart and his companions had gone, with every prospect of returning unharmed to civilization. Mr. Gladstone's belief was justified; so far as Gordon's personal safety was concerned, he might still, at this late hour, have secured it. But he had chosen; he stayed at Khartoum.

No sooner were the steamers out of sight than he sat down at his writing-table and began that daily record of his circumstances, his reflections, and his feelings, which reveals to us, with such an authentic exactitude the final period of his extraordinary destiny. His *Journals,* sent down the river in batches to await the coming of the relief expedition, and addressed, first to Colonel Stewart, and later to the "Chief-of-Staff, Sudan Expeditionary Force," were official documents, intended for publication, though, as Gordon himself was careful to note on the outer covers, they would "want pruning out" before they were printed. He also wrote, on the envelope of the first section, "No secrets as far as I am concerned." A more singular set of state papers was never compiled. Sitting there, in the solitude of his palace, with ruin closing round him, with anxieties on every hand, with doom hanging above his head, he let his pen rush on for hour after hour in an ecstasy of communication, a tireless unburdening of the spirit, where the most trivial incidents of the passing day were mingled pell-mell with philosophical disquisitions, where jests and anger, hopes and terrors, elaborate justifications and cynical confessions, jostled one another in reckless confusion. The impulsive, demonstrative man had nobody to talk to any more, and so he talked instead to the pile of telegraph-forms, which, useless now for perplexing Sir Evelyn Baring, served very well—for they were large and blank—as the repositories of his conversation. His tone was not the intimate and religious tone which he would have used with the Rev. Mr. Barnes or his sister Augusta; it was such as must have been habitual with him in his intercourse with old friends or fellow officers, whose religious views were of a more ordinary caste than his own, but with whom he was on confidential terms. He was anxious to put his case to a select and sympathetic audience—to convince such a man as Lord Wolseley that he was justified in what he had done; and he was sparing in his allusions to the hand of Providence, while those mysterious doubts and piercing introspections, which must have filled him, he almost entirely concealed. He expressed himself, of course, with eccentric *abandon*—it would have been impossible for him to do otherwise; but he was content to indicate his deepest feelings with a fleer. Yet sometimes—as one can imagine happening with him in actual conversation—his utterance took the form of a half-soliloquy, a copious outpouring addressed to himself more than to any one else, for his own satisfaction. There are passages in the *Khartoum Journals* which call up in a flash the light, gliding figure, and the blue eyes with the candor of childhood still shining in them; one can almost hear the low voice, the singularly distinct articulation, the persuasive—the self-persuasive—sentences, following each other so unassumingly between the puffs of a cigarette.

As he wrote, two preoccupations principally filled his mind. His reflections revolved round the immediate past and the impending future. With an untiring persistency he examined, he excused, he explained, his share in the complicated events which had led to his present situation. He rebutted the charges of imaginary enemies; he laid bare the ineptitude and the faithlessness of the English Government. He poured out his satire upon officials and diplomatists. He drew caricatures, in the margin, of Sir Evelyn Baring, with sentences of shocked pomposity coming out of his mouth. In some passages, which the editor of the *Journals* preferred to suppress, he covered Lord Granville with his raillery, picturing the Foreign Secretary, lounging away his morning at Walmer Castle, opening the *Times* and suddenly discovering, to his horror, that Khartoum was still holding out. "Why, HE *said distinctly* he could *only* hold out *six months,* and that was in March (counts the months). August! why he ought to have given in! What *is* to be done? They'll be howling for an expedition. . . . It is no laughing matter; *that abominable Mahdi!* Why on earth does he not guard his roads better? *What* is to be done?" Several times in his bitterness he repeats the suggestion that the authorities at home were secretly hoping that the fall of Khartoum would relieve them of their difficulties.

> What that Mahdi is about [Lord Granville is made to exclaim in another paragraph] I cannot make out. Why does he not put all his guns on the river and stop the route? Eh what? "We will have to go to Khartoum!" Why, it will cost millions, what a wretched business! What! Send Zobeir? Our conscience recoils from *that,* it is elastic, but not equal to that, it is a pact with the Devil. . . . Do you not think there is any way of getting hold of HIM in a quiet way?

If a boy at Eton or Harrow, he declared, had acted as the Government had acted, "I *think* he would be kicked, and *I am sure* he would deserve it." He was the victim of hypocrites and humbugs. There was

"no sort of parallel to all this in history—except it be David with Uriah the Hittite"; but then "there was an Eve in the case," and he was not aware that the Government had even that excuse.

From the past, he turned to the future, and surveyed, with a disturbed and piercing vision, the possibilities before him. Supposing that the relief expedition arrived, what would be his position? Upon one thing he was determined: whatever happened, he would not play the part of "the rescued lamb." He vehemently asserted that the purpose of the expedition could only be the relief of the Sudan garrison; it was monstrous to imagine that it had been undertaken merely to ensure his personal safety. He refused to believe it. In any case,

> I declare *positively* [he wrote, with passionate underlinings], and *once for all, that I will not leave the Sudan until every one who wants to go down is given the chance to do so, unless* a government is established, which relieves me of the charge; therefore if any emissary or letter comes up here ordering me to come down, I WILL NOT OBEY IT, BUT WILL STAY HERE, AND FALL WITH TOWN, AND RUN ALL RISKS.

This was sheer insubordination, no doubt; but he could not help that; it was not in his nature to be obedient. "I know if *I* was chief, I would never employ *myself,* for I am incorrigible." Decidedly, he was not afraid to be what club men call insubordinate, though, of all insubordinates, the club men are the worst.

As for the government which was to replace him, there were several alternatives: an Egyptian pasha might succeed him as governor-general, or Zobeir might be appointed after all, or the whole country might be handed over to the Sultan. His fertile imagination evolved scheme after scheme; and his visions of his own future were equally various. He would withdraw to the Equator; he would be delighted to spend Christmas in Brussels; he would . . . at any rate he would never go back to England. That was certain.

> I dwell on the joy of never seeing Great Britain again, with its horrid, wearisome *dinner* parties and miseries. How we can put up with those things, passes my imagination! It is a perfect bondage. . . . I would sooner live like a Dervish with the Mahdi, than go out to dinner every night in London. I hope, if any English General comes to Khartoum, he will not ask me to dinner. Why men cannot be friends without bringing the wretched stomachs in, is astounding.

But would an English general ever have the opportunity of asking him to dinner in Khartoum? There were moments when terrible misgivings assailed him. He pieced together his scraps of intelligence with feverish exactitude; he calculated times, distances, marches; "if," he wrote on October 24th, "they do not come before 30th November, the game is up, and Rule Britannia." Curious premonitions came into his mind. When he heard that the Mahdi was approaching in person, it seemed to be the fulfilment of a destiny, for he had "always felt we were doomed to come face to face." What would be the end of it all? "It is, of course, on the cards," he noted, "that Khartoum is taken under the nose of the expeditionary force which will be *just too late.*" The splendid hawks that swooped about the palace reminded him of a text in the Bible:—"The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." "I often wonder," he wrote, "whether they are destined to pick my eyes, for I fear I was not the best of sons."

So, sitting late into the night, he filled the empty telegraph forms with the agitations of his spirit, overflowing ever more hurriedly, more furiously, with lines of emphasis, and capitals and exclamation-marks more and more thickly interspersed so that the signs of his living passion are still visible to the inquirer of today on those thin sheets of mediocre paper and in the torrent of the ink. But he was a man of elastic temperament; he could not remain forever upon the stretch; he sought, and he found, relaxation in extraneous matters—in metaphysical digressions, or in satirical outbursts, or in the small details of his daily life. It amused him to have the Sudanese soldiers brought in and shown their "black pug faces" in the palace looking-glasses. He watched with a cynical sympathy the impertinence of a turkey-cock that walked in his courtyard. He made friends with a mouse who "judging from her swelled-out appearance," was a lady, and came and ate out of his plate. The cranes that flew over Khartoum in their thousands and with their curious cry, put him in mind of the poems of Schiller, which few ever read, but which he admired highly, though he only knew them in Bulwer's translation. He wrote little disquisitions on Plutarch and purgatory, on the fear of death and on the sixteenth chapter of the Koran. Then the turkey-cock strutting with "every feather on end, and all the colours of the rainbow on his neck," attracted him once more, and he filled several pages with his opinions upon the immortality of animals, drifting on to a discussion of man's position in the universe, and the infinite knowledge of

God. It was all clear to him. And yet—"what a contradiction is life! I hate Her Majesty's Government for their leaving the Sudan after having caused all its troubles; yet I believe our Lord rules heaven and earth, so I ought to hate Him, which I (sincerely) do not."

One painful thought obsessed him. He believed that the two Egyptians officers, who had been put to death after the defeat in March, had been unjustly executed. He had given way to "outside influences"; the two pashas had been "judicially murdered." Again and again he referred to the incident, with a haunting remorse. The *Times,* perhaps, would consider that he had been justified; but what did that matter? "If the *Times* saw this in print, it would say 'Why, then, did you act as you did?' to which I fear I have no answer." He determined to make what reparation he could, and to send the families of the unfortunate pashas £1000 each.

On a similar, but a less serious, occasion, he put the same principle into action. He boxed the ears of a careless telegraph clerk—"and then, as my conscience pricked me, I gave him £5 He said he did not mind if I killed him—I was his father (a chocolate-coloured youth of twenty)." His temper, indeed, was growing more and more uncertain, as he himself was well aware. He observed with horror that men trembled when they came into his presence—that their hands shook so that they could not hold a match to a cigarette.

He trusted no one. Looking into the faces of those who surrounded him, he saw only the ill-dissimulated signs of treachery and dislike. Of the 40,000 inhabitants of Khartoum he calculated that two-thirds were willing—were perhaps anxious—to become the subjects of the Mahdi. "These people are not worth any *great* sacrifice," he bitterly observed. The Egyptian officials were utterly incompetent; the soldiers were cowards. All his admiration was reserved for his enemies. The meanest of the Mahdi's followers was, he realized, "a determined warrior, who would undergo thirst and privation, who no more cared for pain or death than if he were stone." Those were the men whom, if the choice had lain with him, he would have wished to command. And yet, strangely enough, he persistently underrated the strength of the forces against him. A handful of Englishmen—a handful of Turks—would, he believed, be enough to defeat the Mahdi's hosts and destroy his dominion. He knew very little Arabic, and he depended for his information upon a few ignorant English speaking subordinates. The Mahdi himself he viewed with ambiguous feelings. He jibed at him as a vulgar impostor; but it is easy to perceive, under his scornful jocularities, the traces of an uneasy respect.

He spent long hours upon the palace roof gazing northwards; but the veil of mystery and silence was unbroken. In spite of the efforts of Major Kitchener, the officer in command of the Egyptian Intelligence service, hardly any messengers ever reached Khartoum; and when they did, the information they brought was tormentingly scanty. Major Kitchener did not escape the attentions of Gordon's pen. When news came at last, it was terrible: Colonel Stewart and his companions had been killed. The *Abbas,* after having passed uninjured through the part of the river commanded by the Mahdi's troops, had struck upon a rock; Colonel Stewart had disembarked in safety; and, while he was waiting for camels to convey the detachment across the desert into Egypt, had accepted the hospitality of a local sheikh. Hardly had the Europeans entered the sheikh's hut when they were set upon and murdered; their native followers shared their fate. The treacherous sheikh was an adherent of the Mahdi, and to the Mahdi all Colonel Stewart's papers, filled with information as to the condition of Khartoum, were immediately sent. When the first rumors of the disaster reached Gordon, he pictured, in a flash of intuition, the actual details of the catastrophe. "I feel somehow convinced," he wrote, "they were captured by treachery. . . . Stewart was not a bit suspicious (I am made up of it). I can see in imagination the whole scene, the sheikh inviting them to land, . . . then a rush of wild Arabs, and all is over!" "It is very sad," he added, "but being ordained, we must not murmur." And yet he believed that the true responsibility lay with him: it was the punishment of his own sins. "I look on it," was his unexpected conclusion, "as being a Nemesis on the death of the two Pashas."

The workings of his conscience did indeed take on surprising shapes. Of the three ex-governors of Darfour, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Equatoria, Emin Pasha had disappeared, Lupton Bey had died, and Slatin Pasha was held in captivity by the Mahdi. By birth an Austrian and a Catholic, Slatin, in the last desperate stages of his resistance, had adopted the expedient of announcing his conversion to Mohammedanism, in order to win the confidence of his native troops. On his capture, the fact of his conversion procured him some degree of consideration; and, though he occasionally suffered from the caprices of his masters, he had so far escaped the terrible punishment which had been meted out to some other of the Mahdi's European prisoners—that of close confinement in the common gaol. He was now kept prisoner in one of the camps in the neighborhood of Khartoum. He

managed to smuggle through a letter to Gordon, asking for assistance, in case he could make his escape. To this letter Gordon did not reply. Slatin wrote again and again; his piteous appeals, couched in no less piteous French, made no effect upon the heart of the Governor-General.

> Excellence! [he wrote]. J'ai envoyé deux lettres, sans avoir reçu une réponse de votre excellence. . . . Excellence! j'ai me battu 27 *fois* pour le gouvernement contre l'ennemi—on m'a feri deux fois, et j'ai rien fait contre l'honneur—rien de chose qui doit empêché votre excellence de m'ecrir une réponse que je sais quoi faire. . . . *Je vous prie,* Excellence, de m'honoré avec une réponse. . . . P.S. Si votre Excellence ont peutêtre entendu que j'ai fait quelque chose contre l'honneur d'un officier et cela vous empêche de m'ecrir, je vous prie de me donner l'occasion de me defendre, et juges apres la verité.

The unfortunate Slatin understood well enough the cause of Gordon's silence. It was in vain that he explained the motives of his conversion, in vain that he pointed out that it had been made easier for him since he had *"perhaps unhappily,* not received a strict religious education at home." Gordon was adamant. Slatin had "denied his Lord," and that was enough. His communications with Khartoum were discovered and he was put in chains. When Gordon heard of it, he noted the fact grimly in his diary, without a comment.

A more ghastly fate awaited another European who had fallen into the hands of the Mahdi. Olivier Pain, a French adventurer, who had taken part in the Commune, and who was now wandering, for reasons which have never been discovered, in the wastes of the Sudan, was seized by the Arabs, made prisoner, and hurried from camp to camp. He was attacked by fever; but mercy was not among the virtues of the savage soldiers who held him in their power. Hoisted upon the back of a camel, he was being carried across the desert, when, overcome by weakness, he lost his hold, and fell to the ground. Time or trouble were not to be wasted upon an infidel. Orders were given that he should be immediately buried; the orders were carried out; and in a few moments the cavalcade had left the little hillock far behind. But some of those who were present believed that Olivier Pain had been still breathing when his body was covered with the sand.

Gordon, on hearing that a Frenchman had been captured by the Mahdi, became extremely interested. The idea occurred to him that this mysterious individual was none other that Ernest Renan, "who," he wrote, "in his last publication takes leave of the world, and is said to have gone into Africa, not to reappear again." He had met Renan at the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society, had noticed that he looked bored—the result, no doubt, of too much admiration—and had felt an instinct that he would meet him again. The instinct now seemed to be justified. There could hardly be any doubt that it *was* Renan; who else could it be? "If he comes to the lines," he decided, "and it is Renan, I shall go and see him, for whatever one may think of his unbelief in our Lord, he certainly dared to say what he thought, and has not changed his creed to save his life." That the mellifluous author of the *Vie de Jésus* should have determined to end his days in the depths of Africa, and have come, in accordance with an intuition, to renew his acquaintance with General Gordon in the lines of Khartoum, would indeed have been a strange occurrence; but who shall limit the strangeness of the possibilities that lie in wait for the sons of men? At that very moment, in the southeastern corner of the Sudan, another Frenchman, of a peculiar eminence, was fulfilling a destiny more extraordinary than the wildest romance. In the town of Harrar, near the Red Sea, Arthur Rimbaud surveyed with splenetic impatience the tragedy of Khartoum.

> C'est justement les Anglais [he wrote] avec leur absurde politique, qui minent désormais le commerce de toutes ces côtes. Ils ont voulu tout remanier et ils sont arrivés à faire pire que les Egyptiens et les Turcs, ruinés par eux. Leur Gordon est un idiot, leur Wolseley un âne, et toutes leurs entreprises une suite insensée d'absurdités et de déprédations.

So wrote the amazing poet of the *Saison D'Enfer* amid those futile turmoils of petty commerce, in which, with an inexplicable deliberation, he had forgotten the enchantments of an unparalleled adolescence, forgotten the fogs of London and the streets of Brussels, forgotten Paris, forgotten the subtleties and the frenzies of inspiration, forgotten the agonized embraces of Verlaine.

When the contents of Colonel Stewart's papers had been interpreted to the Mahdi, he realized the serious condition of Khartoum, and decided that the time had come to press the siege to a final conclusion. At the end of October, he himself, at the head of a fresh army, appeared outside the town. From that moment, the investment assumed a more and more menacing character. The lack of provisions now for the first time began to make itself felt. November 30th—the date fixed by Gordon as the last possible moment of his resistance—came and went! the expeditionary

force had made no sign. The fortunate discovery of a large store of grain, concealed by some merchants for purposes of speculation, once more postponed the catastrophe. But the attacking army grew daily more active, the skirmishes round the lines and on the river more damaging to the besieged, and the Mahdi's guns began an intermittent bombardment of the palace. By December 10th it was calculated that there was not fifteen days' food in the town; "truly I am worn to a shadow with the food question," Gordon wrote; "it is one continued demand." At the same time he received the ominous news that five of his soldiers had deserted to the Mahdi. His predicament was terrible; but he calculated, from a few dubious messages that had reached him, that the relieving force could not be very far away. Accordingly, on the 14th, he decided to send down one of his four remaining steamers, the *Bordeen*, to meet it at Metemmah, in order to deliver to the officer in command the latest information as to the condition of the town. The *Bordeen* carried down the last portion of the *Journals,* and Gordon's final messages to his friends. Owing to a misunderstanding, he believed that Sir Evelyn Baring was accompanying the expedition from Egypt, and some of his latest and most successful satirical fancies played round the vision of the distressed Consul-General perched for two days upon the painful eminence of a camel's hump. "There was a slight laugh when Khartoum heard Baring was bumping his way up here—a regular Nemesis." But, when Sir Evelyn Baring actually arrived—in whatever condition—what would happen? Gordon lost himself in the multitude of his speculations. His own object, he declared, was "of course, to make tracks." Then in one of his strange premonitory rhapsodies, he threw out, half in jest and half in earnest, that the best solution of all the difficulties of the future would be the appointment of Major Kitchener as governor-general of the Sudan. The *Journal* ended upon a note of menace and disdain.

> Now MARK THIS, if the Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than two hundred men, does not come in ten days, *the town may fall;* and I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye.—C. G. GORDON.
>
> You sent me no information, though you have lots of money.—C. G. G.

To his sister Augusta, he was more explicit.

> I decline to agree [he told her] that the expedition comes for my relief; it comes for the relief of the garrisons, which I failed to accomplish. I expect Her Majesty's Government are in a precious rage with me for holding out and forcing their hand.

The admission is significant. And then came the final adieux.

> This may be the last letter you will receive from me, for we are on our last legs, owing to the delay of the expedition. However, God rules all, and, as He will rule to His glory and our welfare, His will be done. I fear, owing to circumstances, that my affairs are pecuniarily not over bright . . . your affectionate brother, C. G. GORDON.
>
> P.S.—I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have *tried* to do my duty.

The delay of the expedition was even more serious than Gordon had supposed. Lord Wolseley had made the most elaborate preparations. He had collected together a picked army of 10,000 of the finest British troops; he had arranged a system of river transports with infinite care. For it was his intention to take no risks; he would advance in force up the Nile; he had determined that the fate of Gordon should not depend upon the dangerous hazards of a small and hasty exploit. There is no doubt—in view of the opposition which the relieving force actually met with—that his decision was a wise one; but unfortunately he had miscalculated some of the essential elements in the situation. When his preparations were at last complete, it was found that the Nile had sunk so low that the flotillas, over which so much care had been lavished, and upon which depended the whole success of the campaign, would be unable to surmount the cataracts. At the same time—it was by then the middle of November—a message arrived from Gordon indicating that Khartoum was in serious straits. It was clear that an immediate advance was necessary; the river route was out of the question; a swift dash across the desert was the only possible expedient after all. But no preparations for land transport had been made; weeks elapsed before a sufficient number of camels could be collected; and more weeks before those collected were trained for a military march. It was not until December 30th—more than a fortnight after the last entry in Gordon's *Journal*—that Sir Herbert Stewart, at the head of 1100 British troops, was able to leave Korti on his march towards Metemmah, 170 miles across the desert. His advance was slow, and it was tenaciously disputed by the Mahdi's forces. There was a desperate engagement on January 17th at the wells of Abu Klea; the British square was broken; for a moment victory hung in the balance; but the Arabs were repulsed. On the

19th, there was another furiously contested fight, in which Sir Herbert Stewart was killed. On the 21st, the force, now diminished by over 250 casualties, reached Metemmah. Three days elapsed in reconnoitering the country, and strengthening the position of the camp. On the 24th, Sir Charles Wilson, who had succeeded to the command, embarked on the *Bordeen,* and started up the river for Khartoum. On the following evening, the vessel struck on a rock, causing a further delay of twenty-four hours. It was not until January 28th that Sir Charles Wilson, arriving under a heavy fire within sight of Khartoum, saw that the Egyptian flag was not flying from the roof of the palace. The signs of ruin and destruction on every hand showed clearly enough that the town had fallen. The relief expedition was two days late.

The details of what passed within Khartoum during the last weeks of the siege are unknown to us. In the diary of Bordeini Bey, a Levantine merchant, we catch a few glimpses of the final stages of the catastrophe—of the starving populace, the exhausted garrison, the fluctuations of despair and hope, the dauntless energy of the Governor-General. Still he worked on, indefatigably, apportioning provisions, collecting ammunition, consulting with the townspeople, encouraging the soldiers. His hair had suddenly turned quite white. Late one evening, Bordeini Bey went to visit him in the palace, which was being bombarded by the Mahdi's cannon. The high building, brilliantly lighted up, afforded an excellent mark. As the shot came whistling round the windows, the merchant suggested that it would be advisable to stop them up with boxes full of sand. Upon this, Gordon Pasha became enraged.

> He called up the guard and gave them orders to shoot me if I moved; he then brought a very large lantern which would hold twenty-four candles. He and I then put the candles into the sockets, placed the lantern on the table in front of the window, lit the candles, and then we sat down at the table. The Pasha then said, "When God was portioning out fear to all the people in the world, at last it came to my turn, and there was no fear left to give me. Go, tell all the people in Khartoum that Gordon fears nothing, for God has created him without fear."

On January 5th, Omdurman, a village on the opposite bank of the Nile, which had hitherto been occupied by the besieged, was taken by the Arabs. The town was now closely surrounded, and every chance of obtaining fresh supplies was cut off: The famine became terrible; dogs, donkeys, skins, gum, palm fibre, were devoured by the desperate inhabitants. The soldiers stood on the fortifications like pieces of wood. Hundreds died of hunger daily: their corpses filled the streets; and the survivors had not the strength to bury the dead. On the 20th the news of the battle of Abu Klea reached Khartoum. The English were coming at last. Hope rose; every morning the Governor-General assured the townspeople that one day more would see the end of their sufferings; and night after night his words were proved untrue.

On the 23rd a rumor spread that a spy had arrived with letters, and that the English army was at hand. A merchant found a piece of newspaper lying in the road in which it was stated that the strength of the relieving forces was 15,000 men. For a moment, hope flickered up again, only to relapse once more. The rumor, the letters, the printed paper, all had been contrivances of Gordon to inspire the garrison with the courage to hold out. On the 25th, it was obvious that the Arabs were preparing an attack, and a deputation of the principal inhabitants waited upon the Governor-General. But he refused to see them; Bordeini Bey was alone admitted to his presence. He was sitting on a divan, and, as Bordeini Bey came into the room, he snatched the fez from his head and flung it from him.

> What more can I say? [he exclaimed, in a voice such as the merchant had never heard before]. The people will no longer believe me. I have told them over and over again that help would be here, but it has never come, and now they must see I tell them lies. I can do nothing more. Go, and collect all the people you can on the lines, and make a good stand. Now leave me to smoke these cigarettes.

Bordeini Bey knew then, he tells us, that Gordon Pasha was in despair. He left the room, having looked upon the Governor-General for the last time.

When the English force reached Metemmah, the Mahdi, who had originally intended to reduce Khartoum to surrender through starvation, decided to attempt its capture by assault. The receding Nile had left one portion of the town's circumference undefended; as the river withdrew, the rampart had crumbled; a broad expanse of mud was left between the wall and the water, and the soldiers, overcome by hunger and the lassitude of hopelessness, had trusted to the morass to protect them, and neglected to repair the breach. Early on the morning of the 26th, the Arabs crossed the river at this point. The mud, partially dried up, presented no obstacle; nor did the ruined fortification, feebly manned by some half-dying troops. Resistance was futile, and it was

scarcely offered: the Mahdi's army swarmed into Khartoum. Gordon had long debated with himself what his action should be at the supreme moment. "I shall never (D. V.)," he had told Sir Evelyn Baring, "be taken alive." He had had gun-powder put into the cellars of the palace, so that the whole building might, at a moment's notice, be blown into the air. But then misgivings had come upon him; was it not his duty "to maintain the faith, and, if necessary, to suffer for it?"—to remain a tortured and humiliated witness of his Lord in the Mahdi's chains? The blowing up of the palace would have, he thought, "more or less the taint of suicide," would be, "in a way, taking things out of God's hands." He remained undecided; and meanwhile, to be ready for every contingency, he kept one of his little armored vessels close at hand on the river, with steam up, day and night, to transport him, if so he should decide, southward, through the enemy to the recesses of Equatoria. The sudden appearance of the Arabs, the complete collapse of the defense, saved him the necessity of making up his mind. He had been on the roof, in his dressing-gown, when the attack began; and he had only time to hurry to his bedroom to slip on a white uniform, and to seize up a sword and a revolver, before the foremost of the assailants were in the palace. The crowd was led by four of the fiercest of the Mahdi's followers—tall and swarthy dervishes, splendid in their many-coloured jibbehs, their great swords drawn from their scabbards of brass and velvet, their spears flourishing above their heads. Gordon met them at the top of the staircase. For a moment, there was a deathly pause, while he stood in silence, surveying his antagonists. Then it is said that Taha Shahin, the Dongolawi, cried in a loud voice, "Mala' oun el yom yomek!" (O cursèd one, your time is come), and plunged his spear into the Englishman's body. His only gesture was a gesture of contempt. Another spear transfixed him; he fell, and the swords of the three other dervishes instantly hacked him to death. Thus, if we are to believe the official chroniclers, in the dignity of unresisting disdain, General Gordon met his end. But it is only fitting that the last moments of one whose whole life was passed in contradiction should be involved in mystery and doubt. Other witnesses told a very different story. The man whom they saw die was not a saint but a warrior. With intrepidity, with skill, with desperation, he flew at his enemies. When his pistol was exhausted, he fought on with his sword; he forced his way almost to the bottom of the staircase; and, among a heap of corpses, only succumbed at length to the sheer weight of the multitudes against him.

That morning, while Slatin Pasha was sitting in his chains in the camp at Omdurman, he saw a group of Arabs approaching, one of whom was carrying something wrapped up in a cloth. As the group passed him, they stopped for a moment and railed at him in savage mockery. Then the cloth was lifted, and he saw before him Gordon's head. The trophy was taken to the Mahdi: at last the two fanatics had indeed met face to face. The Mahdi ordered the head to be fixed between the branches of a tree in the public highway, and all who passed threw stones at it. The hawks of the desert swept and circled about it—those very hawks which the blue eyes had so often watched.

The news of the catastrophe reached England, and a great outcry arose. The public grief vied with the public indignation. The Queen, in a letter to Miss Gordon, immediately gave vent both to her own sentiments and those of the nation.

> *How* shall I write to you [she exclaimed], or how shall I attempt to express *what I feel!* To *think* of your dear, noble, heroic Brother, who served his Country and his Queen so truly, so heroically, with a self-sacrifice so edifying to the World, not having been rescued. That the promises of support were not fulfilled—which I so frequently and constantly pressed on those who asked him to go—is to me *grief inexpressible!* Indeed, it has made me ill. . . . Would you express to your other sisters and your elder Brother my true sympathy, and what I do so keenly feel, the *stain* left upon England for your dear Brother's cruel, though heroic, fate!

In reply, Miss Gordon presented the Queen with her brother's Bible, which was placed in one of the corridors at Windsor, open, on a white satin cushion, and enclosed in a crystal case. In the meanwhile, Gordon was acclaimed in every newspaper as a national martyr; state services were held in his honor at Westminster and St. Paul's; £20,000 was voted to his family; and a great sum of money was raised by subscription to endow a charity in his memory. Wrath and execration fell, in particular, upon the head of Mr. Gladstone. He was little better than a murderer; he was a traitor; he was a heartless villain, who had been seen at the play on the very night when Gordon's death was announced. The storm passed; but Mr. Gladstone had soon to cope with a still more serious agitation. The cry was raised on every side that the national honor would be irreparably tarnished if the Mahdi were left in the peaceful possession of Khartoum, and that the expeditionary force should be at once employed to chastise the false

prophet and to conquer the Sudan. But it was in vain that the imperialists clamored, in vain that Lord Wolseley wrote several dispatches, proving over and over again that to leave the Mahdi unconquered must involve the ruin of Egypt, in vain that Lord Hartington at last discovered that he had come to the same conclusion. The old man stood firm. Just then, a crisis with Russia on the Afghan frontier supervened; and Mr. Gladstone, pointing out that every available soldier might be wanted at any moment for a European war, withdrew Lord Wolseley and his army from Egypt. The Russian crisis disappeared. The Mahdi remained supreme lord of the Sudan.

And yet it was not with the Mahdi that the future lay. Before six months were out, in the plenitude of his power, he died, and the Khalifa Abdullahi reigned in his stead. The future lay with Major Kitchener and his Maxim-Nordenfeldt guns. Thirteen years later the Mahdi's empire was abolished forever in the gigantic hecatomb of Omdurman; after which it was thought proper that a religious ceremony in honor of General Gordon should be held at the Palace at Khartoum. The service was conducted by four chaplains—of the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist persuasions—and concluded with a performance of "Abide with me"—the General's favorite hymn—by a select company of Sudanese buglers. Everyone agreed that General Gordon had been avenged at last. Who could doubt it? General Gordon himself, possibly, fluttering, in some remote nirvana, the pages of a phantasmal Bible, might have ventured on a satirical remark. But General Gordon had always been a contradictious person—even a little off his head, perhaps, though a hero; and besides, he was no longer there to contradict. . . . At any rate it had all ended very happily—in a glorious slaughter of twenty thousand Arabs, a vast addition to the British Empire, and a step in the peerage for Sir Evelyn Baring.

Questions:

1. Analyze Strachey's attitude toward Chinese Gordon. Does he have any admiration for him at all? What does he admire in him? What qualifies his admiration?
2. Why does Strachey say, when Gordon's head is brought before the Mahdi, that the *two fanatics* saw each other face to face?
3. What is Strachey's attitude toward Gladstone? Toward Queen Victoria? Toward British officialdom in general? Does the final paragraph in this life sum up Strachey's attitude toward the whole Victorian period?
4. Compare and contrast in as many ways as you can Plutarch's attitude toward Antony with Strachey's attitude toward Chinese Gordon.
5. Strachey is definitely making an interpretation of Gordon. How fair do you think this interpretation is?

JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

I

TO MANY it may seem surprising that, in a select quartet of American statesmen, the fourth place should be given to Calhoun. Americans are not wont to waste their time upon failures, nor Englishmen upon people of whom they have never heard. Yet the selection is, I think, just. Calhoun was, more than any other, the personification of an idea. Although that idea was defeated and destroyed, yet, if only that we may understand the history of the victors, it is necessary to understand the philosophy of the vanquished and to study the life of their leaders.

For all that, it must be admitted that it is impossible to write of Calhoun as one can write of Jefferson or Lincoln or Wilson. Jefferson left behind him his *Ana*, a monument of malice. No sooner was the breath from the body than the journalists got to work on sketch and anecdote about Lincoln and Wilson. But the friends of Calhoun had little leisure for such a recreation and he little desire for such an immortality. "All the South," once said a bitter Northern soldier, "is the grave of Calhoun." And all the South turned out to fight for the defense of that grave, as the warriors of a Greek city used to fight around the bones of their hero. The men who would have recorded their bright and creditable little Memories of Calhoun had other work to do and lie instead beside the Mississippi at Vicksburg or before Richmond or at Chancellorsville, by the side of Stonewall Jackson. It is for Calhoun a happy chance. He would not, we may be sure, have wished that even his words should outlive the thing which he loved. To the verdict of posterity he was utterly indifferent. He saw no reason why it should be wiser than its ancestors.

In 1781, General Cornwallis, marching up from

Charleston through South Carolina, made it certain by his surrender at Yorktown that the little baby, who was to be born at Abbeville, in the West, in the March of the next year, should be born a citizen of a sovereign state.

In this rough western corner of the state young Calhoun grew up. For the first eighteen years of his life he, like Lincoln, had no regular schooling. His family was one more firmly established than was Lincoln's, the social position into which he was born a far better one. Yet between the boyhoods of these two there is some similarity. Both, free from the monstrous menace of a well-stocked library, learned to reason before they could learn to read. They suffered little from the benefits of education. At an age when young Woodrow Wilson was tricking himself into the delusion that he had a first-class mind by sitting up till after midnight and absorbing the thoughts of others, these boys were trying for themselves to follow out from their first principles the problems of the universe. They had not information at hand as a short cut to knowledge. On both of them their early up-bringing left afterwards its mark. Their failing was to be that of a too objective intelligence. They saw too clearly to govern muddle-headed men successfully and were unable to dupe themselves with the glib prophecies and baseless comforts, without which none but the strongest dare face the horror of the world. They hated too much the bad logic which half-education produces readily to compromise with it. They lived too largely in the intellect because they had never been able to afford to live in a library. "I desire never to meet him again," a diner-out was afterwards to report on Calhoun. "I hate a man who makes me think so much." And his social reputation was to be that of the most brilliant monologist in America but of a bad listener. Novels he could never abide. In his youth he had read Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* as far as the chapter on Infinity—which is about half-way through the second book—but there, apparently, he stuck, and in the recreation of his later years his reading was of little else save the histories of Poland and of Rome. The only advice upon life which he was to find it possible to give to an aspiring young disciple was to "study less." It is a large contrast to the example of Jefferson.

From his twentieth to his twenty-second year Calhoun was, it is true, a student at Yale, where he had an opportunity of learning from the Hartford Convention his first lessons in secession and whence he graduated with high honors. That he had not till then received anything which a government authority would have consented to card-index as education, makes this feat all the more remarkable.

On one of his journeys from South Carolina to the North, as he was passing through Virginia, he was taken out of his way, in order to pay a visit to Jefferson near Charlottesville. "They talked on until after midnight, which was contrary to Jefferson's custom." And afterwards Richard Rush recorded the secret that "Jefferson loved him." If so, it was one of those rare cases of love at first sight and both the older and the younger man, careful not to shatter illusion by repetition, showed, as far as we know, no desire whatsoever for a second meeting.

Calhoun returned to Abbeville to practice law, but for a lawyer's life he, like most good men, had a natural loathing. In 1811, after a couple of years in the State Legislature, he was elected Member of Congress for his district, and his political career had begun. He had no thought as he set out for Washington that he was leaving for ever that country life which he most loved. "After two years," he said, "I will be back near my brother Patrick's." But success came too quickly, and with it ambition, and forestalled retirement.

II

The main problem of politics at that date was that of the relations of the United States with the "whale and the elephant," as Jefferson called them, with Great Britain, arrogant on sea with her Orders in Council, and France, arrogant on land with her Berlin decrees. By weak policy Madison, it will be remembered, had allowed himself to be led to the brink of a precipice, over which he was very unwilling to go but whence there was no longer any possible return. A vocal and patriotic party of young men—not unlike the Boys, who, eighty years earlier, shouted at Walpole in the British Parliament—demanded that Madison carry his policy to its logical conclusion and declare war on the Government of George III. This party had won large success in the election of 1811. To it the young Congressman from South Carolina attached himself. South Carolina was at that date the political leader of the United States. To be Congressman from one of her constituencies was to be certain of prominence. And success came to him from the first. The Speaker, Henry Clay, fresh with the blood of Kentucky duel, appointed him to the second place on Congress' Committee on Foreign Relations, and, at the first meeting of the Committee, he was unanimously chosen its Chairman.

His part in the war was honorable but not creditable. He took from the first an extremely bellicose stand. He made himself responsible for presenting to

the President a report demanding war. He was not even sobered into wisdom by the very hesitating support of the Senate and the opposition of many Republican Senators. When the war came, he demanded the repeal of the Non-Importation Act, as smacking too much of the old Jeffersonian pacifism for which Jefferson was so busy apologizing, and angrily cried out, "We have had a peace like a war. In the name of Heaven, let us not have the only thing that is worse, a war like a peace." For the futility of the War of 1812 he must then bear a full share of responsibility. His excuse is his youth.

Four questions seem at that time to have mainly occupied his attention. On all of them his conclusions were those of an Imperialist. He demanded, first, an adequate policy of defense—especially the building of a large navy, the weapon, as he argued, best suited for the United States. Second, he demanded the covering of the country with a network of military roads, thirdly, the protection of American manufactures—at least, the cotton and woollen manufactures--by a tariff, and, fourthly, "to incorporate the subscribers to the bank of the United States."

It is interesting to note that in his support of none of his projects does he seem to have had much in mind the limits of power which the Constitution allowed to the Federal Government. On the contrary he took pains to pride himself on his superiority to the pedantry of the constitutionalist. "The instrument was not intended as a thesis for the logician to exercise his ingenuity on," he argued. "If the framers had intended to limit the use of the money to the powers afterwards enumerated and defined, nothing could have been more easy than to have expressed it plainly." The necessity of first obtaining the consent of the states, through whose territory the proposed roads were to pass, he waved airily away as not "worth the discussion, because the good sense of the States may be relied on. They will, in all cases, readily yield their assent."

The only danger which he saw in the encouragement of industry was—and it is a point of some interest and importance—"that capital employed in manufacturing produced a greater dependence on the part of the employed than in commerce, navigation or agriculture." On the other hand, industry shared with agriculture the advantage over commerce and navigation that "it produced an interest strictly American." Such observation in 1916, when the whole world could see these two evils, the one peculiar to the commercial, the other to the industrial state, would have been no especial argument of wisdom. In 1816 it was more remarkable. The individual has a natural right to property and needs it for his moral development. Yet it is the unsolved problem of industrialism that the efficient management of a factory forbids that individual freedom and absence of discipline which human nature demands. Thus the great defender of black slavery in the field began his political career by warning his country against the danger of white slavery in the workshop. There is, as we shall see, less in this that is surprising and paradoxical than might at first sight appear.

Some of Calhoun's admirers—and to some extent he himself—were afterwards to try to show by deft straining of words, that the speeches of the young Congressman were in every iota consistent with the later thunders of the great Nullifier. It is a wasted labor. The inconsistencies are patent, the explanation of them not discreditable. It may well be that, if the young Calhoun had been asked to define the relations of the state to the Federal Government, he would have used language not very different from that with which he was afterwards to defy Webster or Jackson. Yet clearly at this date he was not thinking about the problem which was afterwards utterly to dominate his mind. From the first his loyalty was to South Carolina and the South. In 1816, no interest, alien to South Carolina, threatened to dominate the Union and to stretch the Constitution in order to destroy that special Southern life which he so greatly loved. It was, therefore, but natural that he should be careless about State Rights and push forward projects which he believed to be to the benefit both of his own and other states, not pedantically careful to inquire the exact limit of strict constitutional right.

It is surely not inconsistent that a man should allow much freedom to a partner whom he still trusts which he would be reluctant to allow to one of whom he has come to be suspicious. Before his old age the South was to lose its dominance of 1816. And Calhoun—with how much justice will later be considered—was to believe that it was the intention of the North to use her superior voting strength and every advantage which she could twist out of the Constitution, in order to destroy the freedom and life of South Carolina. Not from pedantry but from common sense did Calhoun demand that South Carolina, if she was to be made to suffer all the disadvantages of the Constitution, should at least reap every advantage which interpretation could make it bear. The battle, if it must be fought, was better fought over the jots and tittles of the Constitution than over the blood-soaked plains of Georgia and the Carolinas. Sentence against sentence, speech against speech, there is then a real inconsistency be-

tween the young man who had not learnt the dangers of Union and the old statesman in whom hope was almost dead. Yet the inconsistency is to the discredit neither of the old man nor of the young.

III

Madison was in 1817 succeeded as President by Monroe, who inaugurated the Era of Good Feeling. The new President offered to Calhoun the Secretaryship of War and a seat in the Cabinet. This Calhoun accepted and had to resign his place in Congress.

He remained at the head of the War Office until his election as Vice-President in 1824 and the unbiased evidence seems to leave little question of the extreme efficiency with which he performed his duties. "General Bernard, who had been a favorite aide-de-camp of the Emperor Napoleon and saw and knew much of him, and who was chief of the Board of Engineers while Mr. Calhoun was secretary and had an equal opportunity of observing him, not infrequently, it is said, compared his (Mr. Calhoun's) administrative talents to those of that extraordinary man." Calhoun found his office in chaos and reorganized it on a system, of which it was the ironical glory that, as von Holst says, it stood "even the test of the Civil War." He took the opportunity of office to forward his favorite project of military roads, one of the advantages of which would be, he said, the consolidation of the Union.

The War Office had the responsibility for Indian Affairs. Because he was to be the great champion of slavery, Calhoun, in the imagination of many, appears as an ogre of inhumanity, utterly careless of any cruelty that might be suffered by man or woman, if only they were not of European blood. Yet he took a far larger interest in the welfare of the Indians than did any other statesman of his day. Not until sixty years afterwards, when his memory had been stamped to the dust, and a generation, well-drilled in education, had been taught thoroughly from their text-books that no intelligence ever came out of the Southern states, was it safe for a Northern politician, Carl Schurz, to disinter his schemes and claim the credit for their originality.

Calhoun argued that the Government's policy of ceding to the Indian tribes by treaty certain reserved areas and allowing them to live there in autonomy was the worst possible for the Indians. It deprived them of the virtues of the savage without giving them those of the civilized man, and, if continued, would prove a method of extermination, as certain as, if less pleasingly complete than, that of the humane Lord Amherst who favored the sale to them of smallpox-infected blankets. Indeed it is curious to notice that, if Calhoun erred in his suggested Indian policy, it was in too great a subservience to conventional Liberal catchwords. His desire was that the Indian should, as quickly as possible, cease to be an Indian and take an ordinary place in the citizen's life of the state. He believed only too easily that he could be fitted for this place by education and made certain investigations, as a result of which he claimed that the Indian had proved himself as apt a pupil as the white boy—which well may be.

"The degree of perfection," wrote his employees on taking leave of him, "to which you have carried the several branches of this department is believed to be without parallel." And such is the general verdict on his eight years' work. Yet that verdict is not unanimous. He gave a contract for the delivery of stones at Old Point Comfort to a certain Elijah Mix, without having offered the public advertisement which the law required. This Mix was a pleasant scoundrel, who not only failed to perform his contract, but, when in consequence, during Calhoun's Vice-Presidency, a second contract was refused him, in anger accused the Vice-President of having fraudulently obtained a share of the profits of the first.

Calhoun demanded an investigation of the charge by a Committee of the Senate, which reported that "They are unanimously of the opinion that there are no facts which will authorize the belief that the Vice-President was ever interested or that he participated, directly or indirectly, in the profits of any contract formed with the Government through the Department of War." Yet the story remained to color certain judgments upon his Secretaryship.

Most of the charges and gossip against him may be traced back to the *Diary* of John Quincy Adams, son of the friend and enemy of Jefferson, Secretary of State in Monroe's Cabinet and therefore Calhoun's colleague and rival. Between a gentleman of South Carolina and this very proper Puritan of New England there was little in common and little love lost. "Precedent and popularity," Adams recorded, "were the two motives of Calhoun's every action." And in 1831 he was to write—though, before 1831 came, each was to have given the other many a further cause of complaint—"His personal relations with me have been marked, on his part, with selfishness and cold-blooded heartlessness." In truth Adams saw in Calhoun a dangerous rival for the succession to Monroe. And he possessed a nose well-trained to smell out the moral deficiencies of his political competitors.

By the extinction of the Federalists party politics in the United States had come almost to an end.

There was only one party—the Republican—and Monroe would have been elected President unanimously had not one elector purposely cast a vote against him, lest he should share a compliment which had been paid to Washington alone. The absence of an opposition, and consequently of the need for party unity, allowed, as was only to be expected, a division of the politicians into a variety of personal cliques, whose leaders intrigued against one another for the highest post. In the old days of fierce warfare party unity had been imposed by an organization, or caucus. This organization survived into tranquillity. Crawford of Georgia, the Secretary of the Treasury, was its nominee as Monroe's successor. But in all parts of the land the revolt against "King Caucus" was popular. Each of the three main divisions of the country had its own favorite to oppose to the party's official candidate. Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, was from the West, Calhoun from the South, and Adams of New England. Henry Clay, of Kentucky, the Speaker of Congress, was also a candidate.

Calhoun soon found that owing to his youth his chances of election were small and was persuaded to stand instead for the Vice-Presidency, for which his rivals allowed him a virtually unopposed election. He received, when the electoral college met, one hundred and eighty-two votes out of two hundred and sixty-one.

IV

The Presidential election was less easily settled. The largest vote in the electoral college went to Jackson. But, as he did not receive a clear majority, it fell, according to the Constitution, to Congress to select for President one out of the three first candidates in their voting. Their choice lay between Jackson, Adams and Crawford. Friends of democracy maintained that, as Jackson had received the largest vote, Congress was under moral obligation to select him. But, if such a doctrine were admitted, the transference of the election to Congress would be clearly turned into no more than a formal farce. If it was improper that Congress should have this power of selection whenever the electoral college failed to give any candidate a clear majority, then the Constitution should be amended and the power taken from it. But, as long as it was allowed to have the power, it clearly did right to exercise it. It therefore selected Adams, preferring him to the uncouth and irascible Jackson.

Yet there was reason for some suspicion concerning the impeccable propriety of the arrangement. For Henry Clay, of Kentucky, transferred the votes of his supporters to Adams, and owing to that transfer Adams was selected. When Adams, in his turn, appointed Clay as Secretary of State, the eyebrows even of the least cynical could hardly refrain from rising.

The quarrel between Jackson and Adams threw Calhoun into a great difficulty. The supporters of both had united in order to make him Vice-President. Which of the two should he now desert?

He had never had great reverence for what Benton, with Attic felicity, called "the demos krateo principle." His keen logic must have been well aware of the constitutional propriety of Congress' action. Nevertheless he threw his influence upon the side of Jackson. His motive is not clear. It is the custom to ascribe his conduct to vast and grasping Presidential ambitions. That he still had such ambitions is certainly true. But it is difficult to see what he stood to gain or lose by the advancement of one or other of his successful rivals. He may have thought that in the Vice-Presidency he could establish a claim to the succession to the leadership of the Jackson party. But within that party were dangerous rivals. Would not his chances of establishing such a claim in the Adams party have been as good, if only he had seen fit to join it?

The only reason, easy to discover, why he preferred Jackson was that, having sat with Adams in a Cabinet, he knew him the better of the two. In a few years, when he was to come to know Jackson, he was to prefer Adams. For the moment he presided in the Senate and allowed to its members, and especially to the alcoholic John Randolph, who had established by years of prescription and intoxication a certain not dishonorable license of abuse, a freedom of language concerning the Chief Magistrate which brought large question of his impartiality. A newspaper controversy arose, in which, in a manner reminiscent of the days of Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, President and Vice-President attacked one another under the pseudonyms of Onslow and Patrick Henry.

V

During the last years, protection, to which Calhoun had in his youth been favorable, had been becoming more and more clearly the first political issue of the day, and the protection demanded was that of the Northern manufacturer at the expense of the Southern exported cotton. As soon as he had grasped this, Calhoun had changed entirely his opinion upon the tariff and, re-examining the Constitution to see whether it justified these Northern attacks, as he thought them, upon Southern life, had come to the conclusion that they were utterly unconstitutional.

In 1824 a new Tariff Bill was passed. Earlier tariffs, even that of 1816, had been, professedly at least, for revenue. This for the first time was admittedly for protection. The elections of that year returned a small protectionist majority and the policy was therefore continued. But while the United States were placing a tariff upon manufactured woollen goods, Great Britain was reducing her duty upon imported wool from a shilling to a penny on the pound. As a result, the British manufacturer, even in spite of the tariff, was able to flood the American market with his cheaper wares. And, by the year, 1826, American woollen factories, which were chiefly in Massachusetts, were almost at a standstill. A demand came therefore from Boston for a new Tariff Act and a still higher tariff. And in January, 1827, such an Act was introduced into Congress. Van Buren, of New York, already foreseeing himself as Calhoun's rival for the succession to Jackson so maneuvered the voting in the Senate upon this Bill as to make the Ayes and the Noes equal. Calhoun, as Chairman, was thus forced to give a casting vote and to commit himself.

This was highly inconvenient, as his strongest support came from protectionist Pennsylvania, but he had by now been convinced of the determination of Northern industry to live at the subsidy of the South and therefore voted against the Bill.

Under the leadership of Senator Hayne, of South Carolina, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce prepared a remonstrance, denouncing the Bill as unjust and unconstitutional. From Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama similar remonstrances poured in, from Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and New Jersey demands for revision. The whole country was divided clearly into its two sections.

In January, 1828, a new Tariff Bill was introduced into and passed through both houses. It received the Presidential assent. Until now the line between Protectionists and Free Traders had not been absolutely geographical, since there were in the South manufacturers of sugar and indigo who stood to gain from the protective system. But the Tariff of Abominations, as the tariff of 1828 was called, seems to have persuaded all Southerners that the North was determined on their ruin for her own benefit and that to this general menace a general opposition must be shown.

Eight years before, at the time of the Missouri Compromise, Adams had written in his Diary for 24th February, 1820: "I had some conversation with Calhoun on the slave question pending in Congress. He said he did not think it would produce a dissolution of the Union, but, if it should, the South would be from necessity compelled to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Great Britain," which led poor Adams "into a most momentous train of reflection." Loyal to the Union, its friend, Calhoun had from his earliest youth never looked upon it as more than an alliance of the sovereign State of South Carolina with other sovereign states and been willing to contemplate the possibility that circumstances might arise which would make it necessary to dissolve that alliance and to form others elsewhere.

The right to secession was, at this date, taken everywhere for granted. Judge Rawle, of Pennsylvania, in his *Commentaries on the Constitution,* written in 1825, demands no more than that an act of secession should be a clear expression of the will of the people of the state, before the other states be required to accept it. "In such case the previous ligament with the Union would be legitimately and fairly destroyed." At the time of the making of the Constitution, he says, "It was also known, though it was not avowed, that a State might withdraw itself," while in three of the states—Virginia, Rhode Island, and New York—the ratification of the Constitution was only agreed to upon this express condition.

The rights of South Carolina were then, to Calhoun's mind, not at all doubtful. The only question was, what was the most expedient policy with which to meet the Northern menace. To him, as her leading statesman, South Carolina looked for guidance. And, in answer to her demand, Calhoun, in 1828, issued his first great political manifesto, *The South Carolina Exposition.* The argument of the *Exposition* is that there is a permanent economic conflict between the North, ambitious to become industrialized, and the South, agricultural and determined to remain so. For the South needed Free Trade and a large export market in which her cotton could be exchanged against the imported British manufactures. The North needed the exclusion of those manufactures by a high tariff, in order that, freed from their competition, she might be able to build up her own.

Since the North had made up her mind to use a superior voting power in order to force upon the South an economic policy to Northern advantage and Southern disadvantage, it was necessary for the South, before she resorted to the ultimate remedy of secession, to ask what loopholes of self-defense the Constitution left to her. His answer to that inquiry was the doctrine of nullification. He appealed back to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, in order to prove that the state had the right "to interpose" when the Federal Government attempted to exercise over her citizens any power which the Constitution had not delegated to it. In other words, he advised

the people of South Carolina simply to ignore the new Tariff Law.

The first comment which every critic is inclined to make upon such a doctrine is that it is an invitation to disruptive anarchy. If every state is to take upon herself the interpretation of the concessions which she has made to the Federal Government, it is more than likely that one state will be found rejecting, and her neighbor enforcing, a law and there will appear the ridiculous picture of a Federal law, which is law in one part of the Federation and not law in another. To such an argument Calhoun answered that nullification did not mean, as is often popularly supposed, that a state was to obey or disobey each Federal law at her own pleasure. He was too practical and too logical a man to imagine it tolerable that a state should remain a member of the Union, at the same time disregarding the Union's laws. Nullification was, he said, a method of appeal. If one state thus challenged a Federal law, it would give an opportunity to the other states to consider whether it was or was not desired to confer this power upon the Federal Government. If it was desired, an amendment conferring it might be added to the Constitution by the consent of three-fourths of the states.

To this answer there is an obvious objection. In theory, it is true, a state might nullify a law which she considered unconstitutional—not one which she considered unjust or unwise. But in the heat of party feeling the consciences of politicians might not be strong enough to preserve this distinction. If a fraction of a quarter of the states were to nullify a law, even though it were clearly constitutional, saving their faces perhaps by some lawyers' sophistry, the other three-quarters would be impotent. For they would be unable to reconfer the power upon the Federal Government by a new constitutional amendment. The doctrine of nullification thus made it possible for a quarter of the states in effect to nullify the whole Constitution, provided only that they were unscrupulous enough to do so.

On the other hand, if the states were not the judges, who was to be the judge of the legality of the actions of the Federal Government? Calhoun rejected the popular answer of the Supreme Court, because the Supreme Court was, he said, but the creature of the Federal Government. It was therefore unfit to judge between the state and the Federal Government. Yet the time was to come when the South was to look to the Supreme Court as the most certain defender of her threatened liberties. The obvious temptation, from which the member of a nullifying convention would suffer, would be that of confusing expediency and legal interpretation. It may be said that the Supreme Court would be under the same temptation. All human tribunals are, it is true, fallible and may interpret wrongly. Yet at least the Judges of the Supreme Court would be arbitrators, independent to the extent that, though appointed by the Federal Government, they could not be removed by it, and not, as a nullifying state, one of the parties to the dispute. Judges, too, are trained interpreters of law, answerable for nothing but their interpretation of law, whereas politicians, with whom presumably such a convention would be filled, are on the one hand not trained interpreters, on the other dependent for the achievement of their ambitions upon the favor of a constituency, which, in a moment of passion, could hardly be trusted to keep clear the distinction between their representatives' interpretation of what the law is, and their policy concerning what the law ought to be.

Whether Calhoun was a statesman or a maddening pedant, ready to disrupt a continent in order that he might have the luxury of an exercise of logic-chopping, depends upon whether we grant or not the original premise, which, in his opinion, made such an exact inquiry into the nature of State Rights necessary—the premise that the North was now determined to use her powers to destroy the economic life of the South—a premise of which the Tariff of Abominations was the proof. Similarly, whether Webster was more than merely a bad historian, inebriated, on the rare occasions when he was reduced to such an unalcoholic *pis-aller,* by the exuberance of his own verbosity, depends upon whether he was right in his conviction that "the plan of a Southern Confederacy had been received with favor by many of the political men of the South."

The fears of either of the two can be easily made to appear ridiculous if they are described too much in the language of conspiracy. Neither in the North nor in the South did a secret band of men meet together and swear an oath that they would not rest until they had accomplished a dastardly purpose. Yet it is true that there had been growing for some years subconsciously in the minds both of the men of the South and of the North feelings which, at about this time, began to be consciously acknowledged and allowed to shape policy. The psychological conflict was very similar to that which divided England, a few years later, over the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The North, the Cobdenites, had soaked themselves in the modern utilitarian philosophy, had come to believe that to prefer industry to agriculture was to be "progressive," that those who clung obstinately to agriculture were unprogressive and that the spirit of the

times demanded that they should go to the wall. The South, on the other hand, had only accepted the bargain of the Union on the assumption that the power of government would remain in the hands of the landed classes, who alone have that understanding of tradition without which no society can be healthy, and, finding that power was passing into the hands not only of the North but of the industrial North, she became more and more doubtful of the advantages of the bargain. Webster, himself, was no especial advocate of Protection. Indeed his greatest speech was a masterly vindication of Free Trade. Nevertheless the spirit of Protection had captured the North. It was a spirit which the South could not afford to tolerate. And it was that spirit, and neither the virtues nor the wickedness of slavery, which at this date was the cause of conflict.

Calhoun, as he admitted, was "giving publicity to doctrines which a large portion of the community will probably consider new and dangerous." It was characteristic of him fearlessly to make clear the logical extremity, to which, in his opinion, the state had the right to go. But he by no means advised her as yet to go to that extremity, even though there may have been some force in Webster's gibe that his conduct was "as if one were to take the plunge of Niagara and cry out that he would stop half-way down." In 1828 Jackson had been elected President and Calhoun, for the second time, Vice-President, receiving one hundred and seventy-one of the votes of the electoral college—eleven less than he had received four years previously. At first all was cordiality. And although, in spite of Calhoun's opposition, Van Buren, of New York, was appointed Secretary of State, yet three out of Jackson's Cabinet of six were generally considered friends of the Vice-President. Calhoun's counsel to South Carolina was then to wait for the accession of Jackson to the Presidency and see whether he would find a remedy for their grievances. Yet he was under no illusions. Jackson's electoral attitude towards the tariff had been a straddle. He had received the votes of the South as a Free Trader, and of New York, Pennsylvania, and the West as a Protectionist. In him it was possible to have hope but not confidence.

VI

Jackson's first annual message was as noncommittal as his electoral promises. And soon Calhoun made up his mind that little was to be hoped for from the new government. Though outwardly the relations between President and Vice-President were still friendly and Calhoun was frequently spoken of as Jackson's likely successor, in truth the two soon began to drift apart.

Of the character of Andrew Jackson many opinions are held. Some see the great hero of democracy who broke the power of the moneyed interest; others speak of him as little better than a savage, who, like a savage, hated all those old things which he had not the culture to understand. Both views, it is probable, are partly right. In his manners, as in his mind, he was rough and uncouth. And he hated alike the city and the stink of cosmopolitan finance, and also the strong local patriotism of the South-Eastern states, based upon a perception of differences whose subtlety barbarism was unable to grasp. These two hatreds dominated his politics.

The quarrel between him and Calhoun began as a personal quarrel. Eaton, Jackson's Secretary of War, used at one time to live with his lodging-housekeeper, whom he afterwards married. Jackson himself had married a divorcee and his temperament was such as very fiercely to resent any unjust persecution of a public man for the supposed irregularity of his private life, but Calhoun, who had through all his life extremely strict opinions upon sex, refused to receive Mrs. Eaton in his house. It might be thought that, whatever the former sin, since they had rectified it by marriage, it was no longer the business of others to judge. But such, rightly or wrongly, was not the opinion of Calhoun. He thus greatly offended Jackson, who took the refusal as a personal insult. Van Buren, a widower and "living," as von Holst says with quaint astonishment, "as a bachelor," seized the opportunity to supplant his rival in the President's favor by ostentatious civility to Mrs. Eaton.

Politics carried a step further what personality had begun. In February of 1830, on a motion brought forward by Foote, of Mississippi, concerning the sale of public lands, the doctrine of nullification was for the first time stated in the Senate by Hayne, of South Carolina. Webster replied to him. Hayne, it was generally agreed, proved himself the better historian. But Webster, with a purple appeal to the great destiny of united America, gave to the Northern cause that comfort of rhetoric which, to an English-speaking statesman, is often more valuable than accurate history.

It was not at first certain upon which side Jackson stood. The Nullifiers had hopes of committing him to theirs, and for this purpose, two months later—in April—invited him to a banquet to celebrate Jefferson's birthday. He saw the trap and was not to be caught. A series of toasts had been arranged, the object of which was to commit those who drank them

to nullification. Jackson attended the dinner. Throughout the toasts he sat stern and impassive. Then, when the volunteer toasts were called for, he rose and gave "Our Federal Union. It must and shall be preserved." Calhoun, Vice-President of the United States, could hardly refuse to drink such a toast. He rose with the rest, though "his glass trembled in his hand and a little of the amber fluid trickled down the side." And later in the evening, when he gave to a now uninterested audience his toast of "The Union, next to our Liberty, the most dear," men felt that, though the Vice-President was perhaps the abler philosopher, the President was certainly the better strategist.

The utter discrediting of Calhoun in Jackson's eyes came eventually from a trick for which Calhoun always put the responsibility on Van Buren while John Quincy Adams put it on Crawford, Calhoun's old Cabinet colleague and Presidential rival, but which was probably really perpetrated in collusion between the two. In 1818, while Calhoun was Secretary of War, Jackson had been employed as a General in operations against the Seminole Indians, in the course of which he had, without orders, crossed the Spanish frontier into Florida and captured the forts of St. Mark's and Pensacola. During the election campaign of 1824, in which, as has been said, Jackson was defeated, this irregularity had been brought up against him by his opponents and it had been asserted that the Cabinet had considered the propriety of his arrest. Forseeing that similar attacks would be made in 1828, Jackson, before the campaign commenced, had caused Calhoun to be asked for the true story. Calhoun had answered that Jackson's arrest had not been considered. Calhoun's conduct at this interview was certainly not entirely upright, for he made it his business to leave Jackson with the impression that he had been his defender in the Cabinet's debates. The truth was that, though there had not actually been any question of Jackson's arrest, there had been a question of reprimanding him and Calhoun, quite properly, had been in favor of a reprimand. Crawford, a bitter and disappointed man, now a semi-paralytic, who lived in retirement in Georgia, always imagined that he owed his defeat in the Presidential election of 1824 to some articles, called the "A. B. Papers," which appeared in Calhoun's journals and which were written by a certain Illinois Congressman, Ninian Edwards, a friend of Calhoun. These letters, of which Crawford always believed Calhoun to have been the instigator, accused Crawford of peculation while Secretary of the Treasury. They were afterwards found to be a pack of malicious lies. Hearing of the interview which had taken place with Calhoun before the election, Crawford saw an opportunity to ruin the man who had, as he thought, ruined him. He played his cards with a not very honorable skill. James A. Hamilton, the son of the great Alexander, the Washington agent of Van Buren before the latter became Secretary of State, was the manager of the intrigue from Van Buren's side. Crawford wrote a letter in which he asserted that Calhoun had demanded that Jackson be arrested. This letter was given to Hamilton, and by him to Major Lewis, Jackson's confidential adviser, the master of what was called the President's Kitchen Cabinet. Lewis informed Jackson.

Jackson was naturally furious. Calhoun, as it seemed to him, had used deliberate falsehood to obtain the succession and, as was to have been foreseen by one who knew the President's character, Jackson in his fury so lost all sense of reason as hardly to notice the amendment which Crawford then introduced into his charge—an amendment which altered falsehood to truth and which admitted that Calhoun had demanded not "arrest" but "a reprimand of some sort."

In spite of Mr. Bowers' able defense it is impossible not to feel that Crawford's conduct was monstrous. In the first place, no man of honor would have revealed a Cabinet secret; and, in the second, Crawford had himself been far more vigorous in hostility to Jackson than had Calhoun, whose behavior had been, as he wrote with dignity, "an affair of mere official duty, involving no question of private enmity or friendship." Yet Jackson, who judged men's characters by their support of or opposition to the seething projects which happend to be whirling through his tempestuous brain, was quite incapable of understanding such an objective view of obligation. Calhoun's chances of receiving Jackson's support in the achievement of his ambitions were entirely destroyed.

If the world owes any gratitude to Calhoun for his leadership and organization of the Southern cause, his quarrel with Jackson was perhaps providential. He was an ambitious man, and, as long as the achievement of ambition remained possible, he would always have been under the temptation to compromise wih his principles in order to help its achievement. Intrigue and competitiveness had up to now played as large a part in his life and dominated his mind as much as those of any of his rivals. But he was also a man too clear-sighted to dupe himself with hopes and expectations which were impossible of fulfillment. After the quarrel with Jackson he knew, even if in brief moments he forgot it, that he could never be President of the United States, and was content for the rest of his life to be the first citizen of

South Carolina, giving to her his undivided service.

On 26th July, 1831, he issued his *Address to the People of South Carolina*. Previously he had been content to appeal to history to show that the states were in fact sovereign. In the *Address* he argued from the dissimilarity of life, interests, climate, problems, and population between state and state, that state sovereignty was the only tolerable political system for the United States. And on 28th August, 1832, in an open letter to Governor Hamilton of South Carolina, he rejected the Government's offered compromise of a reduced tariff. To accept would be, he said, to abandon their position. For the action of the Government, far from being a concession, showed protection to be "the settled policy of the country." He went on to restate his theory of state sovereignty and to argue that, if the appeal of nullification should fail and three-quarters of the states should decide against the nullifying state, there would be "present a case where secession would apply."

The Senate and President having ranged themselves in clear opposition, the statesmen of South Carolina made up their minds that their only hope lay in their own constituents. To them was submitted the question whether the moment for the appeal of nullification had now arrived, and the state was divided into the "States Rights and Free Trade" party, or nullifiers, and the "States Rights and Union" party, who maintained the right to secession but denounced nullification as a ridiculous compromise, lacking at once the dignity of secession and the benefits of Union.

Nullification failed to secure a two-thirds majority from the electorate of South Carolina. Yet Congress, frightened at its strength, repealed the Tariff of Abominations and offered South Carolina the compromise of a reduced tariff. The state rejected it as a bribe and, at fresh elections held in the autumn of 1832, nullification triumphantly carried the day. The Convention of the State met in November and solemnly declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 null and void, fixing 1st February, 1833, as the date after which they should no longer be "binding on the State, its officers or citizens."

Senator Hayne had just been elected Governor of South Carolina. Calhoun therefore at once resigned the Vice-Presidency and instead entered the Senate as Hayne's successor. The air was full of rumors of the fate with which he was to meet at the hands of Jackson. And, as he journeyed up from Charleston to Washington, crowds all along the route turned out to see him. The erudite compared his journey to that of Luther to the Diet of Worms, the less lettered to that of a cow to the slaughter-house. In the Senate he had hardly a supporter, as he and Webster argued it out in a debate of giants. But old, alcoholic John Randolph, of Roanoke, almost ready for the grave, armed with five swear-words and the knowledge that he was the friend of freedom, made them bring him down to the House and, finding his view blocked by an offending hat, bade them "Take away that hat. I want to see Webster die muscle by muscle."

There is a popular tale, which admirers of Andrew Jackson have allowed themselves to believe, that Jackson, in a fine bravado of military bluster, threatened to hang Calhoun "as high as Haman"; that, partly owing to Calhoun's fear for his own skin, partly owing to Jackson's unflinching strength and readiness to use force to subdue rebellion, the movement completely collapsed and victory rested entirely with the Federal Government. Victory did rest with the Federal Government, but not as completely as Jackson pretended. It appeared otherwise only because Jackson, a master of bluster, had the talent, like most strong, silent men, of covering up his deficiencies beneath an avalanche of words, while Calhoun, unable to dupe himself and unwilling to dupe others with the hollow appearances of victory which satisfy most politicians for the absence of its reality, with an unflinching realism pointed out far more clearly than did his opponents the defeat which he had been forced to suffer.

Jackson, it is true, did answer South Carolina's challenge by asking Congress for the passage of the Revenue Collection Bill, which gave him the right to collect the revenue by force. This Bill was denounced in the South as the Bloody Bill and Jackson as the "driveling old dotard." Yet the bill was eventually passed, Tyler, of Virginia, the future President, alone opposing it. But it was not passed until Clay had first introduced another Bill to reduce the tariff. And, if to postpone Civil War be to save the state, then it is clear that the state owed its salvation at this time neither to Jackson nor to Calhoun but to Henry Clay, who in November, 1832, had returned to the Senate.

If, as Disraeli said, "Sir Robert Peel was Britain's greatest Member of Parliament," then Clay was surely America's greatest Senator. His was an extraordinary character. He was Tadpole and Taper and Rupert of Hentzau rolled into one. In private life a dueller who did not hesitate to kill his man, an enormous gambler, a heavy drinker in an age of heavy drinking, in public life an opportunist, an unscrupulous intriguer, he yet won the love of more men and women than any statesman of his time and on his deathbed could make the boast, which many nobler

people might justly envy, that three times—in 1820, in 1832, and in 1850—he saved his country from Civil War. John Quincy Adams, who owed to him the Presidency, found him only "half-educated"—a judgment true, if not very important. More generous is the petulance of Mr. Calhoun, "I don't like Clay. He is a bad man, an impostor, a creature of wicked schemes. I won't speak to him, but, by God, I love him."

Clay arrived in the Senate and insisted that both sides accept a compromise, which he would introduce. Jackson was angry. Like the lady in the *Man of Destiny,* Clay had spoiled Napoleon's attitude. But the President did not feel strong enough to refuse. Whether Clay's reduced tariff was one for revenue or protection, he seems himself to have been uncertain. His language varied with the audience which he was addressing. And both sides, anxious to escape from a difficulty, were content that the word "protection" should not be too exactly defined. Because of this Bill a mass-meeting of nullifiers, held at Charleston, suspended their ordinance a little time before it was due to come into force. Yet the tariff remained, to be thirty years later one of the larger causes of the War. Nor, of course, could Clay's Bill bind future Congresses, who soon gaily forgot it and returned to a policy of naked protection.

Before the Revenue Collection Bill became law the cause for nullification was removed. The Bill was therefore no more than an abstract assertion of a right and, as it only conferred this special power upon the President for one term of office, was most unlikely ever to become more. Many people in South Carolina, content with what seemed to be a great practical victory, were for leaving the Government this child's game of claiming empty and impracticable rights. It was the argument of those who do not see beyond the evil of the single day and Calhoun was not of them. One of the bases of his political philosophy had been, as he had written in his letter to Governor Hamilton, that "Not a provision can be found in the Constitution authorizing the general government to exercise any control whatever over a State by force, by veto, by judicial process or in any other form—a most important omission, designed and not accidental." Once let this right of coercion be conceded to the Federal Government whatever its limitations and however exceptional the circumstances, and, as Calhoun saw, the days of state sovereignty were numbered. For "the precedent, unless the act be expunged from the Statute book, will live forever, ready on any pretext of future danger to be quoted as an authority to confer on the chief magistrate, or even more dangerous powers, if more dangerous can be devised." It was, therefore essential that the act be repealed before it expired. And when he failed to secure its repeal he was under no illusions. "The struggle," he wrote, "so far from being over is not more than fairly commenced." He was clear-sighted and brave enough not to conceal from himself that there was very little doubt how it would end.

To protect his chest he took to wearing "under his clothing a large sheet of paper."

VII

One of the results of the contest for the Presidency in 1824 between Adams and Jackson had been the resurrection of party politics. Jackson had annexed the old Democratic party; Adams in secession created a new party—the Whig. By his quarrels, first with Adams and afterwards with Jackson, by his very clear and distinct policy, Calhoun had cut himself off from both of these. No longer ambitious, he was very well content that it should be so. Though fundamentally he differed from the Whigs even more than from the Democrats, his hatred of Jackson forced him usually to vote with the former in the divisions of the Senate.

Yet during these years there was growing up in New England a movement which was to be more important in the life of Calhoun than any of the questions upon which he himself was voting in the Senate. Up to this time the quarrel between North and South, it is important to notice, had had little to do with slavery. In his *South Carolina Exposition* Calhoun had mentioned "our peculiar labor" as one in a list of those things which made the civilization of the South different from that of the North and the preservation of state sovereignty essential. But he merely recorded its existence, giving it neither praise nor blame. Most writers, it is true, have maintained that slavery, though unmentioned, was the real cause of the cleavage between North and South. They have yet to prove their case. The tariff was an oppression to the South before the issue of slavery arose and it has remained an oppression long after slavery has been abolished.

In January, 1831, William Lloyd Garrison, of Boston, founded a paper, called *The Liberator,* to demand "immediate and unconditional emancipation" of all slaves. In 1833 was formed the American Anti-Slavery Society. Broad-minded slave-owners throughout the South had always been ready to recognize the theoretical evil of slavery and to admit the obligation to try to work out some solution of the difficult negro problem if they were left free to do so. Slave-owners, for instance, had been prominent

supporters of the scheme for repatriating negroes in Africa. As late as 1830 a Congress of Anti-Slavery Societies, to which came delegates from every Southern state, had met at Baltimore.

There may have been a certain half-justice in Garrison's gibe that the slave-owning abolitionist was willing "to assign the guilt of slavery to a past generation and the duty of emancipation to a future." Yet it is clear that his demand for "immediate" abolition—which meant, as he explained, abolition to be brought about as soon as possible and by all possible means—forced such people, whether they wished it or not, to abandon their philanthropic schemes. If slavery was to be abolished without fatal destruction of the prestige of the white race and consequently of all Southern civilization it is clear that it would have to be abolished by the slave-owners, voluntarily and without external coercion. In 1822 there had been a negro insurrection in South Carolina under a certain Vesey. As lately as 1830 there had been another in Virginia, under one Nat Turner, which was accompanied with horrible barbarities. Such, on the principles of Garrison, were the methods, thought the South, by which "immediate abolition" was to be brought about. The abolitionists therefore, accomplishing nothing else, at once drove abolition out of practical politics.

Nor is it right to think of Garrison and his supporters as a band of mild and amiable Quakers, like Benjamin Lundy who had toured the South in 1815 in order to ask slave-owners to set free their slaves and whose tour had met, if with very little success, at least with very little hostility. They opposed slavery through love not of equality but of anarchy. It was but one part of a general program, of which the other planks were teetotalism, communism, and extreme feminism. It was a challenge to all ordered society—not least to the Union, which it denounced as "a league with death and a covenant with hell."

At first the North was as alive to the dangers of this brainless and subversive movement as was the South. Towards it she felt the hatred which reason should always feel for unreason. But she hated it also because the manufacturing classes saw, as the only possible result of its strength, the disruption of the Union, the economic unit within which they could sell their protected goods. The idea that the Union would be preserved, and abolition imposed, by force of arms, had at this date hardly occurred to any one. Most of the statesmen of the South were satisfied that the North treated the abolitionist movement with ridicule. Calhoun, almost alone, saw in it a challenge. Himself, he formed his opinions upon reason and cared less than nothing whether he was for or against the spirit of the age—that dignified phrase in which those capable only of parrot-like repetitions are wont to cloak their deficiencies. But he was wise enough to know that the electorate contained few like him. The American, he knew, was by nature repetitive and the philosophy of progress, which was dribbling over into the country from England, consecrated this custom with repetition.

The present abolitionist movement, run by lunatics and in league with anarchy, would fail. But abolition—abolition of other people's slaves—abolition without these handicaps—was a movement exactly "in accord with the spirit of the age." The idea, once suggested, was sure to grow. The New England conscience, easily forgetting that the slaves were brought to the South in Boston's ships and amply paid for, would soon be reveling in the luxuries of moral superiority. While others then were laughing at the abolitionist cranks, Calhoun, with a prescience grown by now almost uncanny, was bidding the South look to her defenses.

He did, it is true, see nothing morally wrong in slavery. Yet not through any love of slavery did he now throw himself passionately into this—his greatest—fight. What he objected to, was not the abolition of slavery, but abolition, brought about in such a way, imposed by the North upon the South. Such an abolition, he saw, must mean the ruin of white prestige and consequently of all Southern life. Nor did he throw himself into the defense of slavery because it was the easiest to defend of the Southern institutions, but, like a good strategist, because it was the hardest. The South, he had now come to see, was faced with a hostile population, unable to understand the virtue of her civilization. She could therefore only hope to preserve her civilization by preserving complete autonomy. Once she allowed any institution to be subverted by external pressure, all her institutions were doomed.

In January, 1836, two petitions were presented for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. There was no question that, if received, they would be overwhelmingly defeated. Yet Calhoun passionately demanded that they be not even received. Senators from the North assured him that there was no intention of touching the institution of slavery. Senators from the South assured him that, if ever slavery were touched, they would rally to his side in its defense. Neither the one class nor the other could see that there was here any justification for the refusal to receive a citizen's petition, a refusal the legality of which was very doubtful. How much better, they argued, that the petition be received and overwhelmingly defeated in order to teach abo-

litionists not thus foolishly to waste their time.

Calhoun would not admit such reasoning. He rounded on his Southern colleagues, who had said that "whenever the attempt shall be made to abolish slavery they will join with me to repel it. . . . The attempt is now being made," he cried. The petition called the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia "a national disgrace and a national sin." If it was a national disgrace and a national sin in Washington, why was it not also such throughout all the Southern states? "The most unquestionable right," he said, at another time, "may be rendered doubtful, if once it be admitted to be a subject of controversy."

If we admit his purpose, Calhoun was right to go out and meet every attack upon slavery. To allow it to be spoken of as a thing only to be tolerated was the first step to its being spoken of as a thing not to be tolerated. Yet here he probably blundered. The only hope for the preservation of slavery and of Southern life lay in a rigid adherence to every letter of the Constitution. Calhoun could only expect this strictest interpretation when it suited him, if he also gave the same strictest interpretation when it did not suit him. He was from the opening of this battle under very little doubt concerning its end. Wealth and the spirit of the age, going, as they usually do go, hand in hand, may be despised but they cannot be resisted. Yet he saw that slavery would stand no chance if the moral case against it was allowed to go by default and the South to appear as a land of heartless ogres, taking advantage of legal quibbles in order to stand upon intolerable rights. The constitutional guarantees of slavery could only be maintained if a case for it was shown to exist apart from constitutional guarantees.

Calhoun was willing to undertake such a task. Slavery even "in the abstract," he said, was not an evil. It was "a good—a positive good." "Many in the South," he was afterwards to admit, used to think slavery "a moral and political evil," but "that folly and delusion are gone." He based his defense of it upon two principles—one historical, one biological. On the one hand "the relation which now exists between the two races in the slave-holding states has existed for two centuries. It has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. It has entered into and modified all our institutions, civil and political. None other can be substituted." On the other hand, "to destroy the existing relations would be to destroy this prosperity [of the Southern states] and to place the two races in a state of conflict, which must end in the expulsion or extirpation of one or the other. No other can be substituted compatible with their peace and security. The difficulty is in the diversity of the races. So strongly drawn is the line between the two in consequence and so strengthened by the force of habit and education, that it is impossible for them to exist in the community, where their numbers are so nearly equal as in the slave-holding states, under any other relation than that which now exists. Social and political equality between them is impossible. No power on earth can overcome the difficulty. The causes lie too deep in the principles of our nature to be surmounted. But, without such equality, to alter the present condition of the African race, were it possible, would be but to change the form of slavery."

Only prejudice can deny that there is much force in both these arguments. It is an easy and terrible thing to destroy a society. And therefore there is always much to be said for the maintenance of any institution which happens to exist, even though it be not theoretically the best. If it must be changed, it must be changed carefully. Conservatism is never ridiculous, even if Conservatives frequently are. On the other hand, real as is the equality of man, yet when a country is inhabited by two races, approximately equal in numbers and so different as to make intermarriage between them repugnant, the society must either live in chaos or the one race must be the ruler of the other. And it is very arguable that, the more definite the arrangement of superiority and inferiority, the happier the condition of both races. Slavery is the most definite of all such arrangements.

There is very little reason to think that the negro race has at all benefited by the abolition of slavery. The negroes, in the time of slavery, used, it is true, to look forward to a great day of freedom from captivity and found their main spiritual comfort in the Book of Exodus. It was much as the schoolboy vaguely looks forward to a fine, free life, which awaits him as soon as he is rid of the tyranny of school-rules and able to push out into the world. The reality has been found to have probably about as much, and as little, of the dream in the former case as in the latter.

I have heard negroes spontaneously appealing back to "seventy years ago"—the end of the slavery-time—as to one "when de niggers all was good," and contrasting it with the evil present "when de devil, he go up and down in Montgomery County." There is probably about as much truth in this as in the reverse picture. Certainly there were cruel slave-owners—in the West, mostly, on the Mississippi, in the country brought newly under slavery—though a witness as little favorable to the South as Mrs. Beecher Stowe admits that the worst slave-owners

were often Northerners and Lowell's grotesque, "Birdo-freedum Sawin," was, for what he was worth, of New England origin. But in the old slave states of the East, where the slave-owners were a special class, trained up to their responsibility, the descendants of five generations of slave-owners, where "slavery has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength," there was too high a sense of honor among owners for much cruelty to be tolerated. As a lady once said to Calhoun, "Your plantation is a more eloquent argument for slavery than all your orations." At law the slave had no rights, but public opinion made the master not only master but also protector of his slave. To change the legal, without changing the psychological, relation between the two races would be, as Calhoun said with penetrating truth, but to "change the form of slavery." You have not today abolished slavery in the United States. You have merely abolished slave-owners. You have robbed the negro of his protector. Booker Washington, himself, spoke of "the immense amount of help rendered the negro during the period he was a slave." While it would be unfair to pretend that no such help is rendered to him today, yet it is doubtful if he receives as much from the modern philanthropist as he did from the old slave-owner.

When Calhoun said that slavery was "the most solid foundation of liberty," he did not speak merely in the tedious and sophistical paradox of rhetoric. The negro, unable to recognize the equality of man or to think in terms other than those of master or of servant, is, if free, a menace to the general liberty and equality of society. As Lowell said, with large truth:—

> Libbaty's a kind o' thing
> Thet don't agree with niggers.

The laws, if they must cater for the negro as a free man, must be choked up with a catalogue of interferences, which would be quite unnecessary if they had only to deal with white men and the white men in their turn had personal responsibility for the black. The question was not whether one race should be free or two, but whether one race should be free or neither. One result of emancipation has been the destruction of the old freedom of intercourse of the two races. No longer, as of old, may white and black babies play freely together.

Calhoun, it must be remembered, defended not the slave-trade but slavery. In one passage, it is true, he does speak of the benefit to the African in being thus transported from his own country to the civilization of America. Yet this argument clearly defeats itself by proving too much. For it justifies not only the slave-trade but all modern philanthropic schemes for educating and improving the native or developing his country. Finer and more logical was his earlier condemnation of "this odious traffic." In general he held no brief for the slave-trade, for which the first responsibility lay not with the South but with England and the North. His concern was with the problem of the mixed populations which, from whatever cause, were found living side by side—a problem for which a solution had to be found. One is apt perhaps to sympathize too much with him because of the cowardly futility of the answers that were given to his arguments in his day by such men as Lowell and are still given by many of those who write about him. He was told that he was opposing Progress—by which was meant industrial development. In the *Biglow Papers,* Lowell wrote of him: "Mr. Calhoun has somehow acquired the name of a great statesman and, if it be great statesmanship to put lance in rest and run a tilt at the Spirit of the Age, with the certainty of being next moment hurled neck and heels into the dust amid universal laughter, he deserves the title." As if he did not know that he was running "a tilt at the Spirit of the Age!" As if he was an opportunist party politician, anxious only to find a cry which would bring him back to office, or a publicist avid to discover what public opinion was and to repeat it in a loud voice! Not until Lincoln was there to be found one who would answer from first principles an argument from first principles. It was the only answer to which Calhoun would have listened.

Yet, at the end of all, one cannot but feel that Calhoun's arguments prove everything but what they profess to prove. They show admirably that Southern civilization would be ruined if abolition were forced on the South at Northern bidding; that, therefore, if Southern civilization were to be preserved, it was essential that for the moment negro slavery be preserved; that Southern civilization must be preserved in order that America should be saved from the industrial slavery which Northern capitalism would in time impose upon it; that, whenever it came to be abolished, slavery, that ancient institution, would have to be abolished slowly and without panic; but they do not show that slavery is good "in the abstract." That it cannot be. It was right to tolerate slavery then as it is right to tolerate capitalism today, but it was not right to praise it. No institution can "in the abstract" be good which is contrary to reality. Slavery is contrary to reality, because it sets up a social relationship of inequality contrary to the religious relationship of equality and because, denying to the slave-class the possibility of property, it bars it

from the full responsibility of marriage. It was an unnatural relationship, depriving the slave of his natural right to property and the master of his natural obligation to work.

Calhoun said—and, if one reflects on the condition of industrial England at that date, one must admit that it may well be true—that no manual laborer in the world received as large a return for his work as did the American slave in food and clothing. But, when the great Nullifier thought that that was a justification of slavery, he showed himself no more intelligent than a twentieth-century Socialist, who with exactly such a bait would by his schemes of compulsory insurance tempt the working man back into slavery. If one reads Calhoun's arguments concerning the benefits of slavery to the negro, one cannot but be struck by their amazing similarity to those of the Labor Party concerning the benefits of slavery to the working man. Of both the fallacy is the same—that of putting all their eggs into one basket. The Socialist would trust everything to the benevolence of the state—that is, of the politician. Calhoun trusted everything to the benevolence of the slave-owner. Now it is not logically impossible to own a slave and yet remember the equality of man. Yet very few souls are strong enough to do it. And the slave-owner, forgetting that equality, becomes wrong in his theology and by consequence wrong in everything else—his economics, his politics, his dietetics—since these are all only branches of theology.

One of the methods which the abolitionists chose for bringing about "immediate" abolition was that of distributing propaganda through the mails to the slaves themselves. It is doubtful whether it would not have been wiser to ignore the propaganda, but, rightly or wrongly, a cry arose throughout the South that this was intolerable. And Jackson, willing to pander to this cry, invited Congress to bring in a bill, making illegal "the circulation of incendiary publications intended to instigate slaves to insurrection." Calhoun would not have the concession. He warned the South not to be deceived. Congress, in this instance, might be deciding in her favor. But it was an intolerable arrogation that Congress should take upon itself to decide at all what publications should pass through the mails of the Southern states. Instead, he demanded that the Federal postmasters employed within a State be not allowed to circulate publications "forbidden by the laws of the said State." Thus would the purpose be attained and at the same time the right of the state safeguarded. Von Holst professes to find Calhoun's proposal ridiculous, because by it a postmaster in South Carolina might not do things which a postmaster in Connecticut might do. It is hard to see what is ridiculous in that. It is not legal to sell a Bible in the streets of Khartoum. Is that a reason why it should be made illegal to sell one in the streets of Boston? What may be printed or sold, clearly depends upon the social circumstances of a community. Where the circumstances differ, the regulations differ.

Calhoun next threw himself into the project for giving to the South an adequate service of railways. The enemy of compromise was here forced into compromise. The civilization of the South was, to his mind, worth preserving only because it was stable, static, agricultural, and based upon the judgments of tradition. An expanding civilization, he thought, not thus based upon tradition, certainly perished. Yet his objection to industrialism was a hard and statistical devotion to freedom, not a romantic worship of imaginary "good old times." Machinery was good so long as men could use it, only bad when it began to use men. The Southern civilization, he saw must preserve itself, because it is not industrial. At the same time it could only preserve itself by becoming industrial. It must, to some extent, adopt mechanical improvements in order to protect itself against the menace of a mechanical civilization. Calhoun saw the necessity for such a compromise and eagerly pressed forward his scheme for improvement of Southern railways.

VIII

In 1837 Jackson retired from the White House to enjoy the leisure of The Hermitage, Nashville. On laying down power he expressed but two regrets—that he had not had the chance "either to hang Calhoun or to shoot Clay."

That succession, for which Calhoun had at one time hoped, fell instead to Van Buren. Calhoun preferred Van Buren to his predecessor, shamefully though Van Buren had treated him in the Seminole affair and little though he approved of the principle, almost a principle of adoptive monarchy, which had enabled Jackson practically to nominate his successor. He usually voted in the Senate with the President's party rather than with the Whigs. Yet he was careful to keep himself as independent of the one as he had been of the other. During this session his main achievement was the introduction into the Senate of six remarkable resolutions. By these his plan was to secure official approval of the Southern interpretation of the Constitution and to establish a precedent to which the South might ever afterwards appeal back. The first resolution declared that every state "entered into the Union by its own voluntary act." The second denied that the "intermeddling" of citizens of one

state with the affairs of another "under any pretext whatever, political, moral or religious," was "warranted by the Constitution." The third, [illegible] a step further, demanded that the Federal Government should "give increased stability and security to the domestic institutions of the States that compose the Union." The fourth especially mentioned attacks on slavery as "a manifest breach of faith and a violation of the most solemn obligations, moral and religious." The fifth declared that an attack on slavery anywhere was an attack on slavery everywhere. The sixth denounced as contrary to the Constitution any discrimination against Southern and Western states in the future because of their countenance of slavery.

These resolutions were all easily passed by the votes of Northern Senators, anxious only for peace and fearful of offending the slave power. But their very strength is the measure of their desperation. Calhoun argued that so strongly was the opinion of the age setting against slavery that only by such means could it be preserved. The retort to such an argument was obvious, and it came from many Northerners who had no desire to interfere with the institutions of the South. "If slavery can only be preserved by such means, if you can only mind your own business by interfering in ours, then it is an intolerable institution."

What did "intermeddling" mean? Most Northerners were willing to agree that, if any of their citizens behaved as John Brown was afterwards to behave and went into the South to raise a negro insurrection, it would be just that the law should punish him. Many even would agree that the sending of abolitionist propaganda to slaves should be prevented or that an adequate Fugitive Slave Law should be passed and enforced, for it was "so nominated in the bond." Further than that they would not go. Did Calhoun demand that they go further? Were the citizens of Massachusetts or New York, free to write or speak in criticism of their own laws, not to be free to write or speak in criticism of those of South Carolina? Again, what did he mean by the third resolution? What by the fifth? In what way shall the Federal Government "give increased stability and security to the domestic institutions of the State"? How shall they at the same time give increased stability to South Carolina's institution of slavery and to Rhode Island's institution of freedom? Where is the great logician who saw at once the danger in Jackson's proposal not to allow the mails of the United States to be used for propaganda against slavery, arguing that, if the Federal Government were allowed to take sides for slavery today, it might take sides against it tomorrow?

Calhoun, as his wiser critics saw, was approaching perilously near to a contradiction of his own theory of state sovereignty. No doubt it was, in a sense, true that an attack on slavery anywhere was an attack everywhere. Political frontiers are not wholly the frontiers of ideas. People are always influenced by what their neighbors are doing. An attack on Conservativism anywhere is, no doubt, an attack on Conservativism everywhere. The defeat of Mr. Baldwin's Government in England in the election of 1924 greatly weakened M. Poincaré's Government in France. But what would Englishmen have thought of M. Poincaré if he had demanded of England for that reason that she did not dismiss her Conservative Government? Yet it was Calhoun's own argument that South Carolina was as different from Pennsylvania as was England from France. A Federalist might have denied the analogy; a Nullifier could hardly do so.

In a certain sense it is no doubt true that everything is everybody's business. A certain bloodless logical case could be made out, from that truth, for the desirability of a World State in which no eccentricity of conduct and no freedom of opinion would be permitted. But it is a case which we should expect from a Fabian Socialist rather than from Calhoun. The whole admirable argument for the division of the world into these water-tight compartments, called states, is that the application of such logic would be in practice intolerable. It is therefore necessary to hit upon some rough and ready arrangement of what is my business and what is yours and for each of us, as long as it is possible, to mind only our own. State sovereignty is only compatible with a wide tolerance for the opinions that are expressed and the things that are done in other states.

Nor was he content for long with merely committing the whole of the United States to the support of slavery. In 1835 the brig *Enterprise,* bearing on board some slaves, was forced by weather to put into Port Hamilton, in Bermuda. The British authorities claimed that the slaves became free men the moment that they touched British soil. On two similar occasions the British Government had previously yielded before American protest. This was the first of such incidents since the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, and because of that abolition they now refused to yield. Calhoun introduced a set of resolutions into the Senate, declaring that slavery was recognized by the law of nations and the British action consequently indefensible. These resolutions the Senate passed unanimously, although there were nineteen abstentions. His doctrine was adopted by American politicians of every party and,

when in 1841 the authorities of Nassau repeated the offense of those of Port Hamilton under very aggravating circumstances, declaring free a shipload of slaves who had revolted against and murdered their masters on the high seas and then sailed their ship to British territory, Webster, who happened to be Secretary of State, made a protest to Great Britain based entirely on Calhoun's resolutions.

Yet what did Calhoun mean by declaring slavery to be according to the law of nations? What was this law? When was it passed? By whom? Or is the phrase not legal but theological? Is it one of the commandments of God that slavery should be supported, or at least tolerated? If this is what he meant, it was a foolish appeal for a man to make whose first purpose was the practical one of saving slavery. The decrees of the Almighty are doubtless immutable. Unfortunately the interpretations of them, given by Early Victorian cabinet ministers, were by no means so. And, bad theologian as it may have been, the Early Victorian world was more and more coming to the conclusion that in that sense slavery was not in accordance with the law of nations. On the one hand the only hope of saving slavery lay in a rigid adherence to the letter of the law. For to the unwritten law, the appeal in such a cause would in the nineteenth century be necessarily in vain. Yet, on the other hand, Calhoun was wise enough to see that a scrap of paper, unbacked by moral sentiment, could not avert a revolution. It was the dilemma from which he well knew there was no escape. He is called doctrinaire. If he had been merely doctrinaire he would never have seen the dilemma.

Feeling, it seems, that it was necessary to pander a little to the spirit of the age, he, in 1842, supported the Treaty of Washington between Great Britain and the United States for the suppression of the slave-trade on the African coast. To do so was wise, for it was not essential to his case to support the slave-trade. The only argument for slavery to which the nineteenth century would listen was the argument that it was the best solution of an existing situation. The less he took responsibilty for that situation the better was his chance of a hearing.

IX

In the election of 1840 Van Buren and the Democrats were defeated by Harrison, a Whig, famous for his victory of Tippecanoe over the Indians, the log-cabin candidate, whose chief claim to political wisdom was, if one may judge from his supporters' electoral arguments, that he possessed no table manners. Only a month after his inauguration, before this claim could be properly tested upon the linen and crockery of the White House, Harrison died and was succeeded by Tyler, the Vice-President. His qualification for the post was a somewhat mythical descent from Wat Tyler. Wat Tyler, whatever he was, was not a Whig. And not many months had passed before his descendant had been drummed out of the Whig party because of his refusal to charter a bank, and for the rest of his term of office his Cabinet was composed of Democrats.

The chaos of party politics can therefore be easily seen. And it was thought that out of that chaos almost anybody might emerge as the Presidential candidate for 1844. The old days of nullification were now so far passed, Calhoun's predominance in the Senate so generally admitted, that the people of South Carolina began even to mention his name, and he so far forgot his dignity as to issue, under the name of another, a "puff" biography of himself. The ambition was impossible, for he had not even the support of the South. His only two assets were the loyalty of his own state and that of the Irish throughout the Union. In 1842 he had resigned his seat in the Senate in order, as was said, to become a Presidential candidate, but, eight months before the election, on 20th January, 1844, learning wisdom, he publicly withdrew his name and in March accepted instead from Tyler the Secretaryship of State. The previous Secretary, Upshur, had been killed by the explosion of a cannon on board the *U. S. S. Princeton;* and by an intrigue, of which a certain Henry A. Wise of Virginia was the leader, Calhoun was forced upon Tyler as Upshur's successor.

The first problem of that time was that of the relations of the United States to the newly independent Republic of Texas. Wise, ambitious "of planting the Lone Star of the Texan banner on the Mexican capitol," and—a distressingly up-to-date politician—of robbing the Mexican Church, invited himself to breakfast with Tyler and forced Calhoun upon the weak President as the most uncompromising and able of annexationists. Tyler capitulated in a flood of tears. Thus did Calhoun become identified with an episode in some ways the most notable of his career.

Texas had been a part of the old Spanish Empire, and had become, by consequence, when that Empire fell, a part of the new Mexican State. Yet neither Spain nor Mexico had possessed the men to settle it and its European population consisted only of a handful of priests and soldiers living chiefly in the town of San Antonio. The Mexican Government had therefore allowed American citizens, nominally of the Catholic religion, to settle in the country. These Americans had, as might have been foreseen, but little sympathy with the Mexican Government

under which they found themselves. They claimed that the promise of independent statehood, which they had been given, was violated. And, appealing to arms, by the battle of San Jacinto in 1836 gained their independence, which was recognized in the next year by France, Great Britain, Belgium, and the United States. Texas, though its area was that of France, had a European population of only a few thousands, almost all of American origin. It was natural then that these Americans, free at last from Mexico, should wish for inclusion in their old motherland. In August, 1837, they made their first demand for annexation, but Van Buren would not hear of it—and so for the moment the matter dropped.

Calhoun saw the demand of Texas as an opportunity to be jumped at. He was convinced that the guarantees of the Constitution were not strong enough to allow the South to rest careless. Soon the increase in population would cause the North clearly to preponderate over her in Congress, the increase of states cause her to do so in the Senate. Her institutions would then be in danger. Yet how was this danger to be avoided? Either the South must herself expand and thus keep pace with the North, or she must secede.

Calhoun is sometimes accused of having grown, in his blind love of South Carolina, quite indifferent to the Union. The accusation is foolish. Had he been indifferent to the Union he would now have advised secession—for he had no manner of doubt of the state's right to secede. He did not advise it merely because he loved the Union and was determined not to leave it until every possibility of the other solution had been exhausted. For that reason he saw in Texas the salvation of the Union. For if only Texas could be added to the United States, a Southern and slave state, the South, he thought, would be able to hold her own against the North and would not need to resort to the remedy of secession. He was to go by tortuous ways in order to secure the annexation of Texas. But no man judges fairly his character if he cannot see that he chose those ways not because he hated the Union but because he loved it.

Calhoun's opinion, that by the annexation alone could the Union be saved, was known to his friends. It was not at first publicly declared, because it was, he thought, necessary for the success of his scheme to secure the still enormous influence of Jackson upon his side. And Jackson's influence would not be on Calhoun's side, such was his rancor, if he ever suspected that the side was Calhoun's. In 1843 Calhoun had caused to be sent to Jackson a letter out of a Baltimore paper, which, making no mention of slavery or the Southern interests, demanded the annexation of Texas for two reasons—that it would strengthen the Union and that it was necessary for American security, because, if the United States did not take it, Great Britain very soon would. The call of Imperialism aroused the old blusterer of the Abominations, the menace of Great Britain the hero of New Orleans. Jackson was drawn and wrote an answer to the letter, as was desired. This letter was duly handed on to Calhoun.

The special purpose of this maneuver was to destroy Van Buren's chances of becoming Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1844. Van Buren, the creature of Jackson, had refused Texan annexation in 1837. He had no influence save that which he got from Jackson's support. And Calhoun confidently calculated that at the publication of this letter, he would either have ignominiously to recant or to defy his master. Either would ruin him politically.

Upshur, Calhoun's predecessor, had been a vigorous annexationist but had found that the Texans, rebuffed in 1837, had used their six years of independence to grow wise in the ways of the world and were inclined now to play off Great Britain, France, and the United States against one another, in order to see which of the three would give the best terms. They pointed out to the American Government that Mexico had never recognized their independence. It was more than likely that Mexico would consider their annexation as a hostile act. Were the United States willing to take the consequences of this and to defend Texas against hostile attack? Annexation without such a guarantee they would not accept. Upshur was unwilling to say either "Yes" or "No," and was only relieved from his embarrassment by that timely explosion of a cannon, referred to above. Such was the situation into responsibility for which Calhoun entered in March, 1844. Its difficulty was that the President, or his Secretary of State, had no right thus to commit the United States to war. To other men this difficulty might seem pedantic but to Calhoun it was clearly essential, if one remembers the ultimate purpose of his whole policy, that, if it could possibly be avoided, he set no precedent for an executive officer of the Federal Government acting beyond his powers. He tried therefore at first to soothe the Texan delegates with pleasant phrases. They were not to be thus deceived. They would not accept annexation until he promised that a squadron actually would be in the Gulf of Mexico and troops concentrated on the southwest frontier. The President, he had to declare, "would deem it his duty to use all the means placed in his power by the Constitution to protect Texas from all foreign invasion." There was a saving phrase to the last, for, unless Congress sup-

ported him, the Constitution placed no powers in the President's hands.

On this promise Texas signed a Treaty of Annexation. This treaty, ten days later, was laid before the Senate, together with a correspondence between Calhoun and Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Pakenham, the British Minister, which professed to justify it. The gist of Lord Aberdeen's letter was that the British Government would be glad to see the abolition of slavery in Texas made the condition of the recognition of that country's independence by Mexico but that it would use no "improper" means to bring that recognition about. Calhoun's reply was that this statement of British policy and her announced intention to exert influence, even if only indirectly, upon the politics of Texas, forced the United States "in self-defence" to annex Texas.

Von Holst is severe in his judgment upon the morality of this reply. He argues that it is untrue to pretend that British policy forced the hands of the United States, because, as far back as 1837, Calhoun had favored annexation and because Upshur had been in negotiation for it before Lord Aberdeen's letter was written. The first argument is unworthy of so eminent a historian. Calhoun did not say, "I was convinced by Lord Aberdeen's letter that Texas ought to be annexed." He had, it is true, been in favor of that annexation for a long time and for other reasons. But the American Government had not been in favor of it. Van Buren had refused it. And Calhoun, as Secretary of State, was not giving an exposition of his own political opinions but a history of the reasons, whether good or bad, which had led the American Government to adopt its present policy.

The second argument has slightly more weight. It is true that the American Government was certainly negotiating for Texan annexation before Lord Aberdeen's letter was written, and that therefore, when Calhoun said that "they remained passive so long as the policy on the part of Great Britain . . . had no immediate bearing on their peace and safety" and that this policy was "for the first time" avowed in Lord Aberdeen's letter, his statements were not strictly true. Yet it is true that the motive which led Upshur to open negotiations with the Texans was just such a fear of Great Britain—the information that Texan abolitionists had invited Great Britain to buy up Texan slaves and free them, promising in return cessions of Texan land, and that the proposal had been favorably entertained. This news had reached the Government unofficially from Ashbel Smith, Texan Minister in London. There was no reasonable doubt of its accuracy and it clearly made prompt action necessary if the Monroe Doctrine was to be saved. Yet diplomatic courtesy, not allowing it to be quoted in a official document, demanded that Calhoun, hitherto guileless and unsuspecting, "for the first time" received information of the policy which Lord Aberdeen had for some years been pursuing, when Lord Aberdeen publicly confessed to it.

That the British Government disliked slavery, was, as von Holst says, notorious. That it would interfere in order to abolish it, was not notorious. Lord Aberdeen, it is true, said in his letter "we shall not interfere unduly, or with an improper assumption of authority with either party, in order to assure the adoption of such a course." But this letter was, it must be remembered, the letter of a schoolboy who half-suspected that the master had seen him out of bounds and was trying desperately to excuse himself. What was "due" and "undue" interference? Was the acceptance of Texan land, or the granting to her of a loan, in return for abolition of her slavery, a due interference?

What then is the substance of this accusation of monstrous wickedness against Calhoun? The interference of Great Britain in Texan affairs did lead the United States to interfere there too. That Calhoun would have favored such interference anyway, is perfectly true. But it is likely that, but for fear of Great Britain, the Government would never have been able to adopt Calhoun's policy. And there is surely no large immorality in stating—more especially when it happened to be true—that the Government acted from the more popular rather than the less popular motive.

His other sin—that of pretending that Lord Aberdeen's letter "for the first time" informed him of his policy—must be laid to the account of general diplomatic custom rather than that of Calhoun's soul. Perhaps it is a great wickedness that statesmen are required to tell such lies. But it is by no means certain that the cause of the world's peace would be greatly served if, instead, they were expected to add as a postscript to their despatches, "It is true that the first occasion on which you found it convenient publicly to state that you would stab me in the back, if ever you got half a chance, was on 26th December, 1843, but, owing to the fact that I pay a man to report your private conversation, I was aware that that was your intention as early as the previous October." Important as is respect for the moral law, life is, one cannot but feel, too short to linger long over so very drab and uninteresting a peccadillo.

Fear of Great Britain was certainly one motive which caused Calhoun to hurry. Another was that, apart from any pressure that Lord Aberdeen might bring to bear, it was probable that before long the

anti-slavery party would get the upper hand in Texas and abolish slavery there. All authorities seem agreed upon this. Calhoun himself admitted it and admitted that it was a reason why Texas must be included in the Union without delay. If he honestly believed that slavery was "a positive good," there is, I suppose, nothing very shocking in this. For those unable to go to that length with him, the only defense is that the South could not expand into Texas unless the Southerner could take his slave with him, and that therefore without slavery the whole purpose of the annexation would be defeated. Instead of righting the preponderance against the South, it would increase it.

Yet if the purpose of the annexation was to preserve slavery in the South, by what argument could a citizen of any of the free states be induced to indulge in a war or the risk of one for such a purpose? Such a man, a model of constitutional propriety, might agree that it was entirely the business of each state to decide for herself whether she should be slave or free. Yet it was unreasonable to expect that he should have a bias in favor of slavery. Indeed, on the principles of Calhoun, it was almost an impertinence, an "intermeddling," if he had any opinion at all on its merits outside his own state. Why then should he be eager to see accomplished an annexation which, he was told, brooked no delay, because, if it was not accomplished quickly, the citizens of an independent state would abolish their own slavery? Even Southern Democrats saw the unreason of such a demand. Calhoun delayed submission of the treaty until after the Baltimore Democratic Convention had met and, rejecting Van Buren, had chosen as their candidate Polk, of Tennessee, upon the platform of "the reannexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period"—reannexation, because of a somewhat flimsy legalism that Texas had been included in the Louisiana Purchase. Even with such an advertisement of popular feeling, the Senate unceremoniously rejected the Treaty by thirty-five votes to sixteen.

The strict constitutionalist had here a curious pair of strings to his bow. It was the business of the Senate to ratify all treaties. On the other hand it was the business of Congress to admit new states to the Union. To which House then should the present arrangement be properly submitted? The answer should be, I suppose, "Both." The Senate should first have ratified the Treaty with Texas and Congress afterwards admitted her as a state. But Calhoun and Tyler chose to argue—the position is difficult to defend—that the support of either one House or the other was all that was required. On the second day after the rejection of the Treaty, Tyler sent a message to Congress in which he stated that that House was "fully competent, in some other form of proceeding, to accomplish everything which a formal ratification of the Treaty could have accomplished." "The great question," said Tyler gaily, "is not as to the manner in which it shall be done, but whether it shall be accomplished or not." Congress did nothing, leaving the issue to be settled by the people in November.

The rejection of the Treaty had created a new problem. Calhoun had given to Texas a conditional promise of support against Mexican invasion "during the pendency of the Treaty." The Treaty, rejected, was no longer pendent and Calhoun was therefore freed from his promise. Many in Mexico, well aware that annexation would soon come up again, thought this an opportunity—and perhaps the last—to invade and reconquer a Texas for the moment without an ally. The Texan Secretary of State inquired of Calhoun what would be his policy if such an invasion were to take place. Calhoun was in a difficulty. If he said that he could not support Texas, she would turn, as she openly threatened, to Great Britain. If he said that he would support her, the Democratic Party would probably lose the November election, on success in which he utterly depended for the accomplishment of his policy. After six months of prevarication in September he took advantage of some tales of Mexican tampering with the frontier Indians, perhaps conveniently invented for the occasion, and authorized the troops of the United States to enter Texas whenever Texas requested them to do so. Texas was thus saved from flying into the arms of Great Britain. But many prophesied that Calhoun had only saved her at the expense of the Democratic Party's success in the election. Such prophecies he confounded by a bold and very original move. He told the truth.

He told—or, rather, since his position would not allow him to take an active part in the campaign, caused his supporters to tell—the North that the South demanded Texas, because without it she could not feel secure within the Union; that if she could not have Texas she could not allow herself to be still further weakened by paying the tariff of 1842; that if she could have neither Texas nor the removal of the tariff she must find refuge in secession. Before this threat Northern voters, afraid of the risks of Civil War or secession, came obediently to heel. The Liberty Party, the party of the Abolitionists, ran a candidate of their own, who, splitting the vote, caused the Whigs to lose New York and Michigan, which they would otherwise have carried. The Democratic Party's demand for a frontier along the line

54° 40′ won some Northern support. As a result fifteen states went Democratic and eleven Whig, and Polk was elected.

Tyler accepted the election as a mandate. "A controlling majority of the people," he wrote, "and a large majority of the States, in terms the most emphatic," have demanded annexation. He determined to proceed by joint resolution of the two Houses, Congress passing a resolution in favor of annexation, the Senate one which should give the President the option of either submitting the resolution to Texas or of drawing up a new treaty. Calhoun's advice was "to act without delay." The Cabinet was at once called together and a despatch sent off "late in the evening of March 3," inviting Texas to accept the terms of the resolution. On March 4 Tyler's term of office expired.

It is not possible wholly to defend Calhoun's conduct in this. Whatever might be the doubts about the correct constitutional procedure, it is certain that that of joint resolution was unconstitutional. He preferred it to that of a ratified treaty because the resolution required only a majority, a treaty a two-thirds majority in the Senate. Such a majority he was afraid that he would not be able to secure. Yet to explain thus is not to excuse but to condemn. It is beyond denial that he used a high-handed method to evade a constitutional safeguard, because it happened to be inconvenient. The straightforward course would have been to use to the Senate the language which five months before he had used to the electorate, saying to them, "Gentlemen, we consider the annexation of Texas essential to our safety. Either then you must ratify this treaty for us or else we must use our right of secession."

Calhoun's hurry came from the certainty that Polk would not reappoint him as Secretary of State. Himself, he trusted Polk more than did many of his supporters. In order to secure the votes of Pennsylvania, Polk had straddled during the election, concerning the tariff. Throughout the South he was therefore denounced as a Protectionist and there was talk of a second essay of nullification. Calhoun, the grim and wise strategist, was quick to prevent such wasting of ammunition in repelling phantom attacks of nonexistent enemies. He had something better to fight against than election promises. Because of them it would be madness to throw away their great victory. The new Government was too far committed by the old to draw back from the annexation of Texas, even had it wished to do so. And, Texas added, Calhoun calculated that the balance between North and South in the Senate and Congress would be restored. The South could then abolish the tariff and remove her other grievances at leisure. And, as it happened, the tariff of 1846 proved to be far more favorable to the South than any of the previous twenty years. It was not the hour to talk about nullification.

Calhoun, seeing his opportunity, refused the Embassy at St. James', which Polk offered to him, and returned to his place in the Senate.

X

During Calhoun's Secretaryship another territorial problem besides that of Texas had been before the country—the problem of Oregon. The territory then known as Oregon, out of which have been formed the modern states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington and the Canadian province of British Columbia, was claimed by both Great Britain and the United States, and had, as a compromise, been held by those powers in joint dominion. Ambitious Imperialists were anxious that it be brought under unaccompanied American rule and pressure was put upon Calhoun to repudiate the agreement with the British Government and advance the American claim to the whole territory. But Calhoun saw that, if an appeal were now made to arms, the United States would certainly be defeated and therefore lose the whole territory, while, if the present compromise were continued for a little longer, their expansion westward would every year strengthen the American position, until eventually the British would in all probability cede their entire claims. His policy was therefore one of "wise and masterly inactivity." But Polk in his inaugural address threw over Calhoun's caution, declaring the right of the United States to be "clear and unquestionable"—which it certainly was not. And, after an insincere attempt at agreement, he announced in his Message to Congress "that no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected." General Cass, of Michigan, an Imperialistic Northern Democrat, angrily asserted that "war is almost upon us." The jingo press and people caught up the catch-phrase of "Fifty-four-forty or fight." Calhoun was aghast at such blundering. Yet, honest though he was in his hatred of war and his contempt of a statesman who committed his country to a war in which she must certainly be unsuccessful, Calhoun was suspect in his criticism. The Western Democrats accused him of "Punic faith" in having accepted their support in the fight for Texas and refused to give support to them in return in their fight for Oregon. Imperialists jeered that he would have been willing enough for war and annexation, had Oregon been another Texas and lain to the south of the Mason-Dixon line. The jeer was natural and partly just.

Yet the parallel between Cass' conduct over Oregon and Calhoun's over Texas was only partial. Neither was the desire of the one nor of the other to see the territory included in the United States immoral. The population of Texas was mainly American and the American claim to Oregon perhaps slightly better than the British. Cass' folly was in thinking Oregon worth a war to the United States—more particularly a war which would be very unlikely to bring them the territory. Had Calhoun been guilty of the same folly concerning Texas? It is true that he had given to Texas a promise of defense against Mexican aggression. But, in the first place, such aggression, if it took place, would be unjust aggression, for, though the Mexicans obstinately refused to give recognition to plain facts, Texas was an independent state and it was no longer the business of Mexico what arrangement she might make. In the second, to challenge Mexico and to challenge Great Britain were two very different things.

It must be admitted that Calhoun had once said that the annexation of Texas should be carried through without delay, even at the cost of a war in which Great Britain was on Mexico's side. For this his rhetorical exuberance was to blame. But, in serious judgment, every one knew that Great Britain would not fight about Texas, whereas she very well might fight about Oregon. It would too be at least geographically possible for the United States to fight a war in Texas; a war in Oregon, with no road across the continent, with the United States fleet—such as it was—all in the Atlantic, would be for them quite impossible. At the same time Calhoun recognized that Polk had destroyed that goodwill without which the continuance of joint occupation could only lead to friction. Settlement by compromise was therefore necessary. So, in answer to the bellicose resolutions, he introduced into the Senate a counter-resolution, that an agreement which put the frontier at the forty-ninth degree would not "abandon the honor, the character, or the best interests of the American people." Polk, grateful to Calhoun for saving him from his embarrassment, signed in June, 1846, a treaty with Great Britain upon the terms suggested.

That his motive in opposing war was not merely one of anxiety to prevent a growth in Northern strength, that he was not reckless in his demands for extension of territory even south of the Mason-Dixon line, Calhoun was soon to have an opportunity of proving. The boundary between Texas and Mexico had never been agreed upon, but Calhoun, when still Secretary of State, had written to the Mexican Government "that it is his [the President's] desire to settle all questions between the two Governments . . . on the most liberal and satisfactory terms, including that of boundary." Willing to guarantee Texas against Mexican aggression, he had yet no wish for war if it could possibly be avoided.

Polk, while paying verbal homage to Calhoun's policy, soon made it clear that Mexico would be forced to accept the Rio Grande frontier, which Texas claimed but which Calhoun had never intended to demand, and, in order to avoid any future frontier disputes, to sell to the United States California and New Mexico as well. He sent orders to General Taylor to take possession of the disputed strip of territory between the River Nueces and the Rio Grande. Calhoun was anxious to prevent war and urged that a resolution of restraint upon the President be moved in the Senate. Yet he would not move it himself because he was afraid that if he appeared in opposition to the Presidential policy his influence in favor of a peaceful settlement of the Oregon question would be destroyed. The opportunity was therefore lost.

General Taylor advanced to Fort Brown—now Brownsville—on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande. General Ampudia, the Mexican General, lay opposite at Matamoras. Taylor sent to Ampudia a message that if he crossed the river it would be considered an act of war. As the title of Texas to the territory was disputed and quite uncertain, this message was monstrously provocative. On 23rd April a reconnoitering squadron of American troops was captured by the Mexicans. Polk, in delight, declared that "war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself." And on the excuse of a dispute about a scrubby strip of dust and cactus men from Yucatan to Maine marched off to kill.

Calhoun declared with vehement earnestness that he would sooner stab himself to the heart than vote for that lying clause. He "flung the back of his skeleton-like hand upon the desk before him with such energy that men looked from all parts of the hall as if to see whether it had not been shattered to atoms by the blow." The more shallow-minded of Southern politicians hailed the war with joy, thinking that it would bring an increase of Southern strength. Calhoun was too wise for such easy confidence. Texas had established an equality between South and North under which the Southerner could again feel confidence in the Federal Government. For a desperate moment Calhoun had hoped that by the happy accident of its annexation the Union might be saved. But he knew well that a war with Mexico could but result in further vast accession of territory to the

United States, that the North would never abandon that territory to slavery nor the South to freedom, that there would be inevitable and bitter conflict for it between the two sections the end of which no man could foretell. The war, he said, "has dropped a curtain between the present and the future, which is to me impenetrable; and for the first time since I have been in public life I am unable to see the future."

How just were his fears, how foolish the confidence of the other Southern politicians, was early shown, when in August of 1846 Congress, on the motion of Wilmot, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, resolved the "slavery and involuntary servitude should be forever prohibited in any territory" which might be acquired from Mexico, having previously rejected by sixty-nine votes to fifty-four a motion to divide the new territory by continuing the line of the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific.

The proviso was defeated in the Senate, but only by Southern votes. All knew that it was the end of the truce—that gentlemen's agreement of the Compromise, to which twenty-six years before the young Calhoun, a member of Monroe's Cabinet, had agreed and which he had since honorably kept. He had loathed the war; he had condemned the reckless and foolish challenge which the politicians of the South had thrown down. But, when the North answered that challenge by the avowal of determination to destroy the balance of the Constitution upon which Southern freedom depended, Calhoun took his place among his own people. Men, filled indeed with a certain crude moral enthusiasm but with no understanding of the motives of human conduct deep enough to enable them to rebuild where they would destroy, were coming out to kill a lovely thing He who had not asked for the combat, which had been caused by Northern aggression and hastened by Southern arrogance, determined to make one last stand against these forces, knowing well what would be the end of it all and very glad that he was an old and broken man. A Senator accused him of acting from personal ambition. At one time the charge might have been true but now it was too false even to make him angry. "The Presidency," he said quietly—one wonders if Polk was told of it—"is nothing." He went, like a bridegroom whose wife lies dying upstairs. "The day that the balance between the two sections is destroyed," he said, "is a day that will not be far removed from political revolution, anarchy, civil war and widespread disaster." That day, he could see only too well, had come.

It was necessary for Calhoun to make quite clear what was, in his opinion, the nature of the Missouri Compromise. By the Missouri Compromise Congress had agreed that slavery should not exist north of the parallel 36° 30′. Calhoun claimed that this compromise was not a law, since the Constitution gave Congress no power to exclude slavery from a territory in which it guaranteed equal rights to the citizens of all states, but a treaty. The Southerner, still having the constitutional right to take his slave into any territory of the United States, had agreed for the sake of peace not to exercise that right in certain territories. He had not forfeited that right. And now that by the Wilmot Proviso the North had shown its desire to break the spirit of the treaty, the South too was free from obligation. Desperately attacked, she must desperately defend herself by claiming her every right. When the proper time came the Supreme Court should be invited to judge whether her interpretation of the Constitution was correct. If other methods failed, she would force recognition by closing her ports to all Northern ships.

When therefore, in 1848, a bill for the organization of Oregon Territory came before the Senate Committee, Calhoun demanded that the clause prohibiting slavery be struck out. Oregon was, of course, far north of the Mason-Dixon line, and it was freely admitted that slavery would never get a footing there. Yet Calhoun was determined, in answer to the Wilmot Proviso, to force the admission that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in a territory.

The Democratic Party had split into two groups—Northern and Southern—but upon this question of slavery in the territories they reunited upon the catchword of "non-interference." By non-interference the two wings meant two quite different things. The reunion was only nominal. The Southerner meant that he had the right to take his slave into any territory of the United States and the Federal Government no right to stop him; the Northerner meant by it only his new doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," invention of Cass and Dickinson, by which the people of a territory themselves should decide whether their territory were to be slave or free—a thing which, upon Southern interpretation, they had no right at all to do.

The result of Calhoun's objection was that the Territory of Oregon remained for the moment unorganized. This was clearly intolerable and, to remedy it, on 18th July, 1848, Clayton, with Calhoun's consent, introduced a bill by which the provisional laws of Oregon should be recognized "till the Territorial Legislature could enact some law on the subject of slavery." At the same time New Mexico and California should be organized as territories and the question of their slavery placed outside the power of their Legislature and rested "on the Constitution, as the

same should be expounded by the judges, with a right of appeal to the Supreme Court." Confident that the Southern interpretation was correct, Calhoun was anxious to obtain a ruling which would put those who advocated the exclusion of slavery from the territory into the clear position of aggressors. His were the tactics which were afterwards to force from Chief Justice Taney the Dred Scott decision.

Yet it soon became evident that, constitutional right or no constitutional right, the people both of New Mexico and California had made up their minds that their countries should not be used as the battle-grounds for the contentions of North-Eastern and South-Eastern politicians. By the catch-phrase of "No niggers, slave or free," they asserted their determination to keep clear of the whole problem.

Calhoun thought it necessary to give to the North a demonstration of Southern solidarity. For no concession would ever be made to a South which was believed to be divided. He therefore summoned sixty-nine Southern Senators and Representatives to meet in the Senate Chamber on 23rd December, 1848, and submitted to them a draft of *An Address of the Southern Delegates in Congress to their Constituents.* It is perhaps the clearest statement that was ever penned of that cause for which the South was afterwards to fight—and the truest. It is not necessary to repeat in detail the reasons why, if slavery was to be preserved, the South must act as she was acting. Today, Northern statesman, he argued, might sincerely repudiate any desire to interfere with Southern institutions. Yet, as he well knew, the spirit of abolition was soon to conquer the North. In victory it would be irresistible. And then, if she had the predominant position to enable her to do so, the North "would emancipate our slaves under color of an amendment of the Constitution." This emancipation would not establish a relation of equality between the two races where there had previously been one of slavery. Between white and black equality was impossible. All that was possible was that the two races should "change conditions."

To most Southerners his fears still seemed exaggerated. He failed to win that unanimous support which might just possibly have caused the North to hesitate and thus have prevented war. Only two Whigs would sign the *Address,* and several Democrats also refused. In sixteen years' time those who laughed at his fears were to see the negroes parading the streets of Charleston and singing:

De bottom rail's on top now,
And we're going to keep it dar.

"Many of the most intelligent men," wrote Horace Mann, "are convinced that Mr. Calhoun is resolved on a dissolution of the Union." How unintelligent of those most intelligent men not to see that through love of the Union he had tried every expedient, possible or impossible, rather than advise the South to resort to the plain remedy of secession! Yet it is true that he, who had made it a life's task to save "slavery and the Union," by now saw clearly that the two could not both be saved and that beside slavery the Union was "as nothing." If only he could have got unanimous Southern support he would now probably have advised secession. To advise a divided South to secede would be foolish.

Disappointed of unanimous support from the Washington politicians, he thought that the only hope now lay in the summoning of a Southern Convention. "In my opinion," he wrote, "there is but one thing that holds out the promise of saving both ourselves and the Union, and that is a Southern Convention." Unwilling that South Carolina should again assume the lead, he tried to induce Mississippi to issue invitations to the other states to such a convention. Meanwhile, until Southern opinion was formed, little could be done. He seems to have occupied the next months mainly in the composition of his two posthumously published works—his *Disquisition of Government* and *Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States.* Both are masterly examples of lucid précis writing. They are chiefly interesting today for the strange suggestion that the Constitution of the United States should be modeled upon that of Rome, that there should be two Presidents, one from the North, the other from the South, each with a veto upon all legislation. It is a plan, unworkably complicated, seeming to possess all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of disunion, nor can he have ever imagined that there would be the smallest chance that it would be tried. He left it among his papers, one suspects, so that even from his grave he might refute the libel of those who said that he did not love the Union, and might prove that even in the last hour of despair his quick brain was busy exploring every chance for its preservation.

XI

In 1849 Polk had been succeeded in the White House by Zachary Taylor. At the end of that year the Legislature of California demanded admission to the Union without slavery. The population, which had grown rapidly owing to the gold-rush, was sufficient for statehood and it was clearly impossible to force upon them a slavery which they would *not*

have. By this demand Calhoun and the South saw the balance of power definitely and finally upset. And, though it was impossible to refuse it, they were determined that it should not be granted until the North had made satisfactory concessions upon all other points. At last, now that it was too late, the South listened to the warnings of Calhoun. Now for the first time she was united.

Calhoun was suffering from an acute pulmonary affection, aggravated by heart-disease. He was not himself able to make that last protest against the murder of the South which he was to leave to the world as a memory. He could only be led, stumbling, into the Senate Chamber and helped into his seat. The shadow of death was, as all knew, on his face, as he, with his hollow and haggard eyes—"a ghost with burning eyes," a child had once called him—glanced proudly round upon that assembly where, as a master, he had now ruled, off and on, for a quarter of a century, and none could be sure that the shadow of death was not also on the face of the Senate and of the whole country.

A little wind perhaps blew in from a window. Amid an utter silence Mason of Virginia rose, a manuscript in hand, to read out this last warning of the great prophet. The scene was almost unreal. It had about it something of the appearance of a funeral, but of one more terrible than any funeral of life. For the corpse himself sat there, silently watching his own interment, and as he watched a clear and measured and mathematical voice read out his death-sentence upon his mourners.

In his moments of high passion Calhoun did not use that spread-eagle, purple oratory for which the South is famous. His speeches rather resembled the inhumanly dry, precise, inevitable reasoning of a schoolman. Now therefore was neither anger nor abuse. His argument ran coherently from proposition to proposition; that there was a special Southern civilization which a Southerner must love and wish to preserve; that the South had at first only joined the Union because her position in it was, she thought, strong enough to guarantee the safety of that civilization; that by the tariff she had been economically so weakened that she could no more hope thus to defend herself; that the overthrow of the balance of the Constitution would rob her also of political defense. "'The cry of Union, Union—the glorious Union' can no more prevent disunion than the cry of 'Health, health, glorious health' on the part of the physician can save a patient lying dangerously ill." Can, then, the Union be saved? "Yes, easily. . . . The North has only to will it to accomplish it." But he knew very well that the North did not will it and could not will it. For time would make her not less, but more, hostile to the institutions of the South. There was no remedy either along that path or along any other. He had looked back into the past and, like the old king in Xanadu, he

> . . . heard from far
> Ancestral voices prophesying war.

"As things now stand, the Southern States cannot remain within the Union."

Two friends led him slowly out of the Chamber, and as he stumbled heavily towards the door neither from floor nor gallery came any sound save that of the heavy breathing of a sick man. "If any senator," he had remarked, "chooses to comment upon what I have said, I trust I shall have health to defend my position." But it was not to be. Three weeks later a message was brought to the Senate that the senior Senator from South Carolina was dead. And to his friends it was told that his last words were: "The South, the poor South, God knows what will become of her!"

XII

His two great rivals, Webster and Clay, survived him by some two years, till they, too, died, leaving to smaller men their ghastly heritage. To Clay, the agile discoverer of the happy, compromising formula, to Webster, the Imperialist, intoxicated by his own rhetoric, their country owes much. But a just posterity would not, I fancy, have given them a place in the company of Calhoun.

Many find it difficult to judge Calhoun fairly because of their prejudice against slavery. It is true that he did think slavery "a positive good" when the best that can be said of it in true morals is that under certain circumstances it is the least harmful of possible arrangements. For that he is to be blamed. Yet his political conduct was based, not on his opinion of slavery, but on the one clear premise that the North, incapable of understanding her traditions, would break the Southern life if she got the chance. The premise granted, all logically follows. His love was for liberty. He had no half-wit's ambition to extend slavery to distant lands for its own sake. He wished New Mexico to be slave only in order that South Carolina might remain independent.

Whatever be our judgment upon his wisdom, the fair historian will say that Calhoun—the later and purer Calhoun, at any rate—was not a man to "turn a coat to decorate a coat," that he never stooped either to flattery or to abuse, to deceive others or to deceive himself, and that these gifts are rare among politicians. Yet, if the premise of his life was false and

ridiculous, we must add that here was a verbose alarmist for whose rhetoric the world has had to pay dearly. If, on the other hand, that premise was true, his place, though he was neither impeccable nor infallible, is yet in the first rank of American statesmen. And true it surely was. The new spirit of the age was against him. That spirit he saw as a whole and challenged as a whole. A people, he thought, must live upon its traditions or perish, and industrial capitalism, whose very advertisement was that it was daily changing man's material condition of life, was the enemy.

The old Southern slavery had been, at least, one of the institutions of a stable society. The new industrial slavery was to be mere brute force acting upon chaos. It had been a dogma of the Jeffersonian political philosophy to be intensely suspicious of an industrialism which replaced thought by superficial culture, democracy by hypnosis, and did violence to reason in holding up wealth rather than happiness as the end of man. For the first seventy years of independent America the normal American thought of his country as erected in protest against this disorder of the will which made men in Europe clamor always for a higher material standard of living, and which must of its nature—since matter is limited and appetite unlimited—lead finally to disaster. Since the Civil War it has been thought normal in America, as in England, that man should desire and should be invited to desire as much material wealth as he can get. Calhoun, in his time, saw growing up that new spirit of the age which thought of appetite as a thing merely to be indulged, not merely as a thing to be feared, watched, and controlled. He saw disaster in the growth of that spirit. Was he not enormously right in his foresight? How much understanding of that old Southern life would he have found in the new generations of Henry Fords and Carnegies and Rockefellers? And is the day so very far distant when the new slaves of the North, doomed to slavery, because a man, though he be called a voter and a citizen, who thinks material things more important than freedom, lacks a philosophy which will prevent him from selling his freedom for material things—when these new slaves will read again, perhaps with despair yet nevertheless with understanding, the works and speeches of a great gentleman who never feared to call a spade a spade and a slave a slave?

Webster said of him in a funeral epigram, more exactly true perhaps than its author guessed, that he was "a Senator of Rome, when Rome survived." The phrase is perfect. Jefferson fought against the Christian revelation. To Calhoun, the confident Unitarian, it never occurred to accept it. He, in this no more typical of the South than Jefferson, was a pre-Christian. His was the spirit of those great men, lords, who knew neither anger nor laughter nor injustice, who gave to the world all that mere man can give and who fell in the hour when the world came dimly to guess that what mere man could give was not enough; who, themselves possessing a passion for the Public Thing, were willing to confer on the Empire which they ruled, order, prosperity, administration, roads, everything which the subject could ask—save only the citizenship of Rome. Calhoun held these truths to be self-evident—that all men were born equal and that negroes were not men.

The people of South Carolina took the body of their great king and buried him. On his tomb it was enough to write "Calhoun." Nor would he have wished for more. But, if we must search out for him a longer epitaph, there is none of which he would have been more proud than that jeer of the Northern soldier at the moment of Confederate defeat, "The whole South is the grave of Calhoun."

It is evident that the interest which Calhoun holds for Hollis differs radically from the rather simple interest which Antony as an individual holds for Plutarch, and even from the more complex interest which Gordon holds for Strachey. Hollis is interested in Calhoun primarily because he is interested in the history of the United States, especially through the crucial nineteenth century when the present form of the nation was wrought out. Calhoun held views about the nature of the federal organization thoroughly divergent from the views which came to be adopted in practice. Precisely for this reason, Hollis finds that his life and ideas furnish a very dramatic approach to the interpretation of the history of the nation.

The "life" of Calhoun as Hollis has written it, then, may be alternatively considered, if we like, as a long historical essay—an interpretation of the triumph of the modern federal idea. The historical interest, as such, rises to the same level as the strictly biographical interest and at times exceeds it. But this historical interest comes to focus in the life of Calhoun.

Hollis' purpose, then, determines the selection of details which he has made, and determines also the general structure of the biography. The selection is rigorous. Little homely details which reveal character, racy anecdotes which give spice to the personality as personality, are for the most part omitted. Hollis means to keep our attention focused on the idea—the idea which, as Hollis says in his first paragraph, found its personification in Calhoun.

In the same way, the structure of the biography is closely adapted to the author's purpose. Calhoun's life up to his entrance into politics is compressed into the short first section. The ten sections which follow recount in more detail the stages of the political career. Section XII is an interpretative summary of that political career. But though Hollis follows this chronological pattern, he breaks the simple succession of events to interpolate passages of general exposition which provide the background for Calhoun's actions and opinions

The interpolations are, of course, necessary. There are the tangled issues of the tariff, the Texas question, Nullification, and slavery, all of which are interrelated in defining Calhoun's course of thinking. Hollis is probably wise to step forward and give the historical summaries directly, without any attempt to assimilate them into the general texture of the narrative; for, after all, this biography is the drama of an idea, and not of a personality. Hollis finds the center of these issues in the struggle between two types of civilization, and he finds Calhoun's importance in the fact that he, more nearly than anyone else, saw what the nature of that struggle was. This is Hollis' justification for calling Calhoun a great prophet.

But to say this is not to imply that Hollis feels that Calhoun always saw the struggle clearly or that some of his actions and ideas were always consistent. The analysis of Calhoun's attitude toward the strict construction of the Constitution will illustrate this (p. 378). Hollis says: "The only hope for the preservation of slavery and of Southern life lay in a rigid adherence to every letter of the Constitution. Calhoun could only expect this strictest interpretation when it suited him, if he also gave the same strictest interpretation when it did not suit him." Nor does Hollis always approve of Calhoun's views. For example, to Calhoun's view that slavery was a "positive good," Hollis makes an emphatic denial. But Hollis does maintain that, under the circumstances which existed during Calhoun's life, sudden emancipation, and, certainly, emancipation violently achieved, would not have solved problems inherent in the situation and would actually have worked a positive evil.

In general, Hollis' method is not to take Calhoun's own words at their face value, but to probe beneath to discover the basic rationale, and the basic social and political values which mark the real consistency of Calhoun's position and which determined the stand he took on such various matters as Nullification, the Texas question, the strict interpretation of the Constitution, etc. It is only in terms of such a rationale that, as Hollis says, one can decide whether "Calhoun was a statesman or a maddening pedant, ready to disrupt a continent in order that he might have the luxury of an exercise of logic-chopping."

The question which Hollis treats is, of course, a highly controversial one, and Hollis is perfectly aware of the fact. His awareness is reflected in the biography. In part, it will account for the amount of political background which is given, the attempt to reduce political situations to first principles, the willingness to make concessions on point after point concerning particular actions or opinions of Calhoun. Each reader, of course, must decide for himself whether Hollis' interpretation deserves acceptance, but regardless of the reader's final opinion of Calhoun, the biography provides a useful illustration of a biographer's strategy in treating a controversial subject.

Thus far the actual ideas in the biography have been emphasized. This has been necessary because a consideration of "style" and of certain aspects of the method would have been meaningless if taken without reference to the subject matter. But closely reasoned as the biography is, the work amounts to a great deal more than mere dry exposition. Even in the passages of pure exposition Hollis makes use of ironic paradox and pungent epigram. For instance, ". . . Jackson, a master of bluster, had the talent, like most strong, silent men, of covering up his deficiencies beneath an avalanche of words . . ." Or: "You have not today abolished slavery in the United States. You have merely abolished slave-owners." Or. "Both, free from the monstrous menace of a well-stocked library, learned to reason before they could learn to read." Moreover, though personal details and anecdotes are sparingly used, they are, when used, sometimes very effective in focusing the ideas involved. There is, for example, the description of the banquet where Jackson made his famous toast (p. 373). Most important of all, the whole biography has a dramatic structure, which does not appear upon first glance. The essential conflict is between ideas, but Hollis has so prepared the reader by the exposition of those ideas that the last scene in the Senate can, without commentary, sum up Calhoun's entire life. Notice, too, that Section XII differs in style from the rest of the biography. Hollis has made his position plain on logical grounds and can now attempt to secure the reader's acceptance on emotional grounds. The very last paragraph is a sort of epitome of the method used in this section, and an epitome of Calhoun's peculiar position in American history: his truth as a prophet is ironically attested by the fact that the most appropriate epitaph for him may be found in the words of one of his victorious enemies.

Questions:

1. Make a detailed comparison between Strachey's attitude toward Gordon and Hollis' attitude toward Calhoun.
2. Is Strachey or is Hollis the more objective?
3. What connections can you discover between this biography and certain of the essays?

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

Selection

JAMES BOSWELL

THIS is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called, and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honor of which I was very ambitious But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcileable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who as has been already mentioned, thought slightingly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, whose sister was married to Sir Harry Erskine, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favorite of the King; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain, that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of *offices*, a *pension* ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honor of instructing Mr. Wedderburne; and though it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavors, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the "native woodnote wild," as to mark his country; which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who had not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Session, and a ruling elder of the *Kirk*, has had its fame and ample reward, in much higher sphere. When I look back on this noble person at [illegible], in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold LORD LOUGHBOROUGH at London, the change seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in *Ovid;* and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, *"Nam vos mutastis."*

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity; because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North-Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the Island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and now that we are one people by the

Union, it would surely be illiberal to maintain, that they have not an equal title with the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, "However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man." Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. I have no sympathetic feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who had lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not soothe his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan in *The Life of Swift*, which he afterwards published, attempting, in the writhings of resentment, to depreciate Johnson, by characterizing him as "A writer of gigantic fame in these days of little men"; that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated.

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, contains an excellent moral while it inculcates a future state of retribution; and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of "heaven's mercy." Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much."

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them, as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his aweful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for

Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. . . .

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den," an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of *Ossian,* was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a *Dissertation,* not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of *Homer and Virgil;* and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day:—

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney —BURNEY. "How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?" JOHNSON. "It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it." BURNEY. "Perhaps, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it."—Johnson continued. "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labor; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it."

"The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, reli-

gious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Savior says of those who perform them from other motives, 'Verily they have their reward.'

"The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, reasoning *a priori*, we have more [illegible] than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius,—Dr. Pearson,—and Dr. Clarke."

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13, at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses, he said, "Such a man, Sir, should be encouraged; for his performances show the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shows what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue."

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. "Poh, poh! (said he, with a complacent smile,) never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you."

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre tavern in Fleet-street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple-bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. "Sir, (said he,) it is too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart."

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place; for instead of procuring a commission in the foot guards, which was my own inclination, I had, in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law; and was soon to set out for Utrecht, to hear the lectures of an excellent Civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated, by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25, when happening to dine at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher-row, I was surprised to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. "Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that God at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue." What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions; upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he had retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, "He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius."

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in

the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the MITRE,—the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON,—the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. . . .

Finding him in a placid humor, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived in the ardor of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands;—I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention.

I acknowledged, that though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth, "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and the little we could know of final causes; so that the objections of, why was it so? or why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion, but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought.

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was agreeably surprized when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: "For my part, Sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious."

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, "Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry 'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished'; my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should, in that case, be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me."

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled *The Ghost,* availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of "POMPOSO," representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cock-lane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London. Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the Newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine,* and undeceived the world. . . .

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavor to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then

give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent; and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a news-paper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of *An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe,* and of *The Citizen of the World,* a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. *"Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit."* His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi,* and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham, a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield.* But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir, (said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller;* but the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dress'd, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped

together at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great Master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, "He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson"; and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson"

Goldsmith attempted this evening to maintain, I suppose from an affectation of paradox, "that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But, upon the whole, knowledge, *per se*, is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it. . . ."

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman, for whose agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Reverend Mr. John Ogilvie, who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend, while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honor of showing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavored, with too much eagerness, to *shine*, and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, "the King can do no wrong"; affirming, that "what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore, it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*" I mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government. . . .

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!" This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those who admire the rude grandeur of Nature, cannot deny it to Caledonia.

On Saturday, July 9, I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levee, but have not preserved any part of his conversation. On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some commonplace observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned; adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of ridicule, "Why yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals." This observation of his aptly enough introduced a good supper; and I soon forgot in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere.

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father, though he was not much older than Johnson, and certainly, however respectable, had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason

of this. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the color of the world as it moves along. Your father is a Judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence." I said, I was afraid my father would force me to be a lawyer. JOHNSON. "Sir, you need not be afraid of his forcing you to be a laborious practicing lawyer; that is not in his power. For as the proverb says, 'One man may lead a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink.' He may be displeased that you are not what he wishes you to be; but that displeasure will not go far. If he insists only on your having as much law as is necessary for a man of property, and then endeavors to get you into Parliament, he is quite in the right."

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him at the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. JOHNSON. "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him."

Talking of those who denied the truth of Christianity, he said, "It is always easy to be on the negative side. If a man were now to deny that there is salt upon the table, you could not reduce him to an absurdity. Come, let us try this a little further. I deny that Canada is taken, and I can support my denial by pretty good arguments. The French are a much more numerous people than we; and it is not likely that they would allow us to take it. 'But the ministry have assured us, in all the formality of *The Gazette*, that it is taken.'—Very true. But the ministry have put us to an enormous expense by the war in America, and it is their interest to persuade us that we have got something for our money.—'But the fact is confirmed by thousands of men who were at the taking of it.'—Ay, but these men have still more interest in deceiving us. They don't want that you should think the French have beat them, but that they have beat the French. Now suppose you should go over and find that it is really taken, that would only satisfy yourself; for when you come home we will not believe you. We will say, you have been bribed.—Yet, Sir, notwithstanding all these plausible objections, we have no doubt that Canada is really ours. Such is the weight of common testimony. How much stronger are the evidences of the Christian religion!"

"Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge."

To a man of vigorous intellect and arduous curiosity like his own, reading without a regular plan may be beneficial; though even such a man must submit to it, if he would attain a full understanding of any of the sciences.

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had he now accustomed me, that in the course of this evening I talked of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him on account of his having accepted a pension from his present Majesty. "Why, Sir, (said he, with a hearty laugh,) it is a mighty foolish noise that they make. I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the same man in every respect that I have ever been; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (smiling) the House of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year."

There was here, most certainly, an affectation of more Jacobitism than he really had; and indeed an intention of admitting, for the moment, in a much greater extent than it really existed, the charge of disaffection imputed to him by the world, merely for the purpose of showing how dexterously he could repel an attack, even though he were placed in the most disadvantageous position; for I have heard him declare, that if holding up his right hand would have secured victory at Culloden to Prince Charles's army, he was not sure he would have held it up; so little confidence had he in the right claimed by the house of Stuart, and so fearful was he of the consequences of another revolution on the throne of Great-Britain; and Mr. Topham Beauclerk assured me, he had heard him say this before he had his pension. At another time he said to Mr. Langton, "Nothing has ever offered, that has made it worth my while to consider the question fully." He, however, also said to the same gentleman, talking of King James the Second, "It was become impossible for him to reign any longer in this country." He no doubt had an early attachment to the House of Stuart; but his zeal had cooled as his reason strengthened. Indeed I heard him once say, that "after the death of a violent Whig, with whom he used to contend with great eagerness, he felt his Toryism much abated." I suppose he meant Walmsley.

Yet there is no doubt that at earlier periods he was wont often to exercise both his pleasantry and ingenuity in talking Jacobitism. My much respected friend, Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, has favored me with the following admirable instance from his Lordship's own recollection. One day when dining at old Mr. Langton's where Miss Roberts, his niece, was one of the company, Johnson, with his usual complacent attention to the fair sex, took her by the hand and said, "My dear, I hope you are a Jacobite." Old Mr. Langton, who, though a high and steady Tory, was attached to the present Royal Family, seemed offended, and asked Johnson, with great warmth, what he could mean by putting such a question to his niece? "Why, Sir, (said Johnson) I meant no offence to your niece, I meant her a great compliment. A Jacobite, Sir, believes in the divine right of the Kings. He that believes in the divine right of Kings believes in a Divinity. A Jacobite believes in the divine right of Bishops. He that believes in the divine right of Bishops believes in the divine authority of the Christian religion. Therefore, Sir, a Jacobite is neither an Atheist nor a Deist That cannot be said of a Whig; for *Whiggism is a negation of all principle.*"

He advised me, when abroad, to be as much as I could with the Professors in the Universities, and with the Clergy; for from their conversation I might expect the best accounts of every thing in whatever country I should be, with the additional advantage of keeping my learning alive.

It will be observed, that when giving me advice as to my travels, Dr. Johnson did not dwell upon cities, and palaces, and pictures, and shows, and Arcadian scenes. He was of Lord Essex's opinion, who advises his kinsman Roger Earl of Rutland, "rather to go an hundred miles to speak with one wise man, than five miles to see a fair town."

I described to him an impudent fellow from Scotland, who affected to be a savage, and railed at all established systems. JOHNSON. "There is nothing surprising in this, Sir. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogstye, as long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over."

I added, that the same person maintained that there was no distinction between virtue and vice. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honor he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons. . . ."

Mr. Levet this day showed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his Chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name, had formerly his warehouse. I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewed with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they perhaps might contain portions of *The Rambler* or of *Rasselas*. I observed an apparatus for chemical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond. The place seemed to be very favorable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me, that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant, when he wanted to study, secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. "A servant's strict regard for truth, (said he) must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for me, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself*."

I am, however, satisfied that every servant, of any degree of intelligence, understands saying his master is not at home, not at all as the affirmation of a fact, but as customary words, intimating that his master wishes not to be seen; so that there can be no bad effect from it.

Mr. Temple, now vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall, who had been my intimate friend for many years, had at this time Chambers in Farrar's-buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple-lane, which he kindly lent me upon my quitting my lodgings, he being to return to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I found them particularly convenient for me, as they were so near Dr. Johnson's.

On Wednesday, July 20, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Dempster, and my uncle Dr. Boswell, who happened to be now in London, supped with me at these Chambers. JOHNSON. "Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late, have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist. No, Sir, I wish him to drive on. . . ."

Next morning I found him alone, and have preserved the following fragments of his conversation. Of a gentleman who was mentioned, he said, "I have not met with any man for a long time who has given me such general displeasure. He is totally unfixed in his principles, and wants to puzzle other people." I said his principles had been poisoned by a noted infidel writer, but that he was, nevertheless, a benevolent good man. JOHNSON. "We can have no dependence upon that instinctive, that constitutional goodness which is not

founded upon principle. I grant you that such a man may be a very amiable member of society. I can conceive him placed in such a situation that he is not much tempted to deviate from what is right; and as every man prefers virtue, when there is not some strong incitement to transgress its precepts, I can conceive him doing nothing wrong. But if such a man stood in need of money, I should not like to trust him; and I should certainly not trust him with young ladies, for *there* there is always temptation. Hume, and other sceptical innovators, are vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull. If I could have allowed myself to gratify my vanity at the expense of truth, what fame might I have acquired. Every thing which Hume has advanced against Christianity had passed through my mind long before he wrote. Always remember this, that after a system is well settled upon positive evidence, a few partial objections ought not to shake it. The human mind is so limited, that it cannot take in all the parts of a subject, so that there may be objections raised against any thing. There are objections against a *plenum* and objections against a *vacuum;* yet one of them must certainly be true."

I mentioned Hume's argument against the belief of miracles, that it is more probable that the witnesses to the truth of them are mistaken, or speak falsely, than that the miracles should be true. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, the great difficulty of proving miracles should make us very cautious in believing them. But let us consider, although God has made Nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that he may suspend those laws, in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind. Now the Christian religion is a most beneficial system, as it gives us light and certainty where we were before in darkness and doubt. The miracles which prove it are attested by men who had no interest in deceiving us; but who, on the contrary, were told that they should suffer persecution, and did actually lay down their lives in confirmation of the truth of the facts which they asserted. Indeed, for some centuries the heathens did not pretend to deny the miracles; but said they were performed by the aid of evil spirits. This is a circumstance of great weight. Then, Sir, when we take the proofs derived from prophecies which have been so exactly fulfilled, we have most satisfactory evidence. Supposing a miracle possible, as to which, in my opinion, there can be no doubt, we have as strong evidence for the miracles in support of Christianity, as the nature of the thing admits."

At night Mr. Johnson and I supped in a private room at the Turk's Head coffee-house, in the Strand. "I encourage this house, (said he;) for the mistress of it is a good civil woman, and has not much business."

"Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because in the first place, I don't like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, Sir, young men have more virtue than old men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect. I love the young dogs of this age: they have more wit and humor and knowledge of life than we had; but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgment, to be sure, was not so good; but I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.'"

This account of his reading, given by himself in plain words, sufficiently confirms what I have already advanced upon the disputed questions as to his application. It reconciles any seeming inconsistency in his way of talking upon it at different times; and shows that idleness and reading hard were with him relative terms, the import of which, as used by him, must be gathered from a comparison with what scholars of different degrees of ardor and assiduity have been known to do. And let it be remembered, that he was now talking spontaneously, and expressing his genuine sentiments; whereas at other times he might be induced from his spirit of contradiction, or more properly from his love of argumentative contest, to speak lightly of his own application to study. It is pleasing to consider that the old gentleman's gloomy prophecy as to the irksomeness of books to men of an advanced age, which is too often fulfilled, was so far from being verified in Johnson, that his ardor for literature never failed, and his last writing had more ease and vivacity than any of his earlier productions.

He mentioned to me now, for the first time, that he had been distrest by melancholy, and for that reason had been obliged to fly from study and meditation, to the dissipation of variety of life. Against melancholy he recommended constant occupation of mind, a great deal of exercise, moderation in eating and drinking, and especially to shun drinking at night. He said melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery. He observed, that laboring men who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. "Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam. Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, showed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" I mentioned a certain author who disgusted me by his forwardness, and by showing no deference to noblemen into whose company he was admitted. JOHNSON. "Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a Lord; how he would stare. 'Why, Sir, do you stare? (says the shoemaker,) I do great service to society. 'Tis true I am paid for doing it; but so are you, Sir: and I am sorry to say it, paid better than I am, for doing something not so necessary. For mankind could do better without your books, than without my shoes.' Thus, Sir, there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental. . . ."

We concluded the day at the Turk's Head coffee-house very socially. He was pleased to listen to a particular account which I gave him of my family, and of its hereditary estate, as to the extent and population of which he asked questions, and made calculations; recommending, at the same time, a liberal kindness to the tenantry, as people over whom the proprietor was placed by Providence. He took delight in hearing my description of the romantic seat of my ancestors. "I must be there, Sir, (said he) and we will live in the old castle; and if there is not a room in it remaining, we will build one." I was highly flattered, but could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honored by his presence, and celebrated by a description, as it afterwards was, in his *Journey to the Western Islands*.

After we had again talked of my setting out for Holland, he said, "I must see thee out of England; I will accompany you to Harwich." I could not find words to express what I felt upon this unexpected and very great mark of his affectionate regard.

Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. "Sire, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all."

On Tuesday, August 2 (the day of my departure from London having been fixed for the 5th,) Dr. Johnson did me the honour to pass a part of the morning with me at my Chambers. He said, that "he always felt an inclination to do nothing." I observed, that it was strange to think that the most indolent man in Britain had written the most laborious work, *The English Dictionary*.

I mentioned an imprudent publication, by a certain friend of his, at an early period of life, and asked him if he thought it would hurt him. JOHNSON. "No, Sir; not much. It may, perhaps, be mentioned at an election."

I had now made good my title to be a privileged man, and was carried by him in the evening to drink tea with Miss Williams, whom, though under the misfortune of having lost her sight, I found to be agreeable in conversation; for she had a variety of literature, and expressed herself well; but her peculiar value was the intimacy in which she had long lived with Johnson, by which she was well acquainted with his habits, and knew how to lead him on to talk.

After tea he carried me to what he called his walk, which was a long narrow paved court in the neighbourhood, overshadowed by some trees. There we sauntered a considerable time; and I complained to him that my love of London and of his company was such, that I shrunk almost from the thought of going away, even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men. He roused me by manly and spirited conversation. He advised me, when settled in any place abroad, to study with an eagerness after knowledge, and to apply to Greek an hour every day; and when I was moving about, to read diligently the great book of mankind.

Boswell was conscious of the fact that his method of treating the life of Samuel Johnson was rather unusual, and in the opening pages of the life he undertakes to give a statement of his method and a justification of it. The following paragraphs will indicate the principles on which he worked:

"Instead of melting down my materials into one mass, and constantly speaking in my own person, by which I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work, I have resolved to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason, in his Memoirs of Gray. Wherever narrative is necessary to explain, connect, and

supply, I furnish it to the best of my abilities; but in the chronological series of Johnson's life, which I trace as distinctly as I can, year by year, I produce, wherever it is in my power, his own minutes, letters or conversation, being convinced that this mode is more lively, and will make my readers better acquainted with him, than even most of those were who actually knew him, but could know him only partially; whereas there is here an accumulation of intelligence from various points, by which his character is more fully understood and illustrated.

"Indeed I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life, than not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought, by which mankind are enabled as it were to see him live, and to 'live o'er each scene' with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life. Had his other friends been as diligent and ardent as I was, he might have been almost entirely preserved. As it is, I will venture to say that he will be seen in his work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived.

"And he will be seen as he really was; for I profess to write, not his panegyric, which must be all praise, but his Life; which, great and good as he was, must not be supposed to be entirely perfect To be as he was, is indeed subject of panegyric enough to any man in this state of being; but in every picture there should be shade as well as light, and when I delineate him without reserve, I do what he himself recommended, both by his precept and his example . . .

"If authority be required, let us appeal to Plutarch, the prince of ancient biographers. . . . 'Nor is it always in the most distinguished achievements that men's virtues or vices may be best discerned; but very often an action of small note, a short saying, or a jest, shall distinguish a person's real character more than the greatest sieges, or the most important battles'

"To this may be added the sentiments of the very man whose life I am about to exhibit.

" 'The business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestick privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue . . .'

"I am fully aware of the objections which may be made to the minuteness on some occasions of my detail of Johnson's conversation, and how happily it is adapted for the petty exercise of ridicule, by men of superficial understanding and ludicrous fancy; but I remain firm and confident in my opinion, that minute particulars are frequently characteristic, and always amusing, when they relate to a distinguished man. I am therefore exceedingly unwilling that any thing, however slight, which my illustrious friend thought it worth his while to express, with any degree of point, should perish"

It will be seen that a life written on this plan will not have the logical structure of, say, a life like that of Calhoun, by Hollis, or even that of General Gordon, by Strachey. Any fact about Johnson, or any remark by Johnson, no matter how trivial it might seem, would, according to this principle of biographical writing, be incorporated in the work. For this reason, the method as applied to many figures of history and literature, and as applied by many writers, might result in works, not only dull, but relatively formless, with the interpretation of idea completely confused by incident and conversation in no way relevant to it. Boswell, in fact, was scarcely concerned with the interpretation of his subject. It is true that Boswell makes comments and judgments upon Johnson, but he is primarily concerned with recording Johnson and not with defining the central idea of his life, or of assessing the civilization which would produce such a man, or of determining his effect upon history. This can be readily seen if one contrasts the work of Boswell with that of Hollis or Strachey.

Moreover, in discussing Boswell's method, one must realize, as Boswell himself did, that he was peculiarly fortunate in his subject. For instance, one can see how difficult it would be to apply the method to the biography of a man of action, like Napoleon, or a statesman, like Calhoun, the interest in whom would be more objective. But the method is appropriate to the life of a man like Johnson, whose greatness, to a considerable extent, lay in his personality.

Boswell, furthermore, makes a virtue out of the apparent necessities of his method For example, since Boswell does not pretend to be shaping the book in any particular order or according to any particular idea, we are not disappointed at the lack of these things, and the impression of Johnson's day-to-day life is actually heightened by the casualness and veracity of the treatment. To take another example, Boswell finds it impossible to keep himself out of the account, but by putting himself into it so frankly and objectively, on the same level, as it were, as any other character, he avoids any impression that he is coloring the total effect. By way of contrast one can see that Strachey, though he never once appears in his own person in the life of Gordon, is constantly suggesting and shaping our interpretations of any event.

Questions:

1. In the selections given how does Boswell present Johnson's brusqueness? His essential kindness? His humor?
2. What would you judge to be Johnson's real attitude toward the Scottish people?
3. How do some of the anecdotes given in these selections indicate Johnson's basic common sense?
4. Compare Boswell's method of presenting individual scenes with that of Hollis or Strachey. Which method is nearer to that of fiction?
5. Hollis himself has written a life of Johnson. Why does Hollis, who admires Boswell, use a different method? Relate this difference to his intention.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRONTIER IN AMERICAN HISTORY

FREDERICK J. TURNER

IN A recent bulletin of the Superintendent of the Census for 1890 appear these significant words: "Up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement, etc., it can not, therefore, any longer have a place in the census reports." This brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic movement. Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life. Said Calhoun in 1817, "We are great, and rapidly—I was about to say fearfully—growing!" So saying, he touched the [illegible] feature of American life. All peoples show development; the germ theory of politics has been sufficiently emphasized. In the case of most nations, however, the development has occurred in a limited area; and if the nation has expanded, it has met other growing peoples whom it has conquered. But in the case of the United States we have a different phenomenon. Limiting our attention to the Atlantic coast, we have the familiar phenomenon of the evolution of institutions in a limited area, such as the rise of representative government; the differentiation of simple colonial governments into complex organs; the progress from primitive industrial society, without division of labor, up to manufacturing civilization. But we have in addition to this a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West. Even the slavery struggle, which is made so exclusive an object of attention by writers like Prof. von Holst, occupies its important place in American history because of its relation to westward expansion.

In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization. Much has been written about the frontier from the point of view of border warfare and the chase, but as a field for the serious study of the economist and the historian it has been neglected.

The American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier—a fortified boundary line running through dense populations. The most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the hither edge of free land. In the census reports it is treated as the margin of that settlement which has a density of two or more to the square mile. The term is an elastic one, and for our purposes does not need sharp definition. We shall consider the whole frontier belt, including the Indian country and the outer margin of the "settled area" of the census reports. This paper will make no attempt to treat the subject exhaustively; its aim is simply to call attention to the frontier as a fertile field for investigation, and to suggest some of the problems which arise in connection with it.

In the settlement of America we have to observe how European life entered the continent, and how American modified and developed that life and reacted on Europe. Our early history is the study of European germs [illegible] in an American environment. Too exclusive attention has been paid by institutional students to the Germanic origins, too little to the American factors. The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch

canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American. As successive terminal moraines result from successive glaciations, so each frontier leaves its traces behind it, and when it becomes a settled area the region still partakes of the frontier characteristics. Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines. And to study this advance, the men who grew up under these conditions, and the political, economic, and social results of it, is to study the really American part of our history.

STAGES OF FRONTIER ADVANCE

In the course of the seventeenth century the frontier was advanced up the Atlantic river courses, just beyond the "fall line," and the tidewater region became the settled area. In the first half of the eighteenth century another advance occurred. Traders followed the Delaware and Shawnese Indians to the Ohio as early as the end of the first quarter of the century. Gov. Spottswood, of Virginia, made an expedition in 1714 across the Blue Ridge. The end of the first quarter of the century saw the advance of the Scotch-Irish and the Palatine Germans up the Shenandoah Valley into the western part of Virginia, and along the Piedmont region of the Carolinas. The Germans in New York pushed the frontier of settlement up the Mohawk to German Flats. In Pennsylvania the town of Bedford indicates the line of settlement. Settlements had begun on New River, a branch of the Kanawha, and on the sources of the Yadkin and French Broad. The King attempted to arrest the advance by his proclamation of 1763, forbidding settlements beyond the sources of the rivers flowing into the Atlantic: but in vain. In the period of the Revolution the frontier crossed the Alleghanies into Kentucky and Tennessee, and the upper waters of the Ohio were settled. When the first census was taken in 1790, the continuous settled area was bounded by a line which ran near the coast of Maine, and included New England except a portion of Vermont and New Hampshire, New York along the Hudson and up the Mohawk about Schenectady, eastern and southern Pennsylvania, Virginia well across the Shenandoah Valley, and the Carolinas and eastern Georgia. Beyond this region of continuous settlement were the small settled areas of Kentucky and Tennessee, and the Ohio, with the mountains intervening between them and the Atlantic area, thus giving a new and important character to the frontier. The isolation of the region increased its peculiarly American tendencies, and the need of transportation facilities to connect it with the East called out important schemes of internal improvement, which will be noted farther on. The "West," as a self-conscious section, began to evolve.

From decade to decade distinct advances of the frontier occurred. By the census of 1820 the settled area included Ohio, southern Indiana and Illinois, southeastern Missouri, and about one-half of Louisiana. This settled area had surrounded Indian areas, and the management of these tribes became an object of political concern. The frontier region of the time lay along the Great Lakes, where Astor's American Fur Company operated in the Indian trade, and beyond the Mississippi, where Indian traders extended their activity even to the Rocky Mountains; Florida also furnished frontier conditions. The Mississippi River region was the scene of typical frontier settlements.

The rising steam navigation on western waters, the opening of the Erie Canal, and the westward extension of cotton culture added five frontier states to the Union in this period. Grund, writing in 1836, declares: "It appears then that the universal disposition of Americans to emigrate to the western wilderness, in order to enlarge their dominion over inanimate nature, is the actual result of an expansive power which is inherent in them, and which by continually agitating all classes of society is constantly throwing a large portion of the whole population on the extreme confines of the State, in order to gain space for its development. Hardly is a new State or Territory formed before the same principle manifests itself again and gives rise to further emigration; and so it is destined to go on until a physical barrier must finally obstruct its progress."

In the middle of this century the line indicated by the present eastern boundary of Indian territory,* Nebraska, and Kansas marked the frontier of the Indian country. Minnesota and Wisconsin still exhibited frontier conditions, but the distinctive frontier of the period is found in California, where the gold discoveries had sent a sudden tide of adventurous miners, and in Oregon, and the settlements in Utah. As the frontier had leaped over the Alleghanies, so now it skipped the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains; and in the same way that the advance of the frontiersmen beyond the Alleghanies had caused the rise of important questions of transportation and internal improvement, so now the settlers beyond the Rocky Mountains needed means of communication with the East, and in the furnishing of these arose the settlement of the Great Plains and the development of still another kind of frontier life. Railroads, fostered by land grants, sent an increasing tide of immigrants into the far West. The United States Army fought a series of Indian wars in Minnesota, Dakota, and the Indian territory.

By 1880 the settled area had been pushed into northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, along Dakota rivers, and in the Black Hills region, and was ascending the rivers of Kansas and Nebraska. The development of mines in Colorado had drawn isolated frontier settlements into that region, and Montana and Idaho were receiving settlers. The frontier was found in these mining camps and the ranches of the Great Plains. The superintendent of the census for 1890 reports, as previously stated, that the settlements of the West lie so scattered over the region that there can no longer be said to be a frontier line.

In these successive frontiers we find natural boundary lines which have served to mark and to affect the characteristics of the frontiers, namely: The "fall line"; the Alleghany Mountains; the Mississippi; the Missouri, where its direction approximates north and south; the line of the arid lands, approximately the ninety-ninth meridian; and the Rocky Mountains. The fall line marked the frontier of the seventeenth century; the Alleghanies that of the eighteenth; the Mississippi that of the first quarter of the nineteenth; the Missouri that of the middle of this century (omitting the California movement); and the belt of the Rocky Mountains and the arid tract, the present frontier. Each was won by a series of Indian wars.

THE FRONTIER FURNISHES A FIELD FOR COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

At the Atlantic frontier one can study the germs of processes repeated at each successive frontier. We have the complex European life sharply precipitated by the wilderness into the simplicity of primitive conditions. The first frontier had to meet its Indian question, its question of the disposition of the public domain, of the means of intercourse with older settlements, of the extension of political organization, of religious and educational activity. And the settlement of these and similar questions for one frontier served as a guide for the rest. The American student needs not to go to the "prim little townships of Sleswick" for illustrations of the law of continuity and development. For example, he may study the origin of our land policies in the colonial land policy; he may see how the system grew by adapting the statutes to the customs of the successive frontiers. He may see how the mining experience in the lead regions of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa was applied to the mining laws of the Rockies, and how our Indian policy has been a series of experimentations on successive frontiers. Each tier of new States has found in the older ones material for its constitutions. Each frontier has made similar contributions to American character, as will be discussed farther on.

But with all these similarities there are essential differences, due to the place element and the time element. It is evident that the farming frontier of the Mississippi Valley presents different conditions from the mining frontier of the Rocky Mountains. The frontier reached by the Pacific Railroad, surveyed into rectangles, guarded by the United States Army, and recruited by the daily immigrant ship, moves forward at a swifter pace and in a different way than the frontier reached by the birch canoe or the pack horse. The geologist traces patiently the shores of ancient seas, maps their areas, and compares the older and the newer. It would be a work worth the historian's labors to mark these various frontiers and in detail compare one with another. Not only would there result a more adequate conception of American development and characteristics, but invaluable additions would be made to the study of society.

Loria, the Italian economist, has urged the study of colonial life as an aid in understanding the stages of European development, affirming that colonial settlement is for economic science what the mountain is for geology, bringing to light primitive stratifications. "America," he says, "has the key to the historical enigma which Europe has sought for centuries in vain, and the land which has no history reveals luminously the course of universal history." There is much truth in this. The United States lies like a huge page in the history of society. Line by line as we read this continental page from west to east we find the record of social evolution. It begins with the Indian

* Now Oklahoma.

and the hunter; it goes on to tell of the disintegration of savagery by the entrance of the trader, the pathfinder of civilization; we read the annals of the pastoral stage in ranch life; the exploitation of the soil by the raising of unrotated crops of corn and wheat in sparsely settled farming communities; the intensive culture of the denser farm settlement; and finally the manufacturing organization with city and factory system. This page is familiar to the student of census statistics, but how little of it has been used by our historians. Particularly in eastern States this page is a palimpsest. What is now a manufacturing State was in an earlier decade an area of intensive farming. Earlier yet it had been a wheat area, and still earlier the "range" had attracted the cattle-herder. Thus Wisconsin, now developing manufacture, is a State with varied agricultural interests. But earlier it was given over to almost exclusive grain-raising, like North Dakota at the present time.

Each of these areas has had an influence in our economic and political history; the evolution of each into a higher stage has worked political transformations. But what constitutional historian has made any adequate attempt to interpret political facts by the light of these social areas and changes?

The Atlantic frontier was compounded of fisherman, fur-trader, miner, cattle-raiser, and farmer. Excepting the fisherman, each type of industry was on the march toward the West, impelled by an irresistible attraction. Each passed in successive waves across the continent. Stand at the Cumberland Gap and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file—the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur-trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by. Stand at South Pass in the Rockies a century later and see the same procession with wider intervals between. The unequal rate of advance compels us to distinguish the frontier into the trader's frontier, the rancher's frontier, or the miner's frontier, and the farmer's frontier. When the mines and the cow pens were still near the fall line the traders' pack trains were tinkling across the Alleghanies, and the French on the Great Lakes were fortifying their posts, alarmed by the British trader's birch canoe. When the trappers scaled the Rockies, the farmer was still near the mouth of the Missouri.

THE INDIAN TRADER'S FRONTIER

Why was it that the Indian trader passed so rapidly across the continent? What effects followed from the trader's frontier? The trade was coeval with American discovery. The Norsemen, Vespuccius, Verrazani, Hudson, John Smith, all trafficked for furs. The Plymouth pilgrims settled in Indian cornfields, and their first return cargo was of beaver and lumber. The records of the various New England colonies show how steadily exploration was carried into the wilderness by this trade. What is true for New England is, as would be expected, even plainer for the rest of the colonies. All along the coast from Maine to Georgia the Indian trade opened up the river courses. Steadily the trader passed westward, utilizing the older lines of French trade. The Ohio, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Platte, the lines of western advance, were ascended by traders. They found the passes in the Rocky Mountains and guided Lewis and Clark, Fremont and Bidwell. The explanation of the rapidity of this advance is connected with the effects of the trader on the Indian. The trading post left the unarmed tribes at the mercy of those that had purchased fire-arms—a truth which the Iroquois Indians wrote in blood, and so the remote and unvisited tribes gave eager welcome to the trader. "The savages," wrote La Salle, "take better care of us French than of their own children; from us only can they get guns and goods." This accounts for the trader's power and the rapidity of his advance. Thus the disintegrating forces of civilization entered the wilderness. Every river valley and Indian trail became a fissure in Indian society, and so that society became honeycombed. Long before the pioneer farmer appeared on the scene, primitive Indian life had passed away. The farmers met Indians armed with guns. The trading frontier, while steadily undermining Indian power by making the tribes ultimately dependent on the whites, yet, through its sale of guns, gave to the Indians increased power of resistance to the farming frontier. French colonization was dominated by its trading frontier; English colonization by its farming frontier. There was an antagonism between the two frontiers as between the two nations. Said Duquesne to the Iroquois, "Are you ignorant of the difference between the king of England and the king of France? Go see the forts that our king has established and you will see that you can still hunt under their very walls. They have been placed for your advantage in places which you frequent. The English, on the contrary, are no sooner in possession of a place than the game is driven away. The forest falls before them as they advance, and the soil is laid bare so that you can scarce find the wherewithal to erect a shelter for the night."

And yet, in spite of this opposition of the interests of the trader and the farmer, the Indian trade pioneered the way for civilization. The buffalo trail became the Indian trail, and this became the trader's "trace"; the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed

into railroads. The same origin can be shown for the railroads of the South, the far West, and the Dominion of Canada. The trading posts reached by these trails were on the sites of Indian villages which had been placed in positions suggested by nature; and these trading posts, situated so as to command the water systems of the country, have grown into such cities as Albany, Pittsburg, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Council Bluffs, and Kansas City. Thus civilization in America has followed the arteries made by geology, pouring an ever richer tide through them, until at last the slender paths of aboriginal intercourse have been broadened and interwoven into the complex mazes of modern commercial lines; the wilderness has been interpenetrated by lines of civilization growing ever more numerous. It is like the steady growth of a complex nervous system for the originally simple, inert continent. If one would understand why we are today one nation, rather than a collection of isolated states, he must study this economic and social consolidation of the country. In this progress from savage conditions lie topics for the evolutionist.

The effect of the Indian frontier as a consolidating agent in our history is important. From the close of the seventeenth century various intercolonial congresses have been called to treat with Indians and establish common measures of defense. Particularism was strongest in colonies with no Indian frontier. This frontier stretched along the western border like a cord of union. The Indian was a common danger, demanding united action. Most celebrated of these conferences was the Albany congress of 1754, called to treat with the Six Nations, and to consider plans of union. Even a cursory reading of the plan proposed by the congress reveals the importance of the frontier. The powers of the general council and the officers were, chiefly, the determination of peace and war with the Indians, the regulation of Indian trade, the purchase of Indian lands, and the creation and government of new settlements as a security against the Indians. It is evident that the unifying tendencies of the Revolutionary period were facilitated by the previous coöperation in the regulation of the frontier. In this connection may be mentioned the importance of the frontier, from that day to this, as a military training school, keeping alive the power of resistance to aggression, and developing the stalwart and rugged qualities of the frontiersman.

THE RANCHER'S FRONTIER

It would not be possible in the limits of this paper to trace the other frontiers across the continent. Travelers of the eighteenth century found the "cowpens" among the canebrakes and peavine pastures of the South, and the "cow drivers" took their droves to Charleston, Philadelphia, and New York. Travelers at the close of the War of 1812 met droves of more than a thousand cattle and swine from the interior of Ohio going to Pennsylvania to fatten for the Philadelphia market. The ranges of the Great Plains, with ranch and cowboy and nomadic life, are things of yesterday and of today. The experience of the Carolina cowpens guided the ranchers of Texas. One element favoring the rapid extension of the rancher's frontier is the fact that in a remote country lacking transportation facilities the product must be in small bulk, or must be able to transport itself, and the cattle-raiser could easily drive his product to market. The effect of these great ranches on the subsequent agrarian history of the localities in which they existed should be studied.

THE FARMER'S FRONTIER

The maps of the census reports show an uneven advance of the farmer's frontier, with tongues of settlement pushed forward and with indentations of wilderness. In part this is due to Indian resistance, in part to the location of river valleys and passes, in part to the unequal force of the centers of frontier attraction. Among the important centers of attraction may be mentioned the following: fertile and favorably situated soils, salt springs, mines, and army posts.

ARMY POSTS

The frontier army post, serving to protect the settlers from the Indians, has also acted as a wedge to open the Indian country, and has been a nucleus for settlement. In this connection mention should also be made of the Government military and exploring expeditions in determining the lines of settlement. But all the more important expeditions were greatly indebted to the earliest pathmakers, the Indian guides, the traders and trappers, and the French *voyageurs,* who were inevitable parts of governmental expeditions from the days of Lewis and Clark. Each expedition was an epitome of the previous factors in western advance.

SALT SPRINGS

In an interesting monograph, Victor Hehn has traced the effect of salt upon early European development, and has pointed out how it affected the lines of settlement and the form of administration. A similar study might be made for the salt springs of the United States. The early settlers were tied to the coast by the need of salt, without which they could not preserve their meats or live in comfort. Writing in 1752, Bishop Spangenburg says of a colony for

which he was seeking lands in North Carolina, "They will require salt & other necessaries which they can neither manufacture nor raise. Either they must go to Charleston, which is 300 miles distant. . . . Or else they must go to Boling's Point in Va on a branch of the James & is also 300 miles from here. . . . Or else they must go down the Roanoke—I know not how many miles—where salt is brought up from the Cape Fear." This may serve as a typical illustration. An annual [illegible] to the coast for salt thus became essential. Taking flocks or furs and ginseng root, the early settlers sent their pack trains after seeding time each year to the coast. This proved to be an important educational influence, since it was almost the only way in which the pioneer learned what was going on in the East. But when discovery was made of the salt springs of the Kanawha, and the Holston, and Kentucky, and central New York, the West began to be freed from dependence on the coast. It was in part the effect of finding these salt springs that enabled settlement to cross the mountains.

From the time the mountains rose between the pioneer and the seaboard, a new order of Americanism arose. The West and the East began to get out of touch of each other. The settlements from the sea to the mountains kept connection with the rear and had a certain solidarity. But the overmountain men grew more and more independent. The East took a narrow view of American advance, and nearly lost these men. Kentucky and Tennessee history bears abundant witness to the truth of this statement. The East began to try to hedge and limit westward expansion. Though Webster could declare that there were no Alleghanies in his politics, yet in politics in general they were a very solid factor.

LAND

The exploitation of the beasts took hunter and trader to the west, the exploitation of the grasses took the rancher west, and the exploitation of the virgin soil of the river valleys and prairies attracted the farmer. Good soils have been the most continuous attraction to the farmer's frontier. The land hunger of the Virginians drew them down the rivers into Carolina, in early colonial days; the search for soils took the Massachusetts men to Pennsylvania and to New York. As the eastern lands were taken up migration flowed across them to the west. Daniel Boone, the great backwoodsman, who combined the occupations of hunter, trader, cattle-raiser, farmer, and surveyor—learning, probably from the traders, of the fertility of the lands on the upper Yadkin, where the traders were wont to rest as they took their way to the Indians, left his Pennsylvania home with his father, and passed down the Great Valley road to that stream. Learning from a trader whose posts were on the Red River in Kentucky of its game and rich pastures, he pioneered the way for the farmers to that region. Thence he passed to the frontier of Missouri, where his settlement was long a landmark on the frontier. Here again he helped to open the way for civilization, finding salt licks, and trails, and land. His son was among the earliest trappers in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and his party are said to have been the first to camp on the present site of Denver. His grandson, Col. A. J. Boone, of Colorado, was a power among the Indians of the Rocky Mountains, and was appointed an agent by the Government. Kit Carson's mother was a Boone. Thus this family epitomizes the backwoodsman's advance across the continent.

The farmer's advance came in a distinct series of waves. In Pick's *New Guide to the West,* published in Boston in 1837, occurs this [illegible] passage:

> Generally, in all the western settlements, three classes, like the waves of the ocean, have rolled one after the other. First comes the pioneer, who depends for the subsistence of his family chiefly upon the natural growth of vegetation called the "range," and the proceeds of hunting. His implements of agriculture are rude, chiefly of his own make, and his efforts directed mainly to a crop of corn and a "truck patch." The last is a rude garden for growing cabbage, beans, corn for roasting ears, cucumbers, and potatoes. A log cabin, and, occasionally, a stable and corn-crib, and a field of a dozen acres, the timber girdled or "deadened," and fenced, are enough for his occupancy. It is quite immaterial whether he ever becomes the owner of the soil. He is the occupant for the time being, pays no rent, and feels as independent as the "lord of the manor." With a horse, cow, and one or two breeders of swine, he strikes into the woods with his family, and becomes the founder of a new country, or perhaps state. He builds his cabin, gathers around him a few other families of similar tastes and habits, and occupies till the range is somewhat subdued, and hunting a little precarious, or, which is more frequently the case, till the neighbors crowd around, roads, bridges, and fields annoy him, and he lacks elbow room. The preemption law enables him to dispose of his cabin and cornfield to the next class of emigrants; and, to employ his own figures, he "breaks for the high timber," "clears out for the New Purchase," or migrates to Arkansas or Texas, to work the same process over.

The next class of emigrants purchase the lands, add field to field, clear out the roads, throw rough bridges over the streams, put up hewn log houses with glass windows and brick or stone chimneys, occasionally plant orchards, build mills, schoolhouses, courthouses, etc., and exhibit the picture and forms of plain, frugal, civilized life.

Another wave rolls on. The men of capital and enterprise come. The settler is ready to sell out and take the advantage of the rise in property, push farther into the interior and become, himself, a man of capital and enterprise in turn. The small village rises to a spacious town or city; substantial edifices of brick, extensive fields, orchards, gardens, colleges, and churches are seen. Broadcloths, silks, leghorns, crapes, and all the refinements, luxuries, elegancies, frivolities, and fashions are in vogue. Thus wave after wave is rolling westward; the real Eldorado is still farther on.

A portion of the two first classes remain stationary amidst the general movement, improve their habits and condition, and rise in the scale of society.

The writer has traveled much amongst the first class, the real pioneers. He has lived many years in connection with the second grade; and now the third wave is sweeping over large districts of Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Migration has become almost a habit in the West. Hundreds of men can be found, not over 50 years of age, who have settled for the fourth, fifth, or sixth time on a new spot. To sell out and remove only a few hundred miles makes up a portion of the variety of backwoods life and manners.

Omitting those of the pioneer farmers who move from the love of adventure, the advance of the more steady farmer is easy to understand. Obviously the immigrant was attracted by the cheap lands of the frontier, and even the native farmer felt their influence strongly. Year by year the farmers who lived on soil whose returns were diminished by unrotated crops were offered the virgin soil of the frontier at nominal prices. Their growing families demanded more lands, and these were dear. The competition of the unexhausted, cheap, and easily tilled prairie lands compelled the farmer either to go west and continue the exhaustion of the soil on a new frontier, or to adopt intensive culture. Thus the census of 1890 shows, in the Northwest, many counties in which there is an absolute or a relative decrease of population. These States have been sending farmers to advance the frontier on the plains, and have themselves begun to turn to intensive farming and to manufacture. A decade before this, Ohio had shown the same transition stage. Thus the demand for land and the love of wilderness freedom drew the frontier ever onward.

Having now roughly outlined the various kinds of frontiers, and their modes of advance, chiefly from the point of view of the frontier itself, we may next inquire what were the influences on the East and on the Old World. A rapid enumeration of some of the more noteworthy effects is all that I have time for.

COMPOSITE NATIONALITY

First, we note that the frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people. The coast was preponderantly English, but the later tides of continental immigration flowed across to the free lands. This was the case from the early colonial days. The Scotch-Irish and the Palatine Germans, or "Pennsylvania Dutch," furnished the dominant element in the stock of the colonial frontier. With these people were also the freed indented servants, or redemptioners, who at the expiration of their time of service passed to the frontier. Governor Spottswood of Virginia writes in 1717, "The inhabitants of our frontiers are composed generally of such as have been transported hither as servants, and, being out of their time, settle themselves where land is to be taken up and that will produce the necessarys of life with little labour." Very generally these redemptioners were of non-English stock. In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality or characteristics. The process has gone on from the early days to our own. Burke and other writers in the middle of the eighteenth century believed that Pennsylvania was "threatened with the danger of being wholly foreign in language, manners, and perhaps even inclinations." The German and Scotch-Irish elements in the frontier of the South were only less great. In the middle of the present century the German element in Wisconsin was already so considerable that leading publicists looked to the creation of a German state out of the commonwealth by concentrating their colonization. Such examples teach us to beware of misinterpreting the fact that there is a common English speech in America into a belief that the stock is also English.

INDUSTRIAL INDEPENDENCE

In another way the advance of the frontier decreased our dependence on England. The coast, particularly of the South, lacked diversified industries, and was dependent on England for the bulk of its supplies. In the South there was even a dependence on the

Northern colonies for articles of food. Governor Glenn, of South Carolina, writes in the middle of the eighteenth century: "Our trade with New York and Philadelphia was of this sort, draining us of all the little money and bills we could gather from other places for their bread, flour, beer, hams, bacon, and other things of their produce, all which, except beer, our new townships begin to supply us with, which are settled with very industrious and thriving Germans. This no doubt diminishes the number of shipping and the appearance of our trade, but it is far from being a detriment to us." Before long the frontier created a demand for merchants. As it retreated from the coast it became less and less possible for England to bring her supplies directly to the consumer's wharfs, and carry away staple crops, and staple crops began to give way to diversified agriculture for a time. The effect of this phase of the frontier action upon the northern section is perceived when we realize how the advance of the frontier aroused seaboard cities like Boston, New York, and Baltimore, to engage in rivalry for what Washington called "the extensive and valuable trade of a rising empire."

EFFECTS ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

The legislation which most developed the powers of the National Government, and played the largest part in its activity, was conditioned on the frontier. Writers have discussed the subjects of tariff, land, and internal improvement, as subsidiary to the slavery question. But when American history comes to be rightly viewed it will be seen that the slavery question is an incident. In the period from the end of the first half of the present century to the close of the civil war slavery rose to primary, but far from exclusive, importance. But this does not justify Dr. von Holst (to take an example) in treating our constitutional history in its formative period down to 1828 in a single volume, giving six volumes chiefly to the history of slavery from 1828 to 1861, under the title *"Constitutional History of the United States."* The growth of nationalism and the evolution of American political institutions were dependent on the advance of the frontier. Even so recent a writer as Rhodes, in his *History of the United States since the Compromise of 1850,* has treated the legislation called out by the western advance as incidental to the slavery struggle.

This is a wrong perspective. The pioneer needed the goods of the coast, and so the grand series of internal improvement and railroad legislation began, with potent [illegible] effects. Over internal improvements occurred great debates, in which grave constitutional questions were discussed. Sectional groupings appear in the votes, profoundly significant for the historian. Loose construction increased as the nation marched westward. But the West was not content with bringing the farm to the factory. Under the lead of Clay—"Harry of the West"—protective tariffs were passed, with the cry of bringing the factory to the farm. The disposition of the public lands was a third important subject of national legislation influenced by the frontier.

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The public domain has been a force of profound importance in the nationalization and development of the Government. The effects of the struggle of the landed and the landless States, and of the ordinance of 1787, need no discussion. Administratively the frontier called out some of the highest and most vitalizing activities of the general Government. The purchase of Louisiana was perhaps the constitutional turning point in the history of the Republic, inasmuch as it afforded both a new area for national legislation and the occasion of the downfall of the policy of strict construction. But the purchase of Louisiana was called out by frontier needs and demands. As frontier States accrued to the Union the national power grew. In a speech on the dedication of the Calhoun monument Mr. Lamar explained: "In 1789 the States were the creators of the Federal Government; in 1861 the Federal Government was the creator of a large majority of the States."

When we consider the public domain from the point of view of the sale and disposal of the public lands we are again brought face to face with the frontier. The policy of the United States in dealing with its lands is in sharp contrast with the European system of scientific administration. Efforts to make this domain a source of revenue, and to withhold it from emigrants in order that settlement might be compact, were in vain. The jealousy and the fears of the East were powerless in the face of the demands of the frontiersmen. John Quincy Adams was obliged to confess: "My own system of administration, which was to make the national domain the inexhaustible fund for progressive and unceasing internal improvement, has failed." The reason is obvious; a system of administration was not what the West demanded; it wanted land. Adams states the situation as follows: "The slaveholders of the South have bought the coöperation of the western country by the bribe of the western lands, abandoning to the new Western States their own proportion of the public property and aiding them in the design of grasping all the lands into their own hands. Thomas H. Benton was the author of this system, which he brought forward as

a substitute for the American system of Mr. Clay, and to supplant him as the leading statesman of the West. Mr. Clay, by his tariff compromise with Mr. Calhoun, abandoned his own American system. At the same time he brought forward a plan for distributing among all the States of the Union the proceeds of the sale of the public lands. His bill for that purpose passed both Houses of Congress, but was vetoed by President Jackson, who, in his annual message of December, 1832, formally recommended that all public lands shoulds be gratuitously given away to individual adventurers and to the States in which the lands are situated."

"No subject," said Henry Clay, "which has presented itself to the present, or perhaps any preceding, Congress, is of greater magnitude than that of the public lands." When we consider the far-reaching effects of the Government's land policy upon political, economic, and social aspects of American life, we are disposed to agree with him. But this legislation was framed under frontier influences, and under the lead of Western statesmen like Benton and Jackson. Said Senator Scott of Indiana in 1841: "I consider the preemption law merely declaratory of the custom or common law of the settlers."

NATIONAL TENDENCIES OF THE FRONTIER

It is safe to say that the legislation with regard to land, tariff, and internal improvements—the American system of the nationalizing Whig party—was conditioned on frontier ideas and needs. But it was not merely in legislative action that the frontier worked against the sectionalism of the coast. The economic and social characteristics of the frontier worked against sectionalism. The men of the frontier had closer resemblances to the Middle region than to either of the other sections. Pennsylvania had been the seed-plot of frontier emigration, and, although she passed on her settlers along the Great Valley into the west of Virginia and the Carolinas, yet the industrial society of these Southern frontiersmen was always more like that of the Middle region than like that of the tide-water portion of the South, which later came to spread its industrial type throughout the South.

The Middle region, entered by New York harbor, was an open door to all Europe. The tide-water part of the South represented typical Englishmen, modified by a warm climate and servile labor, and living in baronial fashion on great plantations; New England stood for a special English movement—Puritanism. The Middle region was less English than the other sections. It had a wide mixture of nationalities, a varied society, the mixed town and county system of local government, a varied economic life, many religious sects. In short, it was a region mediating between New England and the South, and the East and the West. It represented that composite nationality which the contemporary United States exhibits, that juxtaposition of non-English groups, occupying a valley or a little settlement, and presenting reflections of the map of Europe in their variety. It was democratic and nonsectional, if not national; "easy, tolerant, and contented"; rooted strongly in material prosperity. It was typical of the modern United States. It was least sectional, not only because it lay between the North and South, but also because with no barriers to shut out its frontiers from its settled region, and with a system of connecting waterways, the Middle region mediated between East and West as well as between North and South. Thus it became the typically American region. Even the New Englander, who was shut out from the frontier by the Middle region, tarrying in New York or Pennsylvania on his westward march, lost the acuteness of his sectionalism on the way.

The spread of cotton culture into the interior of the South finally broke down the contrast between the "tide-water" region and the rest of the State, and based Southern interests on slavery. Before this process revealed its results the western portion of the South, which was akin to Pennsylvania in stock, society, and industry, showed tendencies to fall away from the faith of the fathers into internal improvement legislation and nationalism. In the Virginia convention of 1829–'30, called to revise the constitution, Mr. Leigh, of Chesterfield, one of the tide-water counties, declared:

> One of the main causes of discontent which led to this convention, that which had the strongest influence in overcoming our veneration for the work of our fathers, which taught us to contemn the sentiments of Henry and Mason and Pendleton, which weaned us from our reverence for the constituted authorities of the State, was an overweening passion for internal improvement. I say this with perfect knowledge, for it has been avowed to me by gentlemen from the West over and over again. And let me tell the gentleman from Albemarle (Mr. Gordon) that it has been another principal object of those who set this ball of revolution in motion, to overturn the doctrine of States rights, of which Virginia has been the very pillar, and to remove the barrier she has interposed to the interference of the Federal Government in that same work of internal improvement, by so reorganizing the leg-

islature that Virginia, too, may be hitched to the Federal car.

It was this nationalizing tendency of the West that transformed the democracy of Jefferson into the national republicanism of Monroe and the democracy of Andrew Jackson. The West of the War of 1812, the West of Clay, and Benton, and Harrison, and Andrew Jackson, shut off by the Middle States and the mountains from the coast sections, had a solidarity of its own with national tendencies. On the tide of the Father of Waters, North and South met and mingled into a nation. Interstate migration went steadily on—a process of cross-fertilization of ideas and institutions. The fierce struggle of the sections over slavery on the western frontier does not diminish the truth of this statement; it proves the truth of it. Slavery was a sectional trait that would not down, but in the West it could not remain sectional. It was the greatest of frontiersmen who declared: "I believe this Government can not endure permanently half slave and half free. It will become all of one thing or all of the other." Nothing works for nationalism like intercourse within the nation. Mobility of population is death of localism, and the western frontier worked irresistibly in unsettling population. The effects reached back from the frontier and affected profoundly the Atlantic coast and even the Old World.

GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY

But the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe. As has been indicated, the frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control. The tax-gatherer is viewed as a representative of oppression. Prof. Osgood, in an able article, has pointed out that the frontier conditions prevalent in the colonies are important factors in the explanation of the American Revolution, where individual liberty was sometimes confused with absence of all effective government. The same conditions aid in explaining the difficulty of instituting a strong government in the period of the confederacy. The frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy.

The frontier States that came into the Union in the first quarter of a century of its existence came in with democratic suffrage provisions, and had reactive effects of the highest importance upon the older States whose peoples were being attracted there. An extension of the franchise became essential. It was *western* New York that forced an extension of suffrage in the constitutional convention of that State in 1821; and it was *western* Virginia that compelled the region to put a more liberal suffrage provision in the constitution framed in 1830, and to give to the frontier region a more nearly proportionate representation with the tide-water aristocracy. The rise of democracy as an effective force in the nation came in with western preponderance under Jackson and William Henry Harrison, and it meant the triumph of the frontier—with all of its good and with all of its evil elements. An interesting illustration of the tone of frontier democracy in 1830 comes from the same debates in the Virginia convention already referred to. A representative from western Virginia declared:

> But, sir, it is not the increase of population in the West which this gentleman ought to fear. It is the energy which the mountain breeze and western habits impart to those emigrants. They are regenerated, politically I mean, sir. They soon become *working politicians;* and the difference, sir, between a *talking* and a *working* politician is immense. The Old Dominion has long been celebrated for producing great orators; the ablest metaphysicians in policy; men that can split hairs in all abstruse questions of political economy. But at home, or when they return from Congress, they have negroes to fan them asleep. But a Pennsylvania, a New York, an Ohio, or a western Virginia statesman, though far inferior in logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric to an old Virginia statesman, has this advantage, that when he returns home he takes off his coat and takes hold of the plow. This gives him bone and muscle, sir, and preserves his republican principles pure and uncontaminated.

So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power. But the democracy born of free land, strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of administrative experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bounds, has its dangers as well as its benefits. Individualism in America has allowed a laxity in regard to governmental affairs which has rendered possible the spoils system and all the manifest evils that follow from the lack of a highly developed civic spirit. In this connection may be noted also the influence of frontier conditions in permitting lax business honor, inflated paper currency and wild-cat banking. The colonial and revolutionary frontier was the region whence

emanated many of the worst forms of an evil currency. The West in the War of 1812 repeated the phenomenon on the frontier of that day, while the speculation and wild-cat banking of the period of the crisis of 1837 occurred on the new frontier belt of the next tier of States. Thus each one of the periods of lax financial integrity coincides with periods when a new set of frontier communities had arisen, and coincides in area with these successive frontiers, for the most part. The recent Populist agitation is a case in point. Many a State that now declines any connection with the tenets of the Populists, itself adhered to such ideas in an earlier stage of the development of the State. A primitive society can hardly be expected to show the intelligent appreciation of the complexity of business interests in a developed society. The continual recurrence of these areas of paper-money agitation is another evidence that the frontier can be isolated and studied as a factor in American history of the highest importance.

ATTEMPTS TO CHECK AND REGULATE THE FRONTIER

The East has always feared the result of an unregulated advance of the frontier, and has tried to check and guide it. The English authorities would have checked settlement at the headwaters of the Atlantic tributaries and allowed the "savages to enjoy their deserts in quiet lest the peltry trade should decrease." This called out Burke's protest:

> If you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You can not station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow; a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with their habits of life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and, pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counselers, your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and in no long time must, be the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime and to suppress as an evil the command and blessing of Providence, "Increase and multiply." Such would be the happy result of an endeavor to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men.

But the English Government was not alone in its desire to limit the advance of the frontier and guide its destinies. Tide-water Virginia and South Carolina gerrymandered those colonies to insure the dominance of the coast in their legislatures. Washington desired to settle a State at a time in the Northwest; Jefferson would reserve from settlement the territory of his Louisiana purchase north of the thirty-second parallel, in order to offer it to the Indians in exchange for their settlements east of the Mississippi. "When we shall be full on this side," he writes, "we may lay off a range of States on the western bank from the head to the mouth, and so range after range, advancing compactly as we multiply." Madison went so far as to argue to the French minister that the United States had no interest in seeing population extend itself on the right bank of the Mississippi, but should rather fear it. When the Oregon question was under debate, in 1824, Smyth, of Virginia, would draw an unchangeable line for the limits of the United States at the outer limit of two tiers of States beyond the Mississippi, complaining that the seaboard States were being drained of the flower of their population by the bringing of too much land into market. Even Thomas Benton, the man of widest views of the destiny of the West, at this stage of his career declared that along the ridge of the Rocky Mountains "the western limits of the Republic should be drawn, and the statue of the fabled god Terminus should be raised upon its highest peak, never to be thrown down." But the attempts to limit the boundaries, to restrict land sales and settlement, and to deprive the West of its share of political power were all in vain. Steadily the frontier of settlement advanced and carried with it individualism, democracy, and nationalism, and powerfully affected the East and the Old World.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

The most effective efforts of the East to regulate the frontier came through its educational and religious activity, exerted by interstate migration and by organized societies. Speaking in 1835, Dr. Lyman Beecher declared: "It is equally plain that the religious and political destiny of our nation is to be decided in the West," and he pointed out that the population of the West "is assembled from all the

States of the Union and from all the nations of Europe, and is rushing in like the waters of the flood, demanding for its moral preservation the immediate and universal action of those institutions which discipline the mind and arm the conscience and the heart. And so various are the opinions and habits, and so recent and imperfect is the acquaintance, and so sparse are the settlements of the West, that no homogeneous public sentiment can be formed to legislate immediately into being the requisite institutions. And yet they are all needed immediately in their utmost perfection and power. A nation is being 'born in a day'. . . . But what will become of the West if her prosperity rushes up to such a majesty of power, while those great institutions linger which are necessary to form the mind and the conscience and the heart of that vast world. It must not be permitted. . . . Let no man at the East quiet himself and dream of liberty, whatever may become of the West. . . . Her destiny is our destiny."

With the appeal to the conscience of New England, he adds appeals to her fears lest other religious sects anticipate her own. The New England preacher and school-teacher left their mark on the West The dread of Western emancipation from New England's political and economic control was paralleled by her fears lest the West cut loose from her religion. Commenting in 1850 on reports that settlement was rapidly extending northward in Wisconsin, the editor of the *Home Missionary* writes: "We scarcely know whether to rejoice or mourn over this extension of our settlements. While we sympathize in whatever tends to increase the physical resources and prosperity of our country, we can not forget that with all these dispersions into remote and still remoter corners of the land the supply of the means of grace is becoming relatively less and less." Acting in accordance with such ideas, home missions were established and Western colleges were erected. As seaboard cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore strove for the mastery of Western trade, so the various denominations strove for the possession of the West. Thus an intellectual stream from New England sources fertilized the West. Other sections sent their missionaries; but the real struggle was between sects. The contest for power and the expansive tendency furnished to the various sects by the existence of a moving frontier must have had important results on the character of religious organization in the United States. The multiplication of rival churches in the little frontier towns had deep and lasting social effects. The religious aspects of the frontier make a chapter in our history which needs study.

INTELLECTUAL TRAITS

From the conditions of frontier life came intellectual traits of profound importance. The works of travelers along each frontier from colonial days onward describe certain common traits, and these traits have, while softening down, still persisted as survivals in the place of their origin, even when a higher social organization succeeded. The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combines with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier. Since the days when the fleet of Columbus sailed into the waters of the New World, America has been another name for opportunity, and the people of the United States have taken their tone from the incessant expansion which has not only been open but has even been forced upon them. He would be a rash prophet who should assert that the expansive character of American life has now entirely ceased. Movement has been its dominant fact, and, unless this training has no effect upon a people, the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise. But never again will such gifts of free land offer themselves. For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not *tabula rasa*. The stubborn American environment is there with its imperious summons to accept its conditions; the inherited ways of doing things are also there; and yet, in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, and scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons, have accompanied the frontier. What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that, and more, the ever-retreating frontier has been to the United States directly, and to the nations of Europe more remotely. And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.

Questions:

1. Turner, unlike the other writers in this section, does not make use of any single personality in interpreting history. He deals with an idea as such. Does he succeed, however, in making his presentation of the idea vivid and even dramatic? Consider some of the devices which he employs in order to do this; for example, the passage in which he puts the reader on an eminence and lets him see in imagination the various frontier figures pass by him in review.
2. This essay, written in 1890, has been most influential in the subsequent study of American history. Turner is evidently writing his essay for historians. Does he make out, however, a powerful case for his idea even on the average reader? If so, consider his essay as an example of organization for the purpose of clarity and persuasion.

Introduction to Poetry

THERE are so many misconceptions about poetry that any general statement on the subject, however short, must deal with them. First, then, what are some of the qualities which poetry does not have? It is not by nature soft or effeminate or remote from human experience. There is a great deal of bad poetry, of course, which exhibits these traits, just as there is a great deal of fiction and drama which exhibits them too; but such qualities are not typical of poetry any more than typical of fiction and drama. Moreover, poetry does not necessarily have to do with merely "poetic" subject matter, sheep grazing on a moonlit slope or the dawn just breaking over Mont Blanc or the first tremulous kiss of young love. Furthermore, poetry does not necessarily employ what are usually thought of as "poetic" words. Shakespeare, for instance, finds it necessary to use many words which many people would not regard as "nice," much less "poetic." The objection to the usual definition of poetry as "elevated thoughts expressed in beautiful language" is not only that it is too vague but also that it leads to this very misconception: i.e., that poetry is limited to a special subject matter and a special vocabulary.

Our best approach to poetry is to consider it as *merely one of the ways* in which a writer passes an experience on to his audience. Poetry is a part of literature and its end is the same as that of literature in general. Some of the ways in which good poetry differs from bad poetry and bad literature in general have already been discussed in the "General Introduction." Good poetry, like all good literature, will attempt to avoid certain faults: sentimentality, the use of stock responses, worn-out comparisons, *clichés,* etc. But wherein does the good poem differ from, say, a good short story? This is the type of question which we must attempt to answer here.

In the "General Introduction" we used Browning's poem, "Porphyria's Lover," in order to make the distinction between good literature in general, and bad. We may use the same poem, however, to make the distinction which exists between poetry as a form of literature and the other forms. Suppose we compare this poem with other possible literary treatments of the same situation.

The first thing which one will notice in making such a comparison is that the poem is much *shorter* than any story or play based on the same situation could possibly be, and of course far shorter than the novel. We can make this perfectly plain if we reduce Browning's poem to a prose paraphrase:

> I listened with breaking heart to the storm outside the cottage. As I listened, Porphyria glided into the room. She shut the door behind her, knelt by the grate and made up the fire. Then she took off her wet shawl and soiled gloves and her hat, and sat down beside me, calling my name, but I did not answer. She put her arm around my waist, and with her loosened yellow hair flowing about her, she pulled my cheek down against her bare shoulder, and told me how much she loved me. She was too weak to give up everything for me. I knew that. But tonight at the ball she had not been able to keep out of her mind the thought of me sitting here, pale and alone. And so she had come to me. I was happy and proud because I knew at last that Porphyria loved me, and I wondered what to do to keep her as she was at that moment. Therefore, I wound a cord of her yellow hair three times around her throat and strangled her. I am certain that she felt no pain, for, when I warily opened her eyes, their expression was quite normal. After my kisses brought the color back to her cheek, I propped her head on my shoulder. In this way we have both gained what we really wanted, and so we have sat here all night together without receiving any sign of God's displeasure.

In paraphrasing the poem, we have removed the verse and rhyme, and we have omitted the comparisons, but the paraphrase represents substantially all the detail represented in the poem, and in substantially the same order. The paraphrase obviously could not stand as a short story in its own right. The artist who wanted to turn it into a short story which would give an effect comparable to that given by the poem would have to alter it a great deal, and certainly one feels that he would have to *add things* here omitted—he would have to *expand* it. As it stands, the paraphrase represents little more than an anecdote, not a story at all.

Intensification and Concentration

The first point that we notice then in our comparison is the relative concentration of the poem as compared with the story or play that might be based upon this situation. This is not to say, of course, that any poem is always shorter than the short story which deals with the same situation, or that on the other hand there may not be very fine long poems like Milton's *Paradise Lost,* for example. And it is not to say, of course, that the effect gained from the poem would ever be *exactly* the same as that gained from some other form. But it is true that a poem can give a *comparable* effect, that is, can provoke an appropriate emotional response in the reader, in much fewer words than can usually a story or play; and this fact points to a most important characteristic of the poetic method: it tends toward intensification and concentration.

If we compare the method of the poem with that of the story, for instance, we shall see that the poem tends to employ less circumstance, less detail than would the story; but, correspondingly, there is more emphasis on form or arrangement of the details in the poem. In other words, if the poet tends to use a smaller number of details, he must select them even more carefully, and must arrange them so as to get the maximum effect from them. The circumstance in the poem is relatively slight, therefore; the pattern of arrangement or the form, relatively complex.

The emphasis on figurative language in poetry may be interpreted as an aspect of the tendency toward concentration and intensification. That is, in poetry not only the denotations of words are important but the connotations as well. Consequently, since the poet is trying to use all the qualities of his words, he often employs comparisons, for comparisons, as we shall see, allow us to depart further and further from the strict surface meaning of the word.

We may set down then three items in our list of the special kinds of emphasis of the poetic method:

1. Selectivity
2. Form
3. Figurative language

Notice that in stating that poetry tends to stress these items we are not cutting off poetry from the other forms of literature by an impassable chasm. *Any* writer must select his detail—he cannot get down on paper all the possible infinite welter of detail, even if he wanted to. *Any* writer imposes a form on his material—he cannot leave it in the meaningless disarrangement which it often seems to have in life. *Any* writer may make use of figurative language. But it is fair to say that the poetic method stresses these matters to a relatively higher degree than does any other method.

This emphasis on form carries over, as we have seen, into all sorts of fields; but in one, the field of rhythm, it is so prominent that the student may have come to feel that this is the primary distinction of poetry. The use of regular rhythms or verse is only one aspect of poetry, however; and it may be wiser to postpone an examination of it, important as it is, for a few pages while we examine some other aspects of form.

If poetry represents a concentration and intensification of experience which depends upon an emphasis on the formal qualities of the poem, it is interesting to see how these formal qualities allow for condensation and how they aid in the business of intensification. In the paraphrase of "Porphyria's Lover" we carefully removed most of them, including the verse form, with the result that the paraphrase was robbed of nearly all its force. How do some of these qualities of form function?

If, after reading Browning's poem, we compare our impressions of the room in the cottage with the actual details which have been given, we shall be surprized to see how few those details are. They have been carefully chosen to give an atmosphere. They *suggest* things in addition to themselves. For example, the storm outside which the poet intimates was possessed of a special quality of spite and vindictiveness, and the cold grate inside the cottage give an effect of a bleak and perhaps bare room—an effect which is vivid enough, but which is not based, we realize, on any detailed description of the room itself.

The descriptive details have also been chosen for their value in revealing to us the mood of the dominant character, and they thus help us to understand the motivation of the murder which he is to commit. In the "General Introduction" we pointed out how important it was for the poet's motivation of the murder to insist on the murderer's emotional detachment from the normal world of right and wrong at the time of the murder. We shall see that even the first details given in the poem prepare us for this feeling of isolation so that we feel it along with the lover himself. For example, Porphyria's closing the door and shutting "the cold out and the storm" give the feeling of shutting out not only the cold but the whole normal world in which we live. The cottage becomes something isolated and apart from the real world of affairs—it becomes the small, private world of devotion which exists between the man and the woman. And Porphyria's act of stirring up the fire

gives by a sort of comparison what spiritually she does for the man. The fire warms the room, and she warms her lover by her presence. If one objects that a person reading the poem could not possibly read all this into the lines in question, one must agree. But it is necessary to remember that such feelings given perhaps *unconsciously,* given only vaguely, are nevertheless a very powerful preparation for what follows, and that this unconscious preparation makes the latter part of the poem stir us with a much greater intensity than if the preparation were lacking. We must remember, in fact, as we analyze all sorts of poems that many of the most powerful means which the poet uses to influence us often accomplish their work without our being aware of them.

The form of poetry, then, is very closely knit, and in this poem details apparently so trivial as the description of the room are tied very tightly to the core of the poem.

In the "General Introduction" we have already pointed out how the arrangement of the details of the actual killing are calculated to imply the state of mind of the murderer: the methodical, calm, and apparently reasoned process of his mind. We noticed in the same place how important is the comparison which the poet uses here:

> As a shut bud that holds a bee,
> I warily oped her lids . . .

We pointed out the action referred to is that appropriate to the mischievous curiosity of a small boy—not that of a mature man; and that to intimate that the murderer could think of his murder in this way is to let us see, vividly and concretely, that his act as he committed it was not murder at all.

Figurative Language

If one will reread the paraphrase of the poem in which this comparison is left out, and then read the section in the poem in which it occurs, he will see how very important the comparison is. The case under discussion here is typical of poetry in general. Poets are continually using figures of speech, to make their most powerful and fundamental points. It is one of their most important devices for gaining intensity and concentration.

If this is true, we must perhaps revise some of our conceptions about the function of figurative language in poetry. At least we must make certain that we do not continue to entertain a widespread misconception of the use of figurative language which may prevent us from seeing the real service that figurative language renders. Figurative language is not used to give a pretty surface, though it may do so in some cases. But even in those cases it also accomplishes something else more fundamental. Let us take, for example, a very famous and much admired passage from Shakespeare. It is a passage spoken by Macbeth upon hearing of the death of his wife:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle;
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

Of the various things used in this passage for the purpose of comparison, only one, the candle, might be termed "pretty." And most of the other things, the idiot or the poor player, would be regarded as definitely ugly or unpleasant. The stories that idiots tell are not pretty, but this passage of poetry is universally recognized as one of the high points of Shakespeare's poetry. Therefore, if we can discover what general and fundamental function the figurative language serves in this case, we may arrive at a statement of the real purpose of figurative language in poetry.

All language is at basis figurative, of course; and we use all the time in our speech many terms which are clearly figurative in their origin. Thus we speak of the *eye* of a needle or the *mouth* of a river. We do not, of course, think of these objects as being eyes or mouths in any human sense as we use the terms today, but clearly the terms originated because the small hole in the needle was thought to be like a human eye and the entrance of a river like a human mouth.

In saying that all language is at basis figurative, we come very close to saying that at basis all language is *poetic.* It will be easy to show why. We have already said that poetry tends toward concentration and intensification. But so does figurative language, particularly when the images are not worn-out but fresh and new. Compare the two statements: "He is a distinctly unpleasant fellow," and "He is a swine." The latter is much sharper and more emphatic. It carries more force because it implies the figure of a hog with all the unpleasant attributes of a hog. But figures of speech, comparisons, are used of course sometimes, not because they carry a strong emotional coloring, but because they may be employed to make an idea clearer. For example, the author of a textbook in science may say that the human body is like

a machine. He is interested in having the student see that the body creates energy from the food which it assimilates just as the machine creates energy from the fuel it burns. He uses the figure of the machine, therefore, as an *illustration*. Here, obviously, the author is not concerned with imparting an attitude, a feeling, at all. He is anxious merely to communicate an idea.

Now as we have seen, poetry, along with literature in general, differs from science in that it is interested, not in the communication of ideas merely, but of ideas *and* feelings about the ideas. The poet will be interested therefore in choosing comparisons which will state not only ideas but which will carry with them feelings about the ideas. As a matter of fact, almost any comparison which we can think of does carry with it a feeling. Even the comparison of the body to a machine which we have mentioned as an instance of the purely scientific use of figurative language is not *mere* illustration of idea. It is colored by a certain kind of feeling. To compare the body to a tree rather than to a machine carries with it a certain change of feeling as well as of idea.

In addition to this function of *illustration,* critics sometimes speak of the function of *ornamentation*. And this is one of the functions of figurative language. For example, when the poet says

O my love is like a red, red rose

he attributes to his love the beauty and freshness of the flower. Poets often use comparisons thus to ennoble and dignify the things of which they speak. But they do not, as we have seen in the passage from *Macbeth,* always use comparisons to *ennoble* and *dignify*. This is only one aspect of the use of figurative language to influence our feelings about some object or idea. Indeed, the *general* function of the comparison of the girl to a rose is quite the same as that of the comparison of the man to a swine in such a statement of disgust as "He is a swine." The *general* function of both comparisons is to influence our feelings about, or attitude toward, the subjects under treatment.

The passage quoted earlier from *Macbeth* will indicate how the poet uses a comparison to communicate not only idea but feeling, and feeling not restricted to the relatively narrow scope which it has in primarily decorative or ornamental comparisons. Macbeth says that life is a tale told by an idiot. Why? The idea of course is that life is meaningless. Macbeth feels, as his wife dies and all his plans begin to go to pieces, that life is meaningless. What else does the comparison tell us which the statement, "life is meaningless," would not?

In the first place, the picture of the idiot, raging and gibbering meaningless syllables, adds a horror and loathsomeness to the statement. It gives us something of the horror which Macbeth feels at his discovery that life has no meaning. But the figure also tells us more accurately than the mere abstract statement does just what kind of horror Macbeth feels. Though we do not expect a beast to utter intelligible speech, we do expect intelligible speech—a statement that has a meaning—from a human being. The incoherence of the idiot has a special horror, therefore, for the idiot is, after all, a human being. The idiot's babbling is felt, thus, as a hideous travesty on human nature. Macbeth feels, as do all human beings, that life *ought* to have a meaning. His horror at finding that life does not is therefore the sort of horror which one might feel at the babbling of an idiot.

It should be clear that the function of the comparison in the case just discussed is not merely that of making an idea clearer and simpler to understand (the function of mere illustration); the poet is using his comparison in order to communicate something to the reader which otherwise could not be communicated at all. This function of *necessary communication* (the communication of idea *plus* the attitude toward and feeling about the idea) is the great primary function of figurative language. It is perhaps because of this that we sometimes say that it is impossible to transpose what a good poet says into prose—that is, it is impossible to give the experience in any way other than by reading the poetry itself.

Classification of Figurative Language

Figurative language may be classified, for the sake of convenience in discussion, in a number of different ways. Two of the most common classifications are called the *simile* and the *metaphor*. A simile is a comparison announced by the use of *like* or *as*. For example:

Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.
("The Cloud," Shelley)

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down.
("Mr. Flood's Party," Robinson)

A metaphor, however, is a comparison which is not announced, but appears in the form of an identification of one object with another. For example:

Life's but a walking shadow
(*Macbeth,* Shakespeare)

We have just said what comparisons in poetry (and in any other form of literature) accomplish for us. But on what grounds do we accept these comparisons? A comparison, we know, implies a similarity between the things compared. What is the nature of this similarity?

We know that a scientist, a botanist let us say, classifies the objects he deals with because of certain similarities. These similarities are not necessarily similarities of appearance, but depend on structure. For instance, the botanist classifies the grape or the tomato as a berry and the raspberry as an aggregate fruit. The botanist has discovered a system by which all plant life can be classified. But the writer has no such ready-made system for dealing with the similarities on which his comparisons are based. As we have shown above, the use of figurative language in poetry is to convey feeling and attitude, but the scientist in making his system of similarities is absolutely unconcerned with this function; he is merely defining relationships of structure.

Since the poet, let us say, is not dealing with a fixed system, the similarities he embodies in his comparisons may be of many different kinds. For instance, in comparing his love to a red rose, Burns was dealing with the quality of freshness and fragility which was possessed by both the woman and the flower. He would never have maintained for a moment that they were alike in appearance. To take a more complicated case, notice the similarity found by Macbeth between life and the tale told by an idiot. In general, the poet is continually seizing upon some similarity of this sort and pointing it out to us, and the acceptability of the similarity in the final sense must be judged in the light of the poet's whole intention in the poem. A poet is not compelled to use similarities that strike us at first glance as clear and obvious, but he is compelled to prove to us that the similarity, in the sense in which he is using it, is a good one. Perhaps no one had ever thought of the similarity between life and the babblings of an idiot before Shakespeare wrote it down, but after we read the play and know how Macbeth's life had come to ruin, we know that the comparison is a good one. The great imaginative comparisons in poetry strike us with a sense of freshness—may even startle or shock us—and yet we feel, at the same time, that they ring true. To summarize all this, we may say that the pointing out of these similarities is one of the fundamental exercises of the imagination. The great poets are always pointing out connections and relationships in experience that other people never see—putting our experience into a pattern, into a form, so that they will feel the meaning of it.

Closely related to this imaginative use of figurative language is the use of symbols. For if the metaphor is the identification of one thing with another, the symbol is the use of some concrete object which stands for something else and which stands, as a rule, for some general idea as the tiger in Blake's poem. "The Tiger," stands for the terrible and brilliant power of evil. The artist seeks adequate symbols and is successful in proportion as he finds them. The principal characters in any really great story or novel or play, for example, always have a certain symbolic force. Poetry then with its insistence on metaphorical language and on symbolism is not an eccentric form of literature lying somewhere on the remote outskirts of fiction and drama, but is a form that lies very close to the heart of all literature—may even be said to be literature in a very pure and concentrated form.

The Basis of Verse in Human Experience

We have stated earlier in this introduction that regular rhythm is one aspect of the emphasis on form which we find in poetry. We have already seen how the poet binds together in closely knit patterns the various aspects of the words which he uses. It would be strange if we did not find him making use of the aspect of rhythm also, bringing it into the larger pattern of effects which is the poem. Some further comment on verse is necessary, however; for one reason, because there are so many confusions about the topic; for another, because, though verse is only one of the tools which the poet possesses, it is a very powerful tool and its power calls for some sort of explanation.

All utterance has some sort of rhythm, of course. But in prose the rhythm is usually under relatively slight control of the author. He exerts some sort of control, of course, and some prose, much of that in the Bible for instance, is very rhythmical indeed. But in poetry the rhythm is usually very carefully controlled. It is usually regularized; that is, it takes the form of a regular pattern which we call *verse*. The poet, as we have said, usually finds it an advantage to employ verse, and most poems are written in verse, but not all poetry. For example, examine the poem of Walt Whitman in this collection. It is possible, then, to have a poem (that is, an experience thoroughly unified and intensified) which is not written in verse at all or which is written in what is called *free verse*, a relatively loose verse form. It is possible, on the other hand, to have verse which is not poetry at all. For example:

Two and two equal four,
Not any less nor any more.

Verse and prose are opposites, therefore, but not *poetry* and prose. Poetry and prose indeed shade off into each other by imperceptible degrees. For example, the following passage taken from the first chapter of Ecclesiastes will furnish an example of this shading off. It is hard to say whether it could be called more properly *poetry* or *prose.*

> What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun? One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteneth to its place where it ariseth. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again to its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again.

Or to take another example, consider the last sentences of Melville's *Moby Dick:*

> . . . and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.
>
> Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

But the poet does usually use verse. Why? Principally, perhaps, because human beings seem naturally to fall into a regular rhythm when speaking under great emotional stress. Here again it is not easy to give a good reason which will explain why this should be true. But it is a [illegible] fact which the student may check for himself. For example, if one has ever heard a woman speaking in deep grief, or a person speaking who is beside himself with rage, he will have noticed that the utterance begins to take on a regular rhythmical pattern: certain words tend to occur again and again with the same emphasis, and the whole speech tends to get a regular swing.

Now the poet does not employ a regular rhythmic pattern (that is, verse) because *he* is beside himself with emotion. As a matter of fact the situation is usually quite the contrary. But he often makes use of our association of high emotional intensity with a rhythmic pattern, using it to build up an emotional intensity in us.

One of the strange things about verse, however, is that, while we associate it with emotional intensity, it also has a marked hypnotic effect. The hypnotist uses rhythmic gesture and rhythmic utterance in order to induce a sort of trance in which the person hypnotized responds readily to the suggestions which the hypnotist wishes to implant. Realizing the connections which verse has with intense feeling and at the same time with hypnosis, we are better prepared to understand why it should be such a powerful tool in the poet's hand as he tries to make us share in an experience with himself, but also to see why it is a tool which must be used carefully and intelligently or else it will defeat the poet's own ends.

The poet then, in his use of verse, will avoid misusing it. If intelligent, he will realize that whereas verse may be used to raise the emotional intensity of his utterance, it is only *one* of the means at his disposal. Moreover, he will remember that too much insistence on the verse pattern will have just the opposite effect from that which he intends: it will merely put people to sleep with a mechanical singsong. In general, if he uses a metrical pattern, he will use it, not rigidly and mechanically, but flexibly, relating it to the other formal arrangements which he employs, and always as a means to accomplishing the general intention of the poem—never as an end in itself. So also with rhyme, alliteration, and any other such devices which he may employ. Yeats' poem, "That the Night Come," which is included in this text, will furnish a good example of the intelligent use of the verse in a poem, a use which makes it an organic element in the poem.

So much for the importance of verse in poetry and for its basis in human experience. There remains, however, the matter of discussing the system of verse as such. The following section will present, for convenience in a summarized form, the definitions of the various common elements of verse and their relations to each other.

The Mechanics of Verse

METER

I. Foot: The unit, or smallest, combination of accented and unaccented syllables occurring in verse. The regular recurrence of this syllable arrangement determines the rhythm of a verse line.

The kinds of feet are:

1. Iamb: One unaccented and one accented syllable: _ /
The following line is composed of iambic feet:

_ / _ / _ / _ / _ /
I know / I am / but sum/mer to / your heart
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

2. Anapaest: two unaccented and one accented syllable: _ _ /
This line is composed of anapaestic feet:

_ _ / _ _ / _ _ / _ _ /
in the morn/ing of life / when its cares / are unknown
1. 2. 3. 4.

3. Trochee: one accented and one unaccented syllable: / _
This line is chiefly composed of trochaic feet:

/ — / — / — / — / — —
Day by / day thy / shadow / shines in / heaven be /
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
/ _
holden
6.

(It will be observed that one foot, the fifth, is irregular in this line, being composed of one accented and two unaccented syllables, an arrangement of syllables called a *dactyl.*)

4. Dactyl: one accented and two unaccented syllables: / _ _
This line is composed of dactylic feet:

/ _ _ / _ _ / _ _ / _ _
Where is my / lovely one / where is my / loveliest
1. 2. 3. 4.

5. Spondee: two long syllables in classical versification, but the term cannot literally be made to apply in the stress system of English metrics, because a line composed of spondees would contain no unaccented syllables. Even when one or two such apparently occur, an accent is placed on one syllable more heavily than on the other in conformity with the prevailing pattern of the line. But in such cases an effect is gained which may be called *spondaic.* The following lines are examples of such effects.

_ / _ / _ / // /
I hear / it in / the deep / heart's core
1. 2. 3. 4.

(In this line the movement is iambic, but in the fourth foot *heart's* takes an accent almost as heavy as that on *core,* a kind of secondary accent indicated here by the mark //.)
Or:

/ _ / // / // / _
With an / empire's / lamen/tation
1. 2. 3. 4.

(Here the movement is trochaic, but in the second and third feet there is a *spondaic* effect.)
The iambic foot is usual in English verse, other types being used chiefly to give variety to verse in combination with the iamb.

II. Line. Meter marks off the prevailing rhythm of a poem into *a verse* (a single line). It may be said to define the *pattern of the line.* It gives a principle of regularity and order. According to their *metrical structure* (the number and kinds of feet) lines may be defined as follows. Number of feet: *monometer,* a line of one foot; *dimeter,* a line of two feet; *trimeter,* a line of three feet; *tetrameter,* a line of four feet; *pentameter,* a line of five feet; *hexameter,* a line of six feet; *heptameter,* a line of seven feet, *octameter,* a line of eight feet.

A line is defined, therefore, as *iambic pentameter* (five iambic feet), *trochaic trimeter* (three trochaic feet), *anapaestic tetrameter* (four anapaestic feet), etc. (See section under Foot for examples.) Lines longer than five feet are extremely difficult to handle in verse. The important reason is that a line is really a unit of attention and must therefore be short enough for the reader to grasp unconsciously the pattern, in itself, as a unit of composition. A seven foot line tends to break up into two units, one of four and one of three feet.

III. Variation in the Line. A line of verse possesses a metrical order, but it is not a mechanical order in any barely competent verse. Variety arises from a number of causes. The following are the most obvious:

1. Metrical Variation. Sometimes a foot different from that characteristic of the line may be *substituted.* (See Foot, 3 for a *dactylic substitution* in the trochaic line.) The following lines represent very common varieties of metrical variation:

1. For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
2. This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
3. Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
4. Nor cast one longing lingering look behind.

It is clear that the general metrical pattern of the lines here is *iambic pentameter.* But there are two variations in lines 3 and 4. In the line 3 there are ten syllables, as in the preceding two lines, but the accents have a different arrangement: the first word, *Left,* is accented, although the first word of every other line is unaccented. It is possible to argue that *Left the* is a *trochaic foot* (/_), but some readers will argue that the word *the* really goes with *warm pre(cincts)* to form an *anapaest* (_ _/). In the line 4 there is another kind of variation, for the line has eleven syllables instead of the ten syllables common to the other lines. It may be scanned as follows:

_ / _ / _ / _ _ / _ /
Nor cast / one long/ing ling/ering look / behind
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

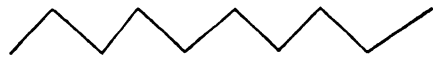
The fourth foot is an anapaestic variation in an iambic line.

2. Rhetorical or Elocutionary Variation. It is clear that, even in the case of a regular metrical line, the reader does not put equal stress on all accented syllables. The actual meaning of the words prevents any such mechan-

ical reading. This creates another kind of movement in the line which does not conform to the metrical pattern. For instance, the following line is regular in meter:

I know I am but summer to your heart

According to meter it might be graphed:



I know I am but summer to your heart

But the two most emphatic words in the line according to meaning are *know* and *summer;* therefore, the syllables *know* and *sum-* take the heaviest stresses in the line. *Heart* is probably of next importance. *Am* and *to,* though accented in the meter, are relatively unimportant, *to* probably taking less stress than the unaccented *I's* in the line. But *to,* in relation to the syllable *-mer* is accented. The line by meaning might be graphed in this way:



I know I am but summer to your heart

The pauses in verse tend to give a variety of movement. Every sentence in ordinary speech breaks up into word groups that constitute the units of the sentence (phrases and clauses) with pauses of different value between—with, or without, punctuation. The same is true of the sentence in verse. The pauses may or may not fit the verse pause, that is, the end of the line If the sense pause falls at the end of the line, the unity of the metrical pattern of the line is weakened. If the pause falls within a line, the metrical pattern tends to be broken. This is especially true if the pause falls *within a foot* and not at the end of a foot. Study the following examples. (The pauses are indicated by the mark / when light and // when heavy.)

1. . . . . thither he plies, /
2. Undaunted to meet there / whatever power
3. Or spirit / of the nethermost Abyss /
4. Might in that noise reside, // of whom to ask
5. Which way the nearest coast / of darkness lies
6. Bordering on light; // when straight behold the Throne
7. Of Chaos, / and his wide pavilion spread
8. Wide on the wasteful Deep; // with him enthroned
9. Sat sable-vested Night, / eldest of things, /
10. The consort of his reign; // and by them stood
11. Orcus and Ades, / and the dreaded name
12. Of Demogorgon; . . .

(*Paradise Lost,* Book II, Milton)

Study, also, the blank verse passages in Section V for such variations. There is no regular place where the pauses fall in the line, and the actual value of the pauses varies from instance to instance. When there is a definite pause at the end of a line it is called an *end-stopped line.* When there is no such pause it is called a *run-on line;* that is, when the sense-group spills over into the next line. This is also called *enjambement.* In the verses above most of the lines are run-on lines, the definite exceptions being lines 1 and 9, though the pause at the end of 3 is more marked than that at the end of any other of the remaining lines. Further, in the passage there are a great many heavy pauses within the lines. Consequently there is a kind of contest between the arrangement of the sense groups and the arrangement of the lines, which gives vitality and variety to the movement of the passage.

Such pauses as these in the above passage within the line are given the name CAESURA. Usually, the *caesura* falls toward the middle of the line, but there are exceptions here in lines 3 and 7.

More than one pause may occur in a line, although in such cases one pause is usually dominant. All pauses are not given the name *caesura.*

3. Length Variation. It is obvious that some syllables require a longer *time* than others for pronunciation. In the following examples there is an apparent difference in length, although the lines are all iambic pentameter. (Note: Example (4), however, is not precisely a regular line because of the light stress, if any, on the word *and*)

(1) And wretches hang that jurymen may dine (*Rape of the Lock,* Pope)
(2) Thy hand, great Anarch, let the curtain fall,
(3) And universal dullness covers all. (*Dunciad,* Pope)
(4) Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash (*The Passing of Arthur,* Tennyson)

Example (1) gives the impression of being very short; (4) of being very long; and (2) is longer than (3). Since the lines contain the same number of syllables and the same number of feet, the apparent differences in length derive from the nature of the syllables used, that is, from their differences in time value. These lines are extreme examples, with the effect of each line fairly consistent in itself, that is, tending to be all short or all long. But most lines of verse offer more fluctuation within themselves, a fluctuation of incidental variety often merely accidental, and more often unconscious. (See below under ONOMATOPOEIA for further comment on relation of sound and sense.)

ONOMATOPOEIA

Onomatopoeia is the imitation of sense by sound. The following words are *onomatopoeic: buzz, hiss, crackle, splash, bang, hum, whisper, rustle,* etc. But the poet sometimes attempts to extend the effect of such imitation beyond a single word into a line or passage. One of the best known examples is from Tennyson:

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
The murmur of innumerable bees.
("Come Down O Maid")

Here the poet is obviously trying to imitate, or at least suggest, in the actual sound of the word combination, the sounds he is describing. Or take another example, from Byron:

From peak to peak the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder. (*Childe Harold*)

In each of these examples the poet has based his effect on the use of two onomatopoeic words (*moan* and *murmur* in the first, and *rattling* and *thunder* in the second) with the principle extended into words that, strictly speaking (for instance, *elms* or *leaps*), are not onomatopoeic. It might be said that a word like *leaps* is appropriate to the sense; that is, is an *imitative* word, but such imitation is only of the vaguest and most general order. Sound combinations, such as "Leaps the live thunder," like metrical combinations, may in general be said to fit the sense only in the vaguest and most elementary way; they are appropriate to the *mood*, as we see after the mood has been defined by the meaning of the words. In themselves the sound or metrical combinations convey nothing specific. Of a line like the following, which is very fine, it would be difficult, for instance, to say that it *imitates*, anything unless one is willing to go so far as to maintain that the word *white* or *gold* imitates the color in question:

Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold
(*The Waste Land*, Eliot)

Simply, the movement of the verse is agreeable and the sound combinations pleasing in themselves. It is well to talk about the *"union of sound and sense"* or the *"imitative quality of verse"* with the greatest caution and a clear notion of the limitations of such phrases in application to a specific instance in poetry. What does a passage of poetry from a foreign language convey if the words are not understood? In general, the movement of verse, rather than the imitative quality of words in themselves, is the more important factor. For instance, any reader can understand an extreme case, like this:

Death is here, death is there,
Death is round us everywhere.

Here the movement of the verse is clearly inappropriate to the sense.

RHYME

What is ordinarily called *rhyme* is a correspondence in two or more words between the sound of the last accented syllable and whatever comes after (*blow—grow, address—repress, potato—Plato, pattering—scattering*). Rhyme depends on sound, not on spelling, for instance, *buy—why, write—fight*. In all of the cases given the introductory consonants are *different*, but the accented syllables and the vowels and succeeding consonants are identical in sound. Rhymes are:

1. Masculine when the accented syllables that are rhymed are the last syllables of the words in question: *address—repress*.
2. Feminine when the accented syllables that are rhymed are followed by identical unaccented syllables: *lightly—brightly*.
3. Double (same as *feminine*)
4. Triple when the rhymed accented syllables are each followed by two syllables that are identical: *tenderly—slenderly*. This type of rhyme is also called *feminine* because the words do not end with the syllable that takes the heavy accent.

Sometimes words that do not give perfect rhyme are used by poets. For instance, some words are spelled alike in the rhyme vowels and consonants, but are not pronounced alike: *stone—gone*. This may be called *eye rhyme* or *sight rhyme*. In other cases only the vowels are identical: *bone—dome*. (See ASSONANCE.) In other cases the necessary consonant arrangement is present, but the vowels differ: *study—lady*. This is variously called *half rhyme, slant rhyme, tangential rhyme*, or *suspended rhyme* When rhymes occur within the line instead of at the ends of lines, the arrangement is called *internal rhyme*.

So Lord Howard past *away* with five ships of war
that *day*

The splendor *falls* on castle *walls*

The mere fact of rhyme in itself gives a kind of surprise and pleasure: but the poet uses it for definite effects. It serves a structural purpose in linking lines and building up stanzas by forming a pattern. When the reader grasps the pattern he anticipates the appearance of the rhyme. Thus, rhyme can become a principle of order in poetry. As the succession of consonant and vowel sounds in verse gives the *melody*, so the use of rhyme contributes to the *harmonic* effect.

There are other ways in which words may be linked and which may be discussed under the heading of rhyme: ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, and CONSONANCE. ALLITERATION may be called initial rhyme, for the opening of the corresponding syllables is the same: *forest, farmer, furtive*. The use of alliteration links parts of a line together, or links one line to another. This is an example of the former use:

A *b*itter God to follow, a *b*eautiful God to *b*ehold

The excessive use of alliteration tends to give a mechanical effect in modern verse.

ASSONANCE may be called *interior rhyme*, for it means the identity of vowel sound in accented syllables without the identity of the following consonants. For instance, in the following line assonance appears:

In the dark backward and abysm of time.

Assonance is sometimes employed instead of ordinary rhyme at the end of lines, but usually it appears merely as a kind of internal linking and enrichment of sound effects within the line.

CONSONANCE differs from rhyme in that the consonants of the corresponding syllables are identical, though the vowels are different *spilled—spelled; star—stir; gone—gun.* Consonance may be employed for the same general purpose as assonance.

STANZA

The stanza is a pattern of lines that usually, although not necessarily, is repeated in a poem as a unit of composition. The lines of a stanza may or may not rhyme. A stanza is described by the metrical pattern of lines and the *rhyme scheme,* if any. For example:

1. But he grew old—	a.
2. This knight so bold—	a.
3. And o'er his heart a shadow	b.
4 Fell as he found	c.
5. No spot of ground	c.
6. That looked like Eldorado.	b.

The general movement of this stanza is *iambic,* with a metrical variation in line 4.
(The accent there falls on *Fell* and not on *as*.) Lines 1 and 2, 4 and 5 are dimeter; lines 3 and 6 are trimeter with an extra syllable. The *rhyme scheme* is a-a-b-c-c-b, the repetition of a letter indicating a rhyme. The poet has the problem, after he adopts a stanza form for a poem, to fit his meaning to it or vary his meaning from the stanza pattern. That is, the meaning may end with the stanza or may spill over, as in the case of the run-on line. And meaning groups (sentence, clause, or phrase) may or may not fall at corresponding points from stanza to stanza. The stanza, like the metrical scheme of a line, is a principle of order in a poem, but the movement of the verse within the stanza and the relation of meaning to the stanza afford perpetual variation.
Below are some of the more usual stanza forms:

I. COUPLET: two lines rhyming or unrhyming. Whatever the length of the lines, the term applies. The lines do not have to be of the same length.

The *heroic couplet* is composed of two *iambic pentameter* lines rhyming:

> Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
> Above the reach of sacrilegious hands.

II. QUATRAIN: four lines rhyming or unrhyming and not necessarily of regular metrical length:

> Last night I fled until I came
> To streets where leaking casements dripped
> Stale lamplight from the corpse of flame.
> One nervous window bled. . . .

This is an irregular quatrain, the first three lines being iambic tetrameter, the fourth being iambic trimeter. The quatrain rhymes a-x-a-x. (In a rhyme-scheme chart *x* may be taken to indicate unrhymed lines even when repeated.) Perhaps the most usual form of quatrain is the *ballad stanza:* iambic tetrameter and trimeter alternating with the rhyme scheme of x-a-x-a. The *heroic quatrain,* also very common, is iambic pentameter rhyming a-b-a-b. The *envelope quatrain* rhymes a-b-b-a; the lines may be of different lengths, or combinations of length.

III. THREE LINE STANZA:

1. Triplet: a stanza of three lines rhyming together, the length of the lines may vary.

2. Terza rima: stanzas of three lines linked together. The scheme is: a-b-a / b-c-b/ c-d c / d-e-d/ etc.
The line length is not determined necessarily by definition. The *terza rima* is not very common in English poetry; Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is the most famous English poem employing it.

IV. FIVE AND SIX LINE STANZAS: many five and six line combinations appear in English poetry, but most of these are not standardized and named as are the quatrain, etc.

V. SONNET. This is one of the most important forms in English. There are several types.

1. Italian or legitimate: this form consists of two parts, an *octet* or eight iambic pentameter lines rhyming a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a, and a *sestet* of six lines rhyming usually c-d-c-d-c-d. But in the *sestet* many other variations are sometimes used. The divisions of the sonnet are not purely artificial but correspond to the treatment of the thought involved. It may be said that the *octet* presents the *theme* of the sonnet, a question, a situation, a reflection, a problem, etc.; and that the *sestet* gives a resolution or conclusion, sometimes merely an acceptance without further protests of the situation defined in the *octet.* There may or may not be a definite break between the *octet* and *sestet;* when the break is not absolutely definite with a full pause, and when the thought spills over a little into the *sestet,* what is called *enjambement* occurs. (See Milton's sonnets for example.)

2. Shakespearian or English: this form is composed of three quatrains rhyming a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-f-, and a couplet g-g. The lines are iambic pentameter. The turn in thought mentioned above does not occur with the regularity in this form that appears in the *legitimate* sonnet. But the couplet almost always offers a kind of conclusion or resolution of the theme developed in the three preceding quatrains. Sometimes, however, the

conclusion or resolution may begin before the quatrains; in such cases the *psychological structure* of the English sonnet approaches that of the *legitimate*.

3. Loosely speaking, any poem of fourteen iambic pentameter lines is called a sonnet. Many modern writers have altered the rhyme and psychological order of the sonnet for various purposes.

VI. BLANK VERSE: unrhymed iambic pentameter. Blank verse is a very flexible form, for it can be used for many different kinds of poetic effects. This flexibility made it the form best adapted for plays, and so the Elizabethan drama is written generally in blank verse. In Section V of this collection there are several examples of blank verse used for different effects.

POETRY

SECTION I

All the poems in this first section tell a story. Obviously, they differ in many ways from a straight prose account of a story. Most prominent, of course, is the difference of metrical form. In the second place, the treatment of the actual events in the poems is different from the treatment one would find in ordinary prose accounts. There is, therefore, a difference in the principle of organization. In approaching the poems in this section, the reader should constantly ask himself this question: "In what way does a given poem differ from a prose account of the same event?" The reader may prepare a prose paraphrase of a given poem and then compare it with the poem itself. A good prose paraphrase will give a mastery of the facts of the case; but the poem merely starts at that point. The poem is not attempting merely to give facts; it is attempting to stimulate a particular feeling about those facts.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

ANONYMOUS

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
  Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
  To sail this schip of mine."

Up and spake an eldern knicht,[1]
  Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
  That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid[2] letter,
  And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
  Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
  A loud lauch[3] lauchèd he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
  The teir blinded his ee.

"O wha[4] is this has don this deid,
  This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
  To sail upon the se!

"Mak hast, mak hast, my mirry men all,
  Our guid ship sails the morne:"
"O say na sae,[5] my master deir,
  For I feir a deadlie storme."

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,
  Wi the auld[6] moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
  That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith[7]
  To weet their cork-heild schoone;[8]
Bot lang owre a'[9] the play wer playd,
  Thair hats they swam aboone.[10]

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
  Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir[11] they se Sir Patrick Spens
  Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
  Wi thair gold kems[12] in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain[13] deir lords,
  For they'll se thame na mair.[14]

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,[15]
  It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens.
  Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

This is a *ballad;* that is, it is a poem which tells a story, but it is important to notice *how* it tells the story. In the first place, the poem is not so much a detailed and ordered narrative as a *drama*. The poem is actually

[1] knight
[2] broad
[3] laugh
[4] who
[5] so
[6] old
[7] loath
[8] cork-heeled shoes
[9] all
[10] above
[11] ere
[12] combs
[13] own
[14] more
[15] Aberdeen

made up of little dramatic scenes. The first of these scenes portrays the king inquiring for the name of a good sailor, learning of Sir Patrick, and writing a letter to Sir Patrick, ordering him to undertake a voyage for him. There is no transition from this to the second scene, which begins abruptly with Sir Patrick pacing the seashore. He receives the letter, and though he realizes the folly of attempting a voyage at this time of year, he passes on the order to his men. It is only when we come to the eighth stanza that we find the straight dramatic form abandoned in favor of comment on the situation by the poet, and even this comment is still close to drama.

The eighth stanza pictures—again without any transition—the hats of the Scottish lords floating on the sea. The ninth and tenth stanzas picture their ladies in their fine houses waiting for their lords to return to them. Not until the last stanza does the poem state explicitly that the ship was lost, and even here the poet does not say "The ship foundered." Instead, he paints a picture of the brave sailor lying on the sea floor with the Scottish lords about him.

From this account one can see how much the poem, simple though it may appear, differs from flat prose statement. The prose statement would probably go something like this: "The king, deciding that a voyage had to be made, found upon inquiry that Sir Patrick Spens was the best sailor to be had, and ordered him to make the voyage. Sir Patrick, though realizing that a storm was brewing and that the trip was likely to be disastrous, carried out the order. The ship sank, and Sir Patrick went down with her together with the crew of noble passengers who had been entrusted to his care."

Now, is the poem better than the prose statement? Why is it better? We can draw up a sort of balance sheet for the poetic method as against the prose. On the debit side of the poem's account we must first set down this: the prose statement is the clearer of the two. If one is in a hurry to give the facts and if he merely wishes to pass on the facts, he will naturally prefer to use prose. But these particular facts are not important in themselves. We are not anxious to learn these facts for their practical importance as one needs to learn the price of eggs or the weather forecast. And moreover, the tragedy as given in the poem is clear enough—there is no great difficulty in finding out what really happened.

Now what is to be put to the credit side of the account? What is gained by telling the story in the form of the poem? In the first place, everything is so much more *vivid* in the poem. By giving the story in little flashes or scenes, we have a sharpness of detail which would otherwise be missed. The prose method is to make the flat statement that the king was thoughtless and foolhardy, knowing nothing of the sea, whereas Sir Patrick was an experienced sailor. The method of the poem is, on the other hand, to show the king actually in his characteristic surroundings. The poem shows him sitting in his palace and drinking his wine at his ease, in contrast to Sir Patrick walking on the beach, within sight of his ship, and uttering a scornful laugh at the folly of the king's orders.

In the same way, the ominous sense of disaster is given, and given vividly, by having the sailor tell of the warning in the weather-signs. The new moon with the old moon in her arms is the folk way of describing what is sometimes seen at the new moon: there is the thin crescent of the new moon with a thin ring of light outlining the rest of the circle of the moon. The picture is very effective here, for it is not only concrete; it has associations of mystery and foreboding. To analyze a little more closely, there is an ironical contrast embedded in the figure itself. The image of the new moon holding the old moon in her arms seems to be an image which suggests affectionate care; but to those who know the weather-signs, it means just the opposite—it means storms and disaster for those at sea.

Does the reader have to analyze consciously in such detail in order for the figure to be effective for him? No, much of the effectiveness of poetry depends upon effects made on the *unconscious* mind of the reader—effects which the reader cannot consciously analyze and explain and which are, therefore, accounted for under some such phrase as "the magic of poetry." And the reader loses a great deal that poetry has to give him if he is willing to accept only what he can explain rationally. Part of the difficulty in appreciating poetry is that the student is trained to read it only as he reads prose, looking only for the facts and not for what is implied. A great deal of the so-called "magic of poetry" lies in its metrical form, a point which cannot be taken up at this time.

The way in which the poem builds up to a climax at the end is a good example of this. There is a quality of suspense which the prose summary lacked. Not only does the poem avoid telling us what actually happened until we come to the last line; there is a definite attempt to connect the tragic end with the forebodings of tragedy given in the earlier stanzas. After mentioning the consternation of the sailors, the poem brings us back to the Scottish lords for ironical comment. They didn't like to wet even the heels of their fine shoes, but before matters were over, their hats floated above them. Then the poem takes up their ladies, waiting for their husbands' return. They are pictured in their finery with their fans and their golden combs in their hands. But all their wealth could not bring their husbands back again.

The irony is built up here into a comment on the vanity of earthly power and riches. The irony is stronger for being merely hinted rather than stated in so many words in a moralizing fashion. The irony is made more forcible also by making Sir Patrick Spens the central basis of it.

Sir Patrick is the seasoned sailor. He knows the sea, and one feels that he knows life too. He knows that one can't always beat the sea or nature or life. And he knows this because, unlike the fine lords, he has actually battled with life. In the end, of course, the disaster to the lords is his own disaster, for, though Sir Patrick is a good sailor, he is also a loyal subject. He has to obey the king, even against his better knowledge. But he has his part in the general tragedy with a difference. At least he goes into it open-eyed. The tragic situation is the conflict between his loyalty and his knowledge.

On the basis of the last paragraphs, one may mention one more way in which the poem differs sharply from its prose paraphrase: the poem implies some kind of "meaning" in the experience and "feeling" about the experience. The paraphrase is interested in relating the

facts. The poem is interested not merely in the facts, but in the way the author feels about the facts and the *meaning* of the facts.

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY

ANONYMOUS

Frankie and Johnny were lovers, great God how they could love!
Swore to be true to each other, true as the stars up above.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie she was his woman, everybody knows.
She spent her forty dollars for Johnny a suit of clothes.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie and Johnny went walking, Johnny in his brand new suit.
"O good Lawd," said Frankie, "but don't my Johnny look cute?"
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie went down to the corner, just for a bucket of beer.
Frankie said, "Mr. Bartender, has my loving Johnny been here.
He is my man, he wouldn't do me wrong."

"I don't want to tell you no story, I don't want to tell you no lie,
But your Johnny left here an hour ago with that lousy Nellie Blye.
He is your man, but he's doing you wrong."

Frankie went back to the hotel, she didn't go there for fun,
For under her red kimono she toted a forty-four gun.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie went down to the hotel and looked in the window so high,
And there was her loving Johnny a-loving up Nellie Blye.
He was her man, but he was doing her wrong.

Frankie threw back her kimono, took out that old forty-four.
Root-a-toot-toot, three times she shot, right through the hardwood door.
He was her man, but he was doing her wrong.

Johnny grabbed off his Stetson, crying, "O, Frankie don't shoot!"
Frankie pulled that forty-four, went root-a-toot-toot-toot-toot.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

"Roll me over gently, roll me over slow,
Roll me on my right side, for my left side hurts me so.
I was her man, but I done her wrong."

With the first shot Johnny staggered, with the second shot he fell;
When the last bullet got him, there was a new man's face in hell.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

"O, bring out your rubber-tired hearses, bring out your rubber-tired hacks;
Gonna take Johnny to the graveyard and ain't gonna bring him back.
He was my man, but he done me wrong."

"O, put me in that dungeon, put me in that cell,
Put me where the northeast wind blows from the southeast corner of hell.
I shot my man, cause he done me wrong!"

This poem is a modern product of the same forces which produced "Sir Patrick Spens" hundreds of years ago. People want more than mere information; they want something that will appeal to their emotions. "Frankie and Johnny" grows out of a simple and unsophisticated society. In its make-up, it resembles closely the older ballad, "Sir Patrick Spens." "Frankie and Johnny" raises at once for us, therefore, two important questions: (1) Can poetry grow out of the present rather than merely the past? and (2) can poetry deal with sordid materials; can it use the subject matter of the backstreets of an American city, material which we are inclined to associate with newspaper headlines rather than with poetry? Any reader can imagine how a newspaper, whose function is to give the essential facts, would treat such a story as the murder of Johnny by his sweetheart. Since the answer to such questions rests on what we think of the poem, let us consider the poem first. In what ways is it like "Sir Patrick Spens?"

In the first place, the poem, though not so dramatic as the older poem, is told in terms of little scenes. The links between the scenes are left up to the reader's imagination, and quite properly. The poem continually focuses attention on the main problem. First there is the statement of Frankie's love for Johnny; then the scene of their walk together; the scene at the saloon where Frankie learns that her lover is unfaithful; then last, the scene in which she kills him.

The scenes in themselves, however, are vivid. Notice how concrete they are. A *hat* is a "Stetson"; a *gun,* a "forty-four," etc. The poem crude as it may seem, shows a mastery of this point: that if you will give the reader a few details sharply and vividly enough, his imagination will do the rest. The "red kimono" is therefore worth more than a good deal of padding and explanation.

Moreover, the poem is not only real, it has a certain dignity. The poem is not interested in providing a great deal of dissecting of motives, nor is it interested in moralizing comment. The focus is kept where it should be here: on the core of the action itself. Notice that the poem uses understatement rather than exaggeration; for example, the grim "She didn't go there for fun." Furthermore, the action is based on the observance of a strict code of honor. We don't ordinarily think of people of this sort as having such a code. But the code of honor is there; it is assumed throughout the poem; and it is the code which holds the poem together. It is right to kill the person who proves unfaithful. Johnny, himself, after he has been shot, admits it: "I was her man, but I done her wrong."

In this connection, notice how important the refrain is in binding the poem together, and the effect of the variations which occur in it: "He is my man, he wouldn't do me wrong," "He was your man, but he's doing you wrong," etc.

AGINCOURT

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631)

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
    Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
    Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marcheth towards Agincourt
    In happy hour;
Skirmishing, day by day,
With those who stopped his way,
Where the French general lay
    With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide
    To the King sending;
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile,
    Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then:
"Though they to one be ten
    Be not amazèd!
Yet have we well begun:
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
    By fame been raisèd.

"And for myself," quoth he,
"This my full rest shall be;
England ne'er mourn for me,
    Nor more esteem me.
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain;
Never shall she sustain
    Loss to redeem me.

"Poitiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell;
    No less our skill is,
Than when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
    Lopped the French lilies."

They now to fight are gone:
Armor on armor shone;
Drum now to drum did groan
    To hear, was wonder;
That, with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake;
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
    Thunder to thunder.

With Spanish yew so strong
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
    Piercing the weather;
None from his fellow starts,
But, playing manly parts
And like true English hearts,
    Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw
And forth their bilboes drew
And on the French they flew,
    Not one was tardy;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went;
    Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King,
His broad-sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,
    As to o'erwhelm it;

And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
Bruisèd his helmet.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray
Which Fame did not delay
To England to carry:
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry!

Questions:
1. What is the poet trying to emphasize in this narrative? Does he succeed?
2. Could a historian arrive at a plan of the battle from this account? If the poet is not attempting to describe the battle for our information, what is he trying to do?

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

ANONYMOUS

It was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Graeme, in the West country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,
To the place where she was [illegible].
"O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin [1] ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly,[2] hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 't is a' for Barbara Allan:"
"O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

"O dinna ye mind,[3] young man," said she,
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking.
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?"

He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing:

"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

And slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said, she could not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing,
And every jow that the dead-bell geid,[4]
It cryd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft [5] and narrow!
Since my love died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow.

Questions:
1. Reconstruct the probable background of the story.
2. Has the poet left out too much of the story?
3. Is there anything gained here by leaving this out?

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

(16—)

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Goodspeed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the check-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Duffield, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

[1] if
[2] slowly
[3] remember
[4] gave
[5] soft

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and [illegible] knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes,
With kisses four.

"And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all,
Who cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide;
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing."

SECTION II

The general method of the poems in this group is different from the method of the poems in the preceding group. This difference is not absolute; but whereas the poems of the first group present a story for the most part in its ordinary chronological order and in some fullness, the poems of the second group merely provide the key, or the clue, to a story. The poems of the second group imply a story. They appeal less to the interests ordinarily provoked by narration, and more to certain other interests. The aim of all poetry is to provoke in the reader a feeling about the material presented. In these poems the author, in trying to awaken the particular feeling he wished the reader to have, has depended less on the story element as such.

EDWARD

ANONYMOUS

"Why dois your brand[1] sae[2] drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
"Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang[3] yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke[4] sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."

"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was never sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,[5]
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

"Your steid was auld,[6] and ye hae gat mair,[7]
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair;
Sum other dule[8] ye drie O."
"O I hae killed my fadir[9] deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

"And whatten penance wul ye drie[10] for that,
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

"And what wull ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,[11]
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

"And what wul ye leive to your bairns[12] and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis[13] room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

"And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall[14] ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

1

What is the story? Edward, the hero of the ballad, is a knight. His mother and father have perhaps had a deadly quarrel. In any case we know of the desire of the mother to dispose of the father. The mother

[1] sword
[2] so
[3] go
[4] hawk
[5] steed
[6] old
[7] more
[8] grief
[9] father
[10] undergo
[11] hall, manorhouse
[12] children
[13] world's
[14] shall

has gradually played on the son's feelings until he worked himself up to the point of killing the father. The mother has therefore accomplished her purpose without making herself actually guilty of murder. She discovers her son with a bloody sword in his hand; and in a mixture of curiosity, gratification, and horror, now that the deed is actually accomplished, she questions Edward on two points: why does the blade drip and why is he so sad? He at first says that he has killed his hawk. But she says the blood is too red (a reference to the first of her questions). Then he says that he has killed his steed But she says in such a case he would not be sad because he has other and better ones (a reference to the second of her questions). Then, overcome with his growing remorse, he confesses to the crime She then asks a question that seems to establish her detachment from the crime, but she does not express grief. What penance will *he* do? He answers that he will sail away, indicating a boat in harbor, and will become a wanderer. To the question about his estate he says that the tower and hall may fall into decay. And to that about his wife and children he says that they may beg through life. Then at the climax she asks him what he will leave to his own dear mother. He will leave her the curse of hell, he says, because she has been responsible for the crime.

2

But how do we know all this?

(1) How do we know that Edward is a knight or nobleman? Because of the reference to his towers and hall.

(2) How do we know of the relation of father and mother? The last line of the poem established the mother's desire to get rid of the father.

(3) How do we know that Edward is suffering remorse before he confesses? He refers to his "hawks so good," his only one, and to his "red-roan steed," that before was "fair and free"; but this regret for loss is really a statement of regret for the loss of the father, who may be taken to have been "so good" and "fair and free." There would have been no more reason for killing the father than for butchering the hawk or the horse which had served him well.

(4) How do we know that the woman is a hard and calculating woman? Naturally, we know it definitely from the accusation at the end. But there are three significant indications that do something to define her earlier in the poem. First, when Edward says that he grieves over the horse, she says, "why, the horse was old," ignoring any sentiment a person might feel for a faithful animal. To her it is only a piece of property. Second, she asks, "what penance will *you* do?" She attempts by the way she frames the question to separate herself from all responsibility. The normal reaction would have been one of grief or at least momentary astonishment, but she is so cold and self-controlled that she first attempts to clear her own skirts. Third, when she addresses him in the last stanza she refers to herself as his "own mother dear," trying to ingratiate herself with him, when she is really his worst enemy and has ruined him.

3

How is the story handled?

The story of Edward is not given in the same way as the story of Sir Patrick Spens. In "Sir Patrick Spens" it is given in the normal chronological order: the action begins with the old knight's telling the king about Sir Patrick and ends with the picture of Sir Patrick on the sea floor. It has been pointed out in the discussion of "Sir Patrick Spens" that the story is not treated by a simple, unemphasized forward movement, as in ordinary narrative, but is presented by a series of scenes, glimpses of the key situations which tell the reader most and most provoke his interest. That is like the method of a little drama of several scenes. But "Edward" does not tell its story in chronological order; it has only one scene, a scene after the real action, and the content of that action has to be handled by implication. It is therefore more economical and unified.

"Sir Patrick Spens" is told from an omniscient point of view. The teller is not a person in any real sense, but he can see and describe a scene such as the sea floor, as no real person could ever do. But the story of "Edward" is not "told" at all. It is, rather, presented in direct form as a dialogue between the two principal persons of the story. It is therefore even more dramatic and objective than "Sir Patrick Spens."

The action of "Sir Patrick Spens" is accounted for at the very first, when the king takes the advice of the old knight; and the conclusion is foreshadowed several times, once when Sir Patrick opens the letter and gives his sardonic laugh, and again when the new moon has the old moon in her arms. The method is exactly the opposite in "Edward." We know what has actually happened long before the end but we do not know the reason, the motivation, until the very last line. There is a sense of foreboding and inevitability about "Sir Patrick Spens," and of surprise and shock about "Edward."

The psychological interest in "Edward" is more important than in "Sir Patrick Spens." Each question and answer in "Edward" brings out some new fact, not only of the story, but of the characters involved. In "Sir Patrick Spens" we learn at the very beginning all we ever know about the characters. This does not mean that "Edward" is necessarily superior to "Sir Patrick Spens;" it merely means that there is a different kind of effect.

In regard to the matter of the technique and structure of "Edward" one can observe that its stanza form is more complicated than that of "Sir Patrick Spens." It has, too, a very elaborate use of refrain and repetition. The very action of the ballad, as a matter of fact, is carried and emphasized by these two devices. The refrains of "Edward" and "mother" define the structure of each stanza, the question and answer arrangement. Further, the question and answer arrangement is well adapted to the purpose of building up suspense, in regard to the nature of the crime, and to the purpose of effecting surprise, in regard to the motivation of the crime.

4

What is the meaning of the poem? We know the story, but what kind of effect does the story give? It

gives an effect of tragic irony. A crime has been committed; and presumably the person most guilty, the mother, will suffer. But the son, whose moral nature is much superior to that of his mother but who has been influenced by her to commit the crime, must suffer too. Even the absolutely innocent persons, the wife and children, must suffer, for they will be abandoned to beg through life. The same question lies behind this story that lies behind the great tragedies: what is the nature of justice? But the ironical effect is not single, for it has certain cross references, as it were, within the situation. First, only when the father is dead does Edward realize the father's virtues and his own better nature that brings him to remorse and penance. Second, the mother, who should be the greatest guardian of the son, has ruined him. Third, the mother, who expected some profit or satisfaction from the crime, is left with only a curse from the son whom, in her way, she loves. Fourth, the wife and children, who are innocent, must suffer too. The irony of "Sir Patrick Spens" is more simple.

Read "Lord Randall" in connection with "Sir Patrick Spens" and "Edward."

LORD RANDALL

ANONYMOUS

"O where hae ye been, Lord Randall, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"
"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald[1] lie down."

[1] would

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randall, my son?
Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I dined wi my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randall, my son?
What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"[2]
"I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randall, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"
"O they swelld and they died; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear ye are poisond, Lord Randall, my son!
O I fear ye are poisond, my handsome young man!"

[2] What did you have for dinner?

"O yes! I am poisond; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."

Question:

Which uses the more dramatic method, this poem or "Agincourt?"

THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY

ANONYMOUS

Ye Highlands, and ye Lawlands,
Oh where have you been?
They have slain the Earl of Murray,
And they layd him on the green.

"Now wae be to thee, Huntly!
And wherefore did you sae?
I bade you bring him wi you,
But forbade you him to slay."

He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he might have been a king!

He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the ba;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Was the flower amang them a'.

He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the glove;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he was the Queen's love!

Oh lang will his lady
Look o'er the castle Down,
E'er she see the Earl of Murray
Come sounding[1] thro the town.

Questions:

1. What sort of person was the dead man?
2. To what emotion does the poem appeal?

MY LAST DUCHESS

(*Ferrara*)

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

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

[1] riding

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
With 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 favor 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!

In this poem we have the Duke of Ferrara entertaining an emissary from an unnamed Count. The purpose of their business is to arrange a marriage between the Duke and the Count's daughter. The events actually begin with the Duke's pointing out a full-length portrait of his "last Duchess." He tells the story behind the painting. the artist portrayed a "certain look" in the Duchess' face. "The depth and passion of its earnest glance" displeased the Duke because he thought that that particular look should have been reserved for him alone. The Duchess, however, bestowed it upon any "officious fool" who happened to be courteous. The Duke "gave commands" (either to have the Duchess killed or sent to a convent) and "all smiles stopped."

The Duke's story is apparently ended. The two start to leave the room, and the Duke remarks on the dowry of the Count's daughter, protesting, however, that it is of minor importance. He insists that the emissary accompany rather than follow him; and he comments on another work of art, a bronze, "Neptune, taming a sea-horse——"

This prose translation is oversimplified and does not do the poem justice. Yet it shows some of the differences between a prose narrative and poetry. The situation is dramatic. The emissary has come to arrange a marriage, although this point is not revealed until the last of the poem—a legitimate device for securing suspense. The success of the poem lies not so much in what is actually told by the poet but in the implications that the reader can draw from what is said.

We must realize that the poet faced at least two major difficulties: First, he was trying to reconstruct an incident, a crisis in the lives of several people, he himself not one of them. In addition, the scene and the characters were of another place and time. Second, the form chosen, the dramatic monologue, is not the simplest technical form. Only one person actually appears in the poem, and he must bear not only his own side of the drama, but he must imply in his answers certain questions, gestures, and even attitudes of the person we infer to be present. The result is a compression that is difficult to obtain.

Suppose we examine the poem and see just what the Duke reveals his character to be. We know that he is proud; he refers continually to "my Duchess," "my favor at her breast," "my gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name." He is proud in another sense, proud of his pos-

sessions. His interest in the portrait is not that it is of his wife but that it is a masterpiece of Frà Pandolf's. He is proud in the same material way of a bronze by Claus of Innsbruck. Second, what of his moral character? Whether he had the Duchess killed or simply sent her away and let her die from humiliation and disgrace makes little difference. The smiles stopped, and he makes no apology or further explanation. Third, what of his emotional side? He was not deeply in love with his wife because he could not abide and appreciate her innocence, which he himself admits was entire innocence. His jealousy was not caused by the loss of something but by his failure to possess completely every phase of her life. As for his intelligence, we find him a shrewd, but superficial, person. He is interested in art, not for any relation that it might bear to his life, but as material possessions. He is desirous of a wife, not as a companion, but as a necessary ornament for his palace.

Another thing that makes for success in the poem and raises it above prose is the manner in which the character of the Duchess is presented. All we know of her is what we learn from her husband We would assume that any information from him would be derogatory, if only to justify himself. He, however, is not interested in justification but in revealing what he expects of a wife. She must have been of high rank, or the Duke would not have married her. She had a heart

> too soon made glad,
> Too easily impressed; she liked what e'er
> She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

She was, then, a natural, innocent woman whom the Duke could not bend into the conventional form he thought his wife should have.

There are now two questions that arise: First, what was the impulse behind the writing of the poem, and second, why the indirection and compression rather than a straightforward presentation.

As for question one, the author had as his purpose the presentation of a scene of Renaissance Italy. He was not interested primarily in telling an incident, or he might have used another medium. He was not interested in presenting an accurate historical account and evaluating that period for us; therefore he even uses fictitious names: Frà Pandolf, Claus of Innsbruck, any Duke, Ferrara. He is interested in presenting people to us at a crisis in their lives. He wishes to present a dramatic situation for its own sake and for the relation of experience it might promote. The story itself is simple and common enough, but the author wishes rather to give a certain flavor that he found in the age and to give the characters and the psychological impulses behind them. Notice that in the entire poem no judgments are passed on anyone or the actions of anyone.

As for question two, the monologue and indirection serve to compress the story and to enrich the presentation. The poet can not set the scene by means of elaborate description and exposition. He has to have the surface story and the real story behind it told, the scene set and everything done by the characters' actions and speech. In this particular poem the compression is even greater because one person must do duty for three. The lines

> I said
> "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
> Strangers like you that pictured countenance—

tells us several things. First, we know that the emissary made some definite comment about the portrait or at least by some gesture revealed an interest greater than that usually expressed by guests. Second, we see the character of the Duke and his pride in presenting a masterpiece by a popular artist. And, we may justly see flattery and condescension in "never read strangers like you."

Notice the paradox in

> Even had you skill
> In speech (which I have not)—

It is true that he failed to make his will known to his first wife but that is only the surface of the matter. The real purpose of the entire story is to inform the emissary just what he expects of his wife. The Duke does not do his powers of speech justice. And the reader sees that he has considerable skill.

The success of this poem depends on this indirection and compression. In fact the interest in character, the conversational tone, the suspense and the clever phrasing of paradoxical statements make the poem successful.

Questions:

1. What is the verse form?
2. Point out examples of irony and understatement.
3. What is revealed of the emissary's character?
4. Is there any evidence in the poem to suppose, as one critic has suggested, that the emissary and the Count's daughter were in love?

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869–1935)

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 hands extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"
Convivially [illegible] 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.

Questions:

1. Why is Eben Flood a drunkard?
2. Why does the poet say that he laid the jug down as "tenderly as a mother lays her sleeping child?"
3. What is there in Flood's character and present situation that is dramatized by the poet?
4. Is the poet making fun of Eben Flood, or does the poet pity him?

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Question:

Has this story any symbolic force?

THE TRUE LOVER

A. E. Housman (1859–1936)

The lad came to the door at night,
When lovers crown their vows,
And whistled soft and out of sight
In shadow of the boughs.

I shall not vex you with my face
Henceforth, my love, for aye;
So take me in your arms a space
Before the east is grey.

When I from hence away am past
I shall not find a bride,
And you shall be the first and last
I ever lay beside.

She heard and went and knew not why;
Her heart to his she laid;
Light was the air beneath the sky
But dark under the shade.

"Oh do you breathe, lad, that your breast
Seems not to rise and fall,
And here upon my bosom prest
There beats no heart at all?"

"Oh loud, my girl, it once would knock,
You should have felt it then;
But since for you I stopped the clock
It never goes again."

"Oh lad, what is it, lad, that drips
Wet from your neck on mine?
What is it falling on my lips,
My lad, that tastes of brine?"

"Oh like enough 'tis blood, my dear,
For when the knife has slit
The throat across from ear to ear
'Twill bleed because of it."

Under the stars the air was light
But dark below the boughs,
The still air of the speechless night,
When lovers crown their vows.

This poem gives a single incident of a story, the climax, and implies the rest of the story. What is implied is, in summary, this much: a lover who has been constantly rejected by his sweetheart is prepared to go on a long journey. When the poem begins, he has come to her house at night and has whistled for her to come out to tell him goodbye. He says:

> And take me in your arms a space
> Before the east is grey.

To that point the story may be taken as a real story which, like the preceding poems in this section, might be understood as an actual incident. But in the third stanza the reader begins to suspect that the journey the young man is to take is not a real journey, for he says:

> When I from hence away am past
> I shall not find a bride,
> And you shall be the first and last
> I ever lay beside.

In other words, he asks his sweetheart to give him her love so that his life may have some meaning before he has to leave it.

But consider the speech of the girl in the fifth stanza:

Oh do you breathe, lad, that your breast
Seems not to rise and fall,

With that, and with the lad's answer, the reader knows that the lover is already dead. The further question and answer merely make more emphatic an ironic fact.

The story, then, is an impossible one, and must not be understood as being realistic. To take it as realistic would make it too disgusting and horrible. It is a story invented by the poet to present more dramatically the meaning of a certain human relationship—the pathos and horror of realizing too late that one has rejected a love that can never be recovered. One need not even interpret the poem as meaning that the "true lover" has actually committed suicide or died. The love is merely lost beyond any recovery; and something within the lover has died, never to be revived. The story of the poem then stands for something beyond itself; the story, then, stands as a concentrated representation of the feeling one might have about many stories that were different in their circumstantial incident and detail. It has a symbolic force.

How is the story told? The poem gives the same impression as a ballad. It uses a very simple stanza form, one that is common in the folk ballads. Further, it uses devices of repetition (observe how the questions are built up) and dialogue as do "Edward," and "Lord Randall." These devices have helped to concentrate the presentation of the story so that it is unnecessary to tell it in full. The same kind of ironic understatement appears in "The True Lover" as in "Sir Patrick Spens." For instance, the "true lover" says:

But since for you I stopped the clock
It never goes again.

and:

Oh like enough 'tis blood, my dear,
For when the knife has slit
The throat across from ear to ear
'Twill bleed because of it.

This is the same effect one finds in "Sir Patrick Spens" in the stanza:

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

But there are certain obvious differences from the folk ballads. The folk ballads always tell or imply a story that is to be taken as literal; this ballad, however, gives a story of a symbolic meaning. In the second place, the rhythm and meter of "The True Lover" is more fluent and musical than is common in the folk ballads.

Question:

Interpret "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" in relation to "The True Lover."

BREDON HILL

A. E. Housman (1859–1936)

In summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning
My love and I would lie,
And see the colored counties,
And hear the larks so high
About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her
In valleys miles away:
"Come all to church, good people;
Good people, come and pray."
But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer
Among the springing thyme,
"Oh peal upon our wedding,
And we will hear the chime,
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas
On Bredon top were strown,
My love rose up so early
And stole out unbeknown
And went to church alone.

They tolled the one bell only,
Groom there was none to see,
The mourners followed after,
And so to church went she,
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon,
And still the steeples hum.
"Come all to church, good people,—"
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;
I hear you, I will come.

Questions:

1. Give a prose statement of all the events dealt with in this poem.
2. Why does the poet describe a funeral in terms of a wedding?

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

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 aery 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 sink,
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 Savior at his sermon on the mount,
Saint 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 mark 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 Saint 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 mortcloth, 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,
Saint 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 visor 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!

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–1896)

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splashed wretchedly;
And the wet dripped from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair,
The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads crossed; and sometimes, when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises;
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobbed, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup: all for this,
To part at last without a kiss
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked hay,
They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Grinned from his pennon, under which
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.

So then,
While Robert turned round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes; while Robert said:
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;
At Poictiers where we made them run
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after us."

But, "O," she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last;
Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilt, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off—
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon the palm, as though

She thought her forehead bled, and—"No,"
She said, and turned her head away,
As there were nothing else to say,
And everything were settled: red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:
"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands:
What hinders me from taking you,
And doing that I list to do
To your fair wilful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin:
"You know that I should strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she said,
"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in,
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens: yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest."

"Nay, if you do not my behest,
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know?" "Foul lies," she said.
"Eh! lies, my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true!
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:
'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'—
Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers, and long feet,
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it— So, an hour yet:
Consider, Jehane, which to take
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards: with her face
Turned upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep: and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the twelve again; but she,
Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turned
Most sharply round, and his face burned.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
He would not weep, but gloomily
He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reached out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor gray lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
Of silk and mail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw,
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send
The thin steel down; the blow told well,
Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem: so then
Godmar turned grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.
Then Godmar turned again and said:
"So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Chatelet!"
She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods.

Questions:

1. What is the full story implied by this poem? Reconstruct it.
2. What effect is the poet aiming at? Justify in terms of this effect the truncation of the full story.

SECTION III

The poems in this section do not tell the reader a story, though some of them imply a situation that has a potential story in it. For instance, "Mariana," by Tennyson, presents a woman whose lover has left her. But the reader never knows what the conclusion is. These poems, then, must appeal to some other kind of interest. Most of them deal directly with some object, or objects, from nature: an eagle, a woodpile, a grass-

hopper, a flock of wild swans, a tiger. But there is always someone who is looking at the object, or objects. This observer may not be mentioned in the given poem (as in "The Eagle," by Tennyson), or he may be mentioned definitely (as in "The Woodpile," by Frost, or "The Wild Swans at Coole," by Yeats) If he is mentioned definitely, he may or may not be the poet himself (or the person that the poet, for the purpose of the poem, pretends to be at that moment). In "The Woodpile," for instance, the observer is the poet himself, but in "The Lotos Eaters" and "Mariana," both by Tennyson, the observers are not the poet, but the wanderers in the first case and the deserted woman in the second. But in all cases the poet intends that the reader shall participate in the observation. In reading a poem one should always try to understand what kind of person the observer in the poem is, so that he himself can participate more fully.

The interest, however, that the observer and reader have in the object of the poem is not merely the interest one would have in looking at such an object in real life or in a photograph. The close observation of the poet may heighten the pleasure of the reader in recognition of the object. But even in poems in which there is no mention of an observer (that is, poems which are most objective), the reader, if he is at all sensitive, will find that the object, as the poet has presented it, awakens in him a certain feeling or mood. The poet gives the objects he looks at a human reference, so that the reader feels them to have an expressive force.

What the poet expresses may be, as in the early poems in this section, a very vague and general feeling or mood. But the reader will observe that in this section the feeling becomes more and more closely defined and that the poems, more and more, tend to present an idea as well as a mood. That is, the objects the poet has chosen from nature tend to have more and more the force of a symbol Sometimes the poet states definitely what he is symbolizing, or illustrating; but sometimes he merely gives clues so that the reader may discover the meaning for himself. This is the case with "The Wild Swans at Coole," by Yeats; for the poet, though he pretends to be telling merely something about seeing the swans one day, is really telling a truth about his own life. And it is the case in "The Tiger," by Blake, in which one quickly discovers that the poet is not writing about an ordinary tiger, but about a beast that stands for something, for the power of evil in the world. One must remember that when the poet gives description, he almost invariably gives it with the purpose of making that description express something for the reader.

THE EAGLE

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

This short poem comes about as close to the completely *objective* account of nature as a poem can. The poet is not using his description to illustrate a moral truth, or even a personal mood of his own. He is giving a picture of an eagle, but we shall learn something about the aims and the method of poetry if we compare carefully this description with other possible descriptions. The definition in the dictionary reads as follows: "Any of various large diurnal birds of prey of the falcon family, noted for their strength, size, graceful figure, keenness of vision, and powers of flight. The typical eagles constitute a genus *Aquila* in which the legs are feathered to the toes." The scientist would be interested in giving such information as that in the last sentence. His account would have much to tell us about the eagle's diet, habitat, biological structure, etc. The poetic description is interested rather in such matters as the "graceful figure, keenness of vision, and powers of flight." And poetry is interested, not merely in telling us of such matters, but in giving us a vivid sense of them.

Notice in this poem that although the poet emphasizes the elements given in the dictionary definition, he does so by presenting them vividly through concrete figures. As for the eagle's strength·

He clasps the crag with crooked hands.

The poet shows us the eagle actually exhibiting his strength, strength in this instance in repose but its latent powers suggested by its powerful talons, the crooked hands.

As for the keenness of vision and powers of flight:

Close to the sun in lonely lands.

One of the common folk-beliefs for a long time was that the eagle could look steadily at the sun. This is suggested by the phrase "close to the sun." But the loneliness and rugged power of the eagle are also suggested, "in lonely lands"

And in the next line the poet actually adopts the eagle's point of vantage. He does not describe the eagle as a man might look up at him, but describes the world as the eagle looks *down* on it.

Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

When one is on a high place, the world seems to spread out in a ring around him, and in this case a distant ring, "Azure" indicates the bluish quality of far-off distances.

The next line continues from the eagle's vantage point—an eagle's-eye view)

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls.

Why *wrinkled?* Because seen from high above, the waves give the appearance of wrinkles, and as they move into shore, the sea seems to be a live thing with movement of its own.

The eagle's keenness of vision and terrible power are given an almost dramatic emphasis in the last two lines. The eagle is evidently watching for prey far below him, on the lower cliffs, or probably in the sea, and perceiving it, swoops toward it with the speed of lightning. And the swift and characteristic exit of the eagle from the

poet's little picture of him affords the poet an appropriate ending for his poem.

But this is not quite the whole story yet. In interpreting, in trying to get the *meaning* of an experience, the poet, being a human being writing for human beings, is certain to interpret in human terms. The eagle, even in this objective poem, becomes something of a human being. He is, one might say, like a robber baron, exulting in his own liberty and fierceness and strength.

Unassailable in his own castle perched on the cliffs, he exacts toll at pleasure from the country around him. This is, as a matter of fact, what Tennyson does say about the eagle, though very wisely he does not say it in so many words, but merely suggests it to the reader who cares to find it. But it is implied in the fact that he gives his eagle *hands* and in that he has him watch from his mountain *walls*. *Walls* is a human word. A wall is a fabric built by men. And so the phrase, "his mountain walls," implies a connection between the eagle and his human counterparts who owned rocky fastnesses which were indeed often as inaccessible as an eagle's aerie. Not least important is the word, *his*. Animals do not properly own property. Tennyson's eagle owns his crag; and the bird becomes human enough for us, even in such a relatively objective poem, that we feel a sort of understanding of it, and therefore a sense of *meaning* to the whole. And in the poem one participates in the exhilaration of the eagle's distant view and the furious but controlled plunge downward. Observe how the poet has made the word *falls* the climatic point of the poem, the word on which the whole effect of the poem is finally concentrated.

WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

(Song from *Love's Labor's Lost*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

When icicles hang by the wall,
  And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
  And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
  Tu-whit, to-who,
  A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
  And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
  And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
  Tu-whit, to-who,
  A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Questions:

1. Does this poem contain merely purely objective description?
2. If not, what else does it give to the reader?

WINTER

From *The Seasons*

JAMES THOMSON (1700–1748)

Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease.
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun-discolored flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook,
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First, joyless rains obscure
Drive through the mingling skies with vapor foul,
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.

Questions:

Compare this with "To Winter," by Blake, on the following grounds: (a) What comment, if any, does each of the poets make? (b) Which poem is the more realistic? (c) Which poem uses personification more fully? (d) Why did the poet in each case employ personification?

TO WINTER

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

O winter! bar thine adamantine doors:
The North is thine; there hast thou built thy dark
Deep-founded habitation. Shake not thy roofs,
Nor bend thy pillars with thine iron car.

He hears me not, but o'er the yawning deep
Rides heavy; his storms are unchainèd, sheathed
In ribbèd steel; I dare not lift mine eyes;
For he hath reared his sceptre o'er the world.

Lo! now the direful monster, whose skin clings
To his strong bones, strides o'er the groaning rocks:
He withers all in silence, and in his hand
Unclothes the earth, and freezes up frail life.

He takes his seat upon the cliffs,—the mariner
Cries in vain. Poor little wretch, that deal'st
With storms!—till heaven smiles, and the monster
Is driv'n yelling to his caves beneath Mount Hecla.

TO AUTUMN

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

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-eaves 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.

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,
  Drowsed 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 cider-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

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.

Questions:

The first two stanzas of this poem use the same method as "To Winter," by Blake: description and personification to summarize, as it were, the spirit of the time. But in the third stanza Keats makes an effort to relate the mood and feeling provoked by the season to an idea of human experience. The clue to this idea lies in the lines:

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
  Think not of them, thou hast thy music, too,—

What is this idea?

ODE TO EVENING

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721–1759)

If ought of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
  Like thy own solemn springs,
  Thy springs and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
  With brede ethereal wove,
  O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing,
  Or where the beetle winds
  His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum;
  Now teach me, maid composed,
  To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
  As, musing slow, I hail
  Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
  The fragrant Hours, and elves
  Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
  The pensive Pleasures sweet,
  Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile
  Or upland fallows gray
  Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

Questions:

In this poem, Collins uses personifications as does Keats in the ode, "To Autumn." Some critics have said that the use of them here is not successful and that the last stanza is not prepared for in the poem. How would you defend or attack this opinion?

IL PENSEROSO

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.

But hail, thou Goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea nymphs', and their powers offended
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.

Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent,
With planet or with element.
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musaeus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud;
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high and anthems clear
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
Of every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

Questions:

1. What is the prevailing mood of this poem?
2. How are the various details of description related to the mood?

THE LOTOS EATERS

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

"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-drooping 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 charmed 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 seemed 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 Fatherland,
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 said, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

Questions:

1. Why does the poet describe the land by saying that in it "it seemed always afternoon"?
2. Does the descriptive detail of the poem support the sense of languor?
3. Compare the "weariness" emphasized in this poem with the "weariness" of the poem which immediately follows.

MARIANA

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all;
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trace the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said.
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

Upon the middle of the night
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;
The cock sung out an hour ere light;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her; without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark;
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"

THE WOODPILE

ROBERT FROST (1875–)

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 down. 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 I could 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 labor 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.

This poem begins as if it were going to tell a story, and, as a matter of fact, it does give a kind of narrative. But the story, as story, is peculiarly pointless. A man relates how, walking in the swamp one gray day, he stopped to debate the matter of going on and finally decided to proceed, saying, "and we shall see." This might be the beginning of an ordinary short story. The writer even makes a bid for suspense with the little remark, "and we shall see," for the remark is puzzling and is intended to provoke curiosity. The man does go on, seeing in the course of his walk a bird with one white feather in its tail, and then an abandoned woodpile. The action of the story, then, as action, comes to nothing. Obviously, to tell a story cannot be the poet's intention.

But there is a large amount of description, rather realistic description. The scene in the woods is given with a high degree of circumstantiality, a higher degree than is customary in poems. The description is given directly, and the poet uses very few comparisons;

that is, his method of presenting the scene appears, at first, to be somewhat prosy. But the observations are sharply made, and the reader feels that the poet has looked closely at the objects described. There is also a certain amount of comment on what he sees. The bird, for example, reminds him of someone "who takes everything said as personal to himself," that is, of an oversensitive person. The tone of the comment is whimsical and genial. The sharpness of observation of the details of the physical scene is matched by the vividness of the comment on the character of the unknown man who has left the woodpile and forgotten it.

The pretense of a story, the description, and the comment, all work together to maintain the interest of a reader as the poem progresses, but the reader feels that no one of these things constitutes the point of the poem. The poem comes to its point in the last three lines:

> 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.

In the section of the poem just before these lines there is presented a kind of pathos, the pathos provoked by abandoned and forgotten objects which remain as a kind of record of the lives of nameless and unknown people. But the poet was not content to leave the matter at that point. The woodpile is on a fireplace, after all, but not on a "useful fireplace." It fulfills its function, and is absorbed again into the kind of world from which the unknown woodchopper had taken it. The woodpile, a common and homely object, is, for the purpose of the poem, more than a woodpile; it gains a symbolic force and becomes a commentary, not only on the unknown man who made it, but on the activities of all men.

Frost's method of approaching the subject of the poem is very cunning. The definition of the actual subject of the poem is delayed until the very end, with the result that the reader seems to stumble upon it unexpectedly, just as the man discovered the woodpile; but when the end of the poem is reached one can see the actual order in the previous part of the poem that seems at first glance so casual.

The subject is well dramatized in the poem: that is, [illegible]ning; we are not told the meaning in flat, general terms. The special kind of dramatization is well defined by the style of the poem. A man is speaking in a conversational tone, relating an anecdote of his walk in the swamp; and the loose easy rhythms and the absence of ordinary poetical devices, such as numerous figures of speech, keep the poem from appearing too "literary" and formal and give the impression of face-to-face conversation.

But the comparisons that the poet does use are extremely accurate and effective, and become more and more so the longer the reader considers their implications. First in describing the woodpile, Frost says:

> Clematis
> Had wound strings round and round it like a bundle.

This comparison serves two purposes. The most obvious one is that it helps the reader to see what the woodpile looked like. That is an important thing for a figure of speech to do, but it is not the only purpose. The second, and perhaps the more important purpose is that the comparison actually carries part of the true subject of the poem. Nature is doing what the man failed to do, nature is man's collaborator and assistant in its own way; nature is again taking possession of what man had tried to remove from nature. All of these meanings are involved in the comparison, even though they may contain a kind of contradiction or paradox. (For instance, it is implied that nature is both man's friend and man's enemy, and this supports the final meaning of the poem.)

The last comparison in the poem is what carries the final point. Without it the poem would be merely an idle description of a walk and what the man saw on the walk. It is an extremely accurate comparison, for decaying of wood is the process known as oxidation, and ordinary burning is also oxidation. The difference between the decaying and the burning of wood is primarily a difference in the speed of the process. Therefore the swamp itself is really a kind of fireplace. The meaning of the comparison has already been discussed, but it is important to remember that without this comparison the poem could not live at all. By it, the poet takes an objective, or almost objective description, and focuses it on a definite meaning and a definite feeling.

TO DAFFADILLS

ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674)

> Faire Daffadills, we weep to see
> You haste away so soone:
> As yet the early-rising Sun
> Has not attain'd his Noone
> Stay, stay,
> Until the hasting day
> Has run
> But to the Even-song;
> And, having pray'd together, wee
> Will goe with you along.
>
> We have short time to stay, as you,
> We have as short a Spring;
> As quick a growth to meet Decay,
> As you, or any thing.
> We die,
> As your hours doe, and drie
> Away,
> Like to the Summers raine;
> Or as the pearles of Mornings dew
> Ne'er to be found againe.

Questions:

1. Are the flowers described for their own sake or for some other purpose?
2. What is that purpose?

THE GRASSHOPPER

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618–1658)

Oh thou that swing'st upon the waving eare
Of some well-filled Oaten Beard,
Drunke ev'ry night with a Delicious teare
Dropt thee from Heav'n, where now th'art reard.

The Joyes of Earth and Ayre are thine intire,
That with thy feet and wings dost hop and flye;
And when thy Poppy works thou dost retire
To thy Carv'd Acron-bed to lye.

Up with the Day, the Sun thou welcomst then,
Sport'st in the guilt-plats of his Beames,
And all these merry dayes mak'st merry men,
Thy selfe, and Melancholy streames.

But ah the Sickle! Golden Eares are Cropt;
Ceres and *Bacchus* bid goodnight;
Sharpe frosty fingers all your Flowr's have topt,
And what scithes spar'd, Winds shave off quite.

Poore verdant foole! and now green Ice! thy Joys
Large and as lasting as thy Perch of Grasse,
Bid us lay in 'gainst Winter Raine, and poize
Their floods, with an o'erflowing glasse.

Thou best of *Men* and *Friends!* we will create
A Genuine Summer in each others breast;
And spite of this cold Time and frozen Fate
Thaw us a warme seate to our rest.

Our sacred hearths shall burne eternally
As Vestall Flames; the North-wind, he
Shall strike his frost stretch'd Winges, dissolve and flye
This *Ætna* in Epitome.

Dropping *December* shall come weeping in,
Bewayle th' usurping of his Raigne;
But when in show'rs of old Greeke we beginne,
Shall crie, he hath his Crowne againe!

Night as cleare *Hesper* shall our Tapers whip
From the light Casements where we play,
And the darke Hagge from her black mantle strip,
And sticke there everlasting Day.

Thus richer than untempted Kings are we,
That asking nothing, nothing need:
Though Lord of all what Seas imbrace, yet he
That wants himselfe, is poore indeed.

Questions:

In most of the preceding poems the poet merely tries to convey a mood to the reader by assembling a group of related images drawn from nature. In the early stanzas of "The Grasshopper" Lovelace appears to be doing the same thing, but one quickly discovers that there is a difference in intention. At what point does this first become definite? Why?

SONNET 18

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

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 dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
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 growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Questions:

1. At what point in this poem is the reader sure that the poet's object is not to convey a mood by mere description?
2. How many comparisons are there in this poem?
3. How are they related to each other?
4. Is the basis of the relation always the same?

SONNET 73

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

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 ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest 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 seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

SONNET 97

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezing have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lord's decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

Question:

Why does the poet add to the comparison involving winter, that involving autumn?

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–)

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?

The poem begins as an apparently objective and simple bit of description. One notices, however, the exactitude of it. It is autumn, at twilight. The paths through the woods are dry, and this suggests that the poet on a walk through the woods has just stepped out on the shore of the still pool, and has stood there long enough to count the swans. There are fifty-nine of them. It has been nineteen years since he counted them for the first time. At that time too it was the autumn of the year, and there was a particular incident connected with that first sight of the swans which may have impressed the whole scene on his memory and which may help account for his remembering it so exactly: the swans rose in flight on that occasion almost before he had finished counting them.

But the poet remembers other things connected with that first experience—how he responded to that first hearing of their wings with a resilience of step—of what he was then as compared to what he is now. And the swans, unchanged since that first meeting, become a sort of yard-stick against which the poet may measure the changes which have taken place in his own life.

The exactitude of description in the first stanzas—the poet's knowledge of the precise number of the swans, the reason for his having remembered them, etc.—has an importance therefore. These are particular swans; indeed, they are the poet's own swans because he has watched for them year after year. Because of this fact, there is no suggestion of affectation when the poet proceeds to contrast the immortality of the swans with his own mortality and change.

If the poet were to say "my heart is sore," prompted by some accidental or chance-met scene, we would be inclined to believe his grief was an easy or trivial one. The poet's restraint, or rather the effect of restraint which the poem gives us, is further reinforced by the poet's method of referring to his grief. He is content to describe the reasons for his soreness of heart and the quality of it by implied contrasts between himself and the swans. When he first saw the swans nineteen years before, he could identify himself to some extent with them. His step became lighter in exultation with them. Now "All's changed," he tells us, and what has changed for him is suggested by what has remained unchanged with the swans: *they* are still unwearied; they are still lover beside lover; their hearts have not become old; they still find themselves at home in their world.

Notice how the poet has been able to suggest a great deal by his choice of words. Consider, for example, the phrase "companionable streams." *Companionable* suggests the qualities of security and comfort in a spacious, well-lighted room, with perhaps a great fire burning on the hearth. It does not seem reasonable at first to apply such a word to streams, especially since they have just been called "cold." And yet the adjective fits. The swans are at home in nature; they are not aliens in

nature, but part of nature in a way in which the poet is not. The swans are not only at home in their world, they dominate it; "passion" and "conquest" wait upon them like servants wherever they choose to wander.

Indeed, the swans themselves are used as a symbol for the beautiful, mysterious, unwearied immortality of nature itself. The poem is an excellent example of the poet's making a bit of natural description carry emotional intensity by relating the description to his own feelings. But he does this by telling us about the swans and not about himself. He does not "pour out his heart" to us. We learn about his own loneliness in the world and his defeat by the implied contrast with the swans. This restraint of the poet gives an impression of intensity and manliness.

THE TREE OF MAN

A. E. Housman (1859–1936)

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.

Questions:

1. This is a piece of description with an application of the scene described to the poet's own life. In the description does the wind stand for anything else? What?
2. What does the wood stand for?
3. Compare the theme of this poem with that of "The Wild Swans at Coole."
4. A critic might say that Yeats in "The Wild Swans at Coole" has given a more subtle treatment of the theme than Housman in "The Tree of Man." Discuss this opinion in the light of the use of imagery in each poem.

THE NIGHT-PIECE TO JULIA

Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

Her eyes the Glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting Stars attend thee;
And the Elves also,
Whose little eyes glow,
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'th'-Wisp mis-light thee;
Nor Snake, or Slow-worm bite thee:
But on, on thy way
Not making a stay,
Since Ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the Moon does slumber?
The Stars of the night
Will lend thee their light,
Like Tapers clear without number.

Then Julia let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me:
And when I shall meet
Thy silvery feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

Questions:

1. What is the effect of the poet's drawing all his descriptive detail from the imagery of night?
2. Why does he call the girl's feet "silvery"?

THE MOWER TO THE GLOW-WORMS

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678)

Ye living lamps, by whose dear light
The Nightingale does sit so late,
And studying all the Summer-night,
Her matchless Songs does meditate;

Ye Country Comets, that portend
No War, nor Princes funeral,
Shining unto no higher end
Than to presage the Grasses fall;

Ye Glow-worms, whose officious Flame
To wandering Mowers shows the way,
That in the Night have lost their aim,
And after foolish Fires do stray;

Your courteous Lights in vain you waste,
Since Juliana here is come,
For She my Mind hath so displac'd
That I shall never find my home.

SONG

EDMUND WALLER (1606–1687)

Go, lovely Rose,
  Tell her that wastes her time and me,
  That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

  Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
  That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

  Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retir'd:
  Bid her come forth,
Suffer her self to be desir'd,
And not blush so to be admir'd.

  Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
  May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and faire.

Question:

What does the poet gain by describing his mistress in terms of a rose?

THE BUGLE SONG

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

The splendor falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

The first two stanzas of this poem describe a bugle call at sunset. The poet who is apparently standing on some high place describes the country about him in the light of sunset, the castle in the distance on which the last beams fall, the waterfall colored by the sunset, etc. Evidently, the country is mountainous, and not only are there the rich tones of the bugle, the hills throw back the echoes which gradually die away and which become at last so faint that one might imagine them as notes blown from the horns of the fairies. But an idea comes into the poet's mind as he listens to the dying echoes. He apparently turns to his loved one with the thought: these echoes of the bugle die away into nothingness, but the spiritual echoes which roll back and forth between us do not decrease but actually increase as time goes on; that is, the poet seems to be saying, our love does not become less with the years but grows greater.

It is easy to see why the poem has been very popular. The thought is simple; the images, pretty and "poetical"; the rhythm is emphatic, and there is a great deal of rhyme. The rich, even gaudy, description of the bugle call at sunset is made to serve true love. Beautiful as all this is, the poet seems to say, love is more beautiful, more enduring.

Suppose we read the poem carefully, however, and explore further the poet's experience. Does the poem seem to be based on a real and deep experience? Does the idea in the last stanza grow out of what has preceded it, or has it been added on as a sort of moralizing comment?

The first stanza seems to come closest to giving a sense of reality. "The long light shakes" seems to come out of a real observation; so also perhaps, "The splendor falls." "Splendor falls" is much sharper and more vivid than "splendid light falls." But what of "old in story"? Does the poet include this phrase because he is thinking of the castle walls with regard to special stories, and does he get into the poem any of the sense of history? Or does the poet add this because he wants to add to the dignity and color of the scene? Is the phrase a real part of the poem or is it a footnote?

The same question comes up even more sharply in the next stanza. Why does the poet bring in the horns of elfland? Are they included as a sort of outside decoration to add a magical glamor to the scene, or has the poet really felt them as a part of the experience? The answer becomes plain when we observe how they are connected with the echoes of love in the next stanza. The echoes of the horn become sweeter, more magical as they grow fainter and nearer to dying away entirely, but this doesn't fit the poet's plan. He is *not* trying to say that likewise the echoes that roll between him and his loved one grow fainter at all. Those echoes grow more and more as time goes on. The ideas don't fit, and the more we think about the relation between the two kinds of echoes, the more inappropriate the comparison becomes.

Now we are not to measure poetry by scientific or logical standards altogether, but such a break in the logic as this does seem to point to this fact: that the poet has not thought the thing out and *felt* the thing out at all, and our suspicion is deepened that the poet put in the comparison merely because he thought it was pretty and hoped we wouldn't think about it too care-

fully. But a good poem ought to stand up under careful reading and thinking.

After all, when one comes to think of it, does the whole atmosphere and feeling that goes with the description in the poem fit a love that is to get stronger as the lovers become older? That sort of love is mature, and is probably a love that has endured strain and disappointment. Does the rich, highly colored description of the earlier part of the poem really build up the feeling that will go with that sort of love? Or is the atmosphere of that part of the poem merely flashy and romantic?

The poem as a matter of fact will not stand up under serious contemplation. And this may account for the amount of rhyme and the emphatic rhythms in the poem. The poem needs them for the same reason that a popular song needs a very insistent tune. If the tune is emphasized enough, we won't pay attention to the words. This poem seems to be built on the same principle.

AH, SUNFLOWER

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

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!

Question:

Why does the poet say "my" sunflower instead of "the" sunflower?

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

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 odors plain and hill;
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O 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 airy 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 vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: O hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
  The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline 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: O 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 skyey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision—I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
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 wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Question:

Is the treatment of imagery in this poem more like that of "The Wild Swans at Coole" than like that of "The Bugle Song"?

THE TIGER

William Blake (1757–1827)

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 water'd 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?

Question:

The tiger here symbolizes evil in the world. What, then, is the theme of the poem?

SECTION IV

In all poetry, including the poems already studied, the attitude of the poet toward his subject and the tone he adopts in the poem are of great importance. The poems in the present section, however, may offer some especially instructive examples of variations in tone. In each of the poems of this section, and in all subsequent poems of the collection, the reader should attempt (1) to define the poet's attitude toward his theme, (2) to define the tone and the relation of the tone to the attitude, and (3) to explain on technical grounds the means the poet adopts to convey his tone.

NEUTRAL TONES

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
—They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles solved years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing. . . .

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

The situation of the poem is a simple one: a man recalls the occasion of a quarrel with his beloved, on a winter day, beside a pond where the gray leaves of an ash tree lay on the dead grass. This recollection is put in the form of a direct address, even though the woman, apparently, is absent and perhaps has been parted from him for many years, for the device of direct address gives a dramatic quality and force to a commonplace situation.

But what really lifts the content of the poem above the commonplace poetic effect of mere pathos at broken love, and what defines the real theme of the poem, is the last stanza. The theme depends on the answer to this question about the last stanza: Why have the "keen lessons that love deceives" etc., always shaped for the speaker the face of the first beloved in that particular background . . . "the God-curst sun, and a tree, and a pond edged with grayish leaves"? The answer may run something like this: that early, and perhaps first, quarrel and disappointment in love have become a symbol for all the later disappointments and frustrations of his life; but it is more than that, being, as it were, in conjunction with the "God-curst" landscape also a *symbol* of all the curse of evil that hangs over man and nature. Therefore, this poem does in a very clear and apparently simple and direct way what all poetry tries to do: it takes a single incident, fact, or observation (the quarrel) and manages to link it with, or fuse it with, other things out of experience (the "starving sod," the dead leaves, the misty sun, etc.) to make a new kind of experience and perception of some kind of coördination or ordering of separate things. That is to say, the poet creates a *symbolic* experience, which means more than the mere experience of the incident originally chosen for the subject. It gives a meaning to the incident.

But there are other questions about this poem, or any other poem. For instance, what is the tone of the poem and, further, how does this tone relate to the meaning of the poem? The *tone* of a poem, really means the same thing as the tone of the voice, which, just as much as the literal meaning of the words spoken, gives meaning to the speaker's attitude. Everybody knows that the same word spoken in different ways means different things. But a poet tries to convey the quality of tone across time and space to a reader who has never heard his voice. He conveys this in many ways, by his diction, by his rhythms and sentence structure, by the kind of similes and metaphors he uses, by the amount of direct speculation, moralizing, or philosophizing he puts into the poem, and by many other means. But take the first line of our present poem:

We stood by a pond that winter day . . .

Then think what the difference in *tone* would be if the poet had said "pool" or "lake" instead of "pond." Yet a pond is after all a pool or a little lake. But *pond* is a more usual and homely word, a more realistic word, a less romantic word, a less "poetical" word. It implies a less formal tone, a less set and rhetorical tone, than would *lake* or *pool*.

Pond is a more usual word than *pool* and implies a more conversational tone in the poem. But observe the rhythms of the first stanza, and in fact, of the whole poem. The movement of the lines is more like that of ordinary conversation than a regular metrical line of four accents, such as

When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock and lonely tree,
All seemed to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school.

or more emphatically,

That with this bright believing band . . .

But the rhythm of the stanza continues more fully the conversational tone and slows the movement as if the speaker were trying to recollect every detail of the scene by the pond. This is made very specific by the last line, "They had fallen from an ash and were gray," which is put on as though a kind of afterthought in the process of recollection. The sentence structure, too, is such that the loose groping movement of the mind trying to repicture a scene is perceived by the reader; for the whole sentence is not constructed with the proper subordination of detail to a main thought—the structure of a logical and planned-out sentence—but is constructed by the accumulation of detail, after a general statement, strung together by *and's* and then followed by a dash and an afterthought. The structure of the sentence by its very logical crudity implies that groping movement, the mind trying to recollect something that has already been mentioned. That is, the tone here is conversational and meditative. The second and third stanzas give this effect less emphatically, but the last stanza makes it more emphatic even than the first, but by means of a different kind of treatment. For instance, the line next to the last, repeats the enumeration of details connected by *and's*, but in the last line:

And a pond edged with grayish leaves

the difficulty of pronouncing these words at a normal speed causes again the effect of reflection.

But what is the poet's attitude underlying the situation? It might be summed up in the word *fatalism*. What will come, will come in spite of what a man can do. Love, like the ash tree or the seasons, grows and then dies. That is what the first stanza implies. The next two stanzas elaborate that idea with a different set of images: the beloved one like a riddle already solved and known too well to be interesting, the grin of bitterness so short-lived that it seemed like a bird of ill-omen flitting past. But the poet fuses all of this with the movement of nature in growth and death, the seasons, etc., and then with the evil in nature and in man's fate, things which must be accepted because man cannot change the course of events. Observe, further then, how the movement of the last stanza settles from a sharp movement of the two lines (which is made more emphatic by the alliteration) to the retarded movement, a movement appropriate to the fatalistic mood.

ROSE AYLMER

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775–1864)

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Questions:

1. What is the tone of this poem?
2. Why does the poet use the word *consecrate* rather than some other word?

TO A MOUSE

On Turning Up Her Nest With the Plough, November, 1785

ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

Wee, sleekit,[1] cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa saw hasty
Wi' bickerin[2] brattle![3]
I wad be laith[4] to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murdering pattle![5]

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles,[6] but thou may thieve:
What then? poor beastie, thou maun[7] live!
A daimen[8] icker[9] in a thrave[10]
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,[11]
An' never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big[12] a new ane,
O' foggage[13] green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin
Baith snell[14] an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou'st turned out for a' thy trouble,
But[15] house or hald,
To thole[16] the winter's sleety dribble
An' cranreuch[17] cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane[18]
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,[19]
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my ee
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

Questions:

1. What is the poet's attitude toward the mouse?
2. Does the tone of the poem break in the last stanza?
3. If not, why not?

[1] soft, sleek
[2] hurrying
[3] clatter
[4] loth
[5] plough-staff
[6] sometimes
[7] must
[8] occasional
[9] ear
[10] twenty-four sheaves
[11] rest
[12] build
[13] coarse grass
[14] bitter
[15] without
[16] endure
[17] hoar-frost

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Questions:

1. Is the tone of this sonnet that of a curse or a prayer?
2. How does the poet achieve this tone?

THE PARTING

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631)

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 for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows

[18] alone
[19] amiss

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 might'st him yet recover.

Questions:

1. What is the attitude of the poet toward his mistress?
2. What keeps the tone of the poem from becoming sentimental?

SONNET 87

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking, no such matter.

Questions:

1. What is the tone of this sonnet?
2. Does the tone change? Or is it sustained?
3. Compare the tone with Drayton's "Parting."

TO IANTHE

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

I love thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake;
Those azure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek,
Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake;
But more when o'er thy fitfull slumber bending
Thy mother folds thee to her wakeful heart,
While love and pity, in her glances blending,
All that thy passive eyes can feel impart:
More, when some feeble lineaments of her,
Who bore thy weight beneath her spotless bosom.
As with deep love I read thy face, recur,—
More dear art thou, O fair and fragile blossom;
Dearest when thy tender traits express
The image of thy mother's loveliness.

The present poem has for its subject the love of a father for his child. The father says that he loves the child because the innocence and weakness of the child would provoke love in even the hardest heart; and that he loves it even more because its tender traits express something of the tenderness and appeal of the mother. That is what the poem says, and the feeling which is the subject of the poem must be a fairly usual one. But a poem is not good merely because it states a usual feeling, no matter how admirable that feeling may be. It must bring renewed strength to the subject, if the poem is to be better than a mere prose statement of the subject. As Wordsworth said, the poem must strip off "the veil of familiarity" from the subject. Shelley's poem presents no new body of perceptions and no enrichment of feeling for the subject. It stands in the same relation to a good poem on the subject as does a cheap picture of a mother and child on an advertising calendar to a good painting of the Madonna.

It fails, first, because the statement is flat, without any interest in developing or exploring the idea, and second, because there is no attempt to make the poem clear-cut and vivid to the reader. In almost every line the poet was content to take a second-hand and conventional way of expressing his idea. His phrases are *hackneyed* and are put in a hackneyed combination. Almost every line has one or more *clichés*. "sweet sake," "azure eyes," "dimpled cheek," "heart of hate," "fitfull slumber," "wakeful heart," "feeble lineament," "spotless bosom," "deep love," "fair and fragile blossom." In each case the poet, apparently, took the first phrase that came to mind without any attempt to present to the reader an accurate and fresh perception; and only by accurate and fresh perceptions could he have made the reader feel the poem as a discovery. The poet simply assumed in a slovenly way that an adjective of a soft and agreeable nature would serve, and so the poem is burdened with them. There is no variety. And to show how inaccurate and vague the use is one may rewrite the poem with all kinds of substitutions without impairing the effect.

I love thee, Baby! for thine own *dear* sake;
Those *bluest* eyes, that *gently* dimpled cheek,
Thy *budding* frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the *cruelest* heart of hate might wake;
But more when o'er thy *troubled* slumber bending
Thy mother folds thee to her *watchful* heart,
While love and pity, in her glances blending,
All thy *receptive* eyes can feel impart:
More, when some *weakest* lineaments of her,
Who bore thy weight beneath her *fairest* bosom,
As with *great* love I read thy face, recur,—
More dear art thou, O *white* and *tender* blossom;
Dearest when most thy *fragile* traits express
The image of thy mother's loveliness.

Little or no harm has been done to the poem. A similar experiment with a good poem would immediately show the destructive effects of such transpositions and substitutions. That point is that Shelley was writing loosely and carelessly; consequently, he resorted to *clichés*.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

STORM OVER THE ALPS

From *Childe Harold,* Canto III

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

The sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh, night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Question:

We usually think of urban life as noisy, rural life as quiet. In this poem and the poem by Wordsworth which precedes it, the situation is reversed. How does the poet in each case achieve the tone?

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674)

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes!

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free,
—O how that glittering taketh me!

JENNY KISS'D ME

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859)

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me.

ON AN INVITATION TO THE UNITED STATES

THOMAS HARDY (1840–1928)

My ardors for emprize nigh lost
Since life has bared its bones to me,
I shrink to seek a modern coast
Whose riper times have yet to be;
Where the new regions claim them free
From that long drip of human tears
Which peoples old in tragedy
Have left upon the centuried years.
For, wonning in these ancient lands,
Enchased and lettered as a tomb,
And scored with prints of perished hands,
And chronicled with dates of doom,
Though my own Being bear no bloom
I trace the lives such scenes enshrine,
Give past exemplars present room,
And their experience count as mine.

HIS BOOKS

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774–1843)

My days among the Dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,

My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears;
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

Here are two poems with exactly the same *themes* or basic *ideas*. Robert Southey and Thomas Hardy, both literary men and poets, are trying to express, in particular, their own relationships to the past, and in general, the relationship of the past to the present. They both say that they find the meaning of their own personal experience in the relationship of that experience to the lives that have gone before them.

This fact raises two questions of great importance in regard to the study of the real nature of a poem.

First, does this imply that the poems, as poems, *mean* the same thing?

Second, does this imply that they have, as poems, equal success? These two questions can only be answered at the end of the analysis of these two poems, and not at the beginning; but bear in mind that the answering of these two questions is the purpose of the present study. The study will have to take up several aspects of each poet's handling of the *theme* (1) the situation, (2) attitude, (3) imagery and figures, (4) diction, (5) rhythm and meter.

1

Situation. The occasion of Hardy's poem is an invitation to the United States. The title tells us this much, and therefore provides a sort of framework of reference for the poem. That is, there is an incident behind the poem, the kernel of a little drama of which the poem is the expression. Hardy has had to make a decision to accept or reject his invitation; and decision is at the very core of dramatic interest. On the contrary, Southey's poem might have been written in his library at any time, for the only element of experience is the sight of his books, which, as he says, "Around me I behold." Nothing has happened in the library to make him *feel* the full force of the truth of what he is going to write. We do not get a notion that there is any choice to be made or any struggle in the poet's mind over anything. All of this means that Hardy's poem starts with a decided advantage: it is *dramatic* and *concrete*, while the other lacks *drama*, or *tension*, and is *abstract*.

(The situation or little drama a poet may use does not have to be drawn from his own experience; that is, it does not have to be autobiographical. There is no reason to suppose that it is better for a poem when it is drawn directly from experience. For the purpose in hand we do not need to know that Thomas Hardy ever did receive an invitation to the United States. As a matter of fact, some poets have written their worst poems about things that actually happened to them.)

The fact that Hardy's invitation is to the United States emphasizes the *dramatic* and *concrete* nature of his treatment of the *theme*. There is a contrast, not only in time between the past and the present, but in space between Europe and America. There is a contrast drawn between a civilization with a long past and a heavy burden of history, and a civilization with a short past and a light burden of history; between a civilization that is conservative and pessimistic, and one that is progressive and optimistic. This contrast reënforces the dramatic element. But there is still another contrast. The ordinary person, especially an American, may assume without much thought that a progressive and optimistic attitude is naturally more admirable and happy than a conservative and pessimistic one. Now, in this poem Hardy reverses the opinion and finds, not in being cut off from the past, but in being identified with the pathos and tragedy of the continual struggle of mankind a nobility and a kind of satisfaction. He will not come to America—the Land of Promise. He has created in the poem a kind of *paradox*. The *tension* of the *paradox* adds to the *dramatic* quality.

All of these implications enrich Hardy's poem. Beside it Southey's poem appears very thin and poverty-stricken, for it says all it has to say about the situation at once and leaves nothing for the imagination of the reader to explore.

2

Attitude. In treating the *theme* Southey takes a much more limited attitude than does Hardy. The past he is talking about is merely the past seen through books. It is a *literary* past only. In the second place Southey gives some conventional and superficial moralizing. He takes the attitude of a teacher who will praise good behavior and correct bad:

Their virtues love, their faults condemn.

Or he takes the attitude of a pupil and studies his lessons:

And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

On the other hand Hardy realizes that the true value of the past is to be gained through imaginative participation:

I trace the lives such scenes enshrine.

To him the past means more than an excuse for passing a simple judgment or for learning simple moral lessons. He wants to reconstruct the past and feel himself into it in order to enrich his experience of the present:

Though my own Being bear no bloom.

In the third place Southey is *sentimental,* because he professes a feeling toward the past which the poem does not communicate to the reader. The reader, therefore, feels that Southey is insincere. He says that he has often wept because he thought how much he owed to the past. The reader would be willing perhaps to believe him if he said some *one* particularly tragic or pathetic story had moved him so deeply; but nobody has ever wept over the past in *general.*

3

Imagery. Southey's poem is given as a straight statement in general, not specific, terms. Many good poems use a straight statement in general terms, in greater or less degree, but in so far as they are successful they find some way to attract the reader's attention and make him concentrate on the statement so that he will *feel* the weight and truth of it, as if it were, for the moment, personal. The poet has to find some way to make the reader share the idea as an experience; that is, some way to establish a relation between the idea of the general statement and the reader's feelings. Perhaps the best and the most usual device the poet uses for this purpose is imagery. Notice how few pictures are presented in Southey's poem. The reader of a poem is like the man from Missouri: for him, seeing (or touching or hearing) is believing. Next, notice how few comparisons (figures of speech) there are in his poem. A comparison is one way of making the reader see, touch, or hear—and therefore believe in, or experience—the subject. For instance, in the last two lines of his poem Southey compares a name, or reputation, to a body decaying into the dust from which, as the Bible says, it came. But the figure of something decaying into dust is so worn out and has become so conventional that it is scarcely thought of as a comparison at all; it does not attract the interest of the reader and make him feel what the poet is trying to express. But contrast the treatment Southey makes of the dust figure with what another poet, James Shirley, makes:

> Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

Here Shirley has taken as the basis for his figure the old one of "dust to dust," but has treated it with originality and has given it new meaning. The bodies of the just will decay into the nothingness of earth, but their actions are like flowers which, after a period when the seed is apparently lost or dead, will bloom again, nourished by the residue of decay. Further, the figure also carries as a kind of secondary meaning, the notion of the Christian resurrection. Shirley never uses the noun *flower,* but uses the verbs *smell* and *blossom.* This gives two advantages. First, it enables him to compress the meaning so that he does not have to explain by saying "like a flower." Second, by depending for his effect on *verbs* only he gets an active rather than a passive effect. These two things give the reader an impression of surprise or discovery and of vitality. The effect of Southey's last two lines is entirely general and passive:

> Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
> That will not perish in the dust.

Hardy's poem is very rich in imagery. Not only does he provide glimpses such as "bones," "drip of human tears," a highly ornamental medieval "tomb," etc., but he uses such things as a device for communicating his very meaning. For instance, he does not say, as a general statement, that a long life of observation and experience has taught him that man's lot is essentially tragic and painful and that the attitude that best equips man for facing his lot is a noble pessimism which makes him persist in the face of a recognized evil. But all of this, and more, is in the first stanza; and most of it is implied in the line: "Since Life has bared its bones to me." Or again, analyze the meaning of the line: "And scored with prints of perished hands." The very land is like something created, as it were, by the generations of the past. The fact that it bears their personal, though crude, marks gives it an added value; just as the geometrical imperfections of handmade pottery give an added value because they indicate the personal element in the creation in contrast with the impersonality of machine-made pottery. The "prints of perished hands" are at one level specific to the reader—farmhouses, old hedges, churches, tombs, stone walls, etc. At another level they are metaphorical—some object such as the piece of pottery with the fingerprint baked into the clay. Those prints, then, stand as a kind of symbol for the continuity of human experience and, further, as a symbol for human brotherhood.

Within the poem itself the images have a continuity and interrelation. They are built up for a special effect. All of them for the first twelve lines build up the impression of a tragic destiny of fate which is finally summarized in the twelfth line by the phrase, "dates of doom." At that point exactly the opposite kind of image is introduced, the image of bloom and renewal of life, and the contrast is emphasized by the fact of the rhyme of *doom* with *bloom.* The contemplation of the tragic past gives the present a kind of spiritual renewal; that is the mysterious paradox on which the poem is built.

4

Diction. (You cannot separate the discussion of diction entirely from imagery, for if a reader dwells on the *connotations* of one word as opposed to the *connotations* of a synonym a large part of the difference in the choice of diction will be found to be bound up with imagery.)

The diction of Southey's poem is, one might say, perfectly usual. *Anon, bedew'd,* and *futurity* are the most unusual words in the poem. This is in itself nothing against the poem, and poems may be injured by the use of words too obscure or eccentric. But at least in Southey's case the reader feels a certain slovenliness in selection; there was no attempt to adapt vocabulary to idea; there was no attempt to create an interplay of connotation and suggestion. All of this means that the poem is flat in tone.

In Hardy's poem there is a definite attempt to work out some relation between idea and diction. The most emphatic case is the use of *wonning. Wonning* is an archaic word meaning *dwelling.* Hardy could have written the line this way:

> For, dwelling in these ancient lands.

That would have expressed at the literal level exactly what he says in the line as it stands now; but the line would have lost a very rich part of its *connotative* meaning. The use of *wonning* connects by implication the

poem to the Anglo-Saxon past of England, it gives an added meaning to *ancient* in the same line. (Hardy could use such a form with more naturalness than an American poet, for through the dialect of his native Wessex he had a more direct contact with the older language.) The use of *chronicled* carries another reenforcing implication. Try the meaning of the line revised:

And labeled with the dates of doom.

This is much inferior, for *labeled* has only one level of meaning for the poem. It says that the dates are attached to the lands, but that is all. *Chronicled* implies that the dates have been put down, not all at once, but in the long sequence of time as the events of "doom" occurred. Second, *chronicle* is the term used for the medieval attempts to write history; and so, something of the old manuscript is implied, with writing quaint and hard to decipher. But since the line follows on the comparison of the land to a tomb, the *chronicled* implies also the idea that the dates are engraved on stone or bronze. Therefore, *chronicled* is a very rich and appropriate word for the particular poem, which deals with the interpretation of the past. One might comment in the same way on *enshrine, centuried,* and *exemplars.*

5

Rhythm and meter. The movement of Southey's poem is very monotonous and mechanical. The regular movement of the meter is the prevailing movement of the poem, for there is no variety in meter itself, and little in (1) quantity or (2) rhetoric. In Hardy's poem there are metrical variations in lines five, eight, nine, and sixteen. Further, Hardy's mixture of monosyllables and polysyllables, as opposed to the excess of monosyllables in Southey's poem, tends to give a variety of movement. But the greatest difference is in the verse-texture of the two pieces. The almost dead level of short vowel effects in Southey's poem gives a monotony and an impression of triviality. This analysis started with the question: Does the fact that "My Books" and "On an Invitation to the United States" have the same theme imply that they have the same meaning? The meaning of a poem depends to a large extent on the way the theme itself is realized. For instance, death as an idea and death as the sight of a corpse have two very different meanings. In the second case, the experience is much more vivid. Southey has not engaged the reader in an experience. He has simply stated an idea. Hardy has managed to get the idea involved with a complicated set of experiences, (images, comparisons, rhythms, etc.) so that the idea can be felt.

This answers the second question with which this analysis started, the one concerning theme and success. A poem may be said to be successful when it accomplishes this fusion of idea and feeling; that is, when it makes the reader really *aware* of the idea.

FIDELE'S DIRGE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
  Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
  To thee the reed is as the oak;
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
  Thou hast finish'd joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renownèd be thy grave!

Questions:

1. What is the attitude toward death established in this poem?
2. What is the effect on the tone of the poem of the reiteration of "Fear no more"?
3. Why does the poet choose the particular objects that he does about which to say "Fear no more"?

SONNET 31

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Thy bosom is endearèd with all hearts
Which I, by lacking, have supposèd dead:
And there reigns Love, and all Love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought burièd.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead!—which now appear
But things removed that hidden in thee lie.
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give:
—That due of many now is thine alone:
  Their images I loved I view in thee,
  And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.

THEY FLEE FROM ME

SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503–1542)

They flee from me that sometime did me seek
  With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
  That now are wild, and do not remember

That sometime they did put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thankèd be fortune, it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once in special,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
Therewith all sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, *'Dear how like you this?'*

It was no dream; I lay broad waking:
But all is turned, through my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking:
And I have leave to go of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangleness.
But since that I so kindly am served,
I would fain know what she hath deserved.

DEATH THE LEVELER

James Shirley (1596–1666)

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb:
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

Questions:

1. The theme of the poem is well-known and has been often treated in poetry. Does the poet succeed here in making us feel it freshly and powerfully?
2. How much of the power of the poem depends upon the images?

AT HER WINDOW

Frederick Locker-Lampson (1821–1895)

Beating Heart! we come again
Where my Love reposes:
This is Mabel's window-pane;
These are Mabel's roses.

Is she nested? Does she kneel
In the twilight stilly,
Lily clad from throat to heel,
She, my virgin Lily?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,
Fading, will forsake her;
Elves of light, on beamy bars,
Whisper then, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead
At her flowery grating;
If she hear me will she heed?
Mabel, I am waiting.

Mabel will be deck'd anon,
Zoned in bride's apparel;
Happy zone! O hark to yon
Passion-shaken carol!

Sing thy song, thou trancèd thrush,
Pipe thy best, thy clearest;—
Hush, her lattice moves, O hush—
Dearest Mabel!—dearest. . . .

Questions:

1. What is the poet's attitude toward his mistress?
2. What is the tone of the poem?

BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDES' DAUGHTER

John Crowe Ransom (1888–)

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 arm 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.

Question:

Why does the poet use phrases like "Who cried in goose," and "brown study"?

HOW DO I LOVE THEE

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806–1861)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

SONNET 104

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

To me, fair friend, you never can be old;
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three Winters cold
Have from the forests shook three Summers' pride;
Three beauteous Springs to yellow Autumn turn'd
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

Question:

Compare this and the preceding poem for tone. Are they equally successful?

SECTION V

All poetry depends for an important part of its effect on the metrical skill of the poet and on his skill in combining sound effects. The consideration of these matters is always necessary in studying any poetry. The poems in this section, however, have been selected because they illustrate in a fairly obvious manner the success or failure of a writer in this respect. The reader should investigate preceding and subsequent poems in the light of the questions that occur.

THAT THE NIGHT COME

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–)

She lived in storm and strife,
Her soul had such desire
For what proud death may bring
That it could not endure
The common good of life,
But lived as 'twere a king
That packed his marriage day
With banneret and pennon,
Trumpet and kettle drum,
And the outrageous cannon
To bundle time away
That the night come.

This poem is a character sketch. It portrays a woman of intense vitality, even a tragic vitality, which expressed itself in distracting but rather magnificent activity, as if life were merely an interlude to be passed over as quickly as possible before death, an event proud and terrible enough to match her own nature. The poem is really an expression of a paradox of character. The fact of her excessive life and vitality is, in a way, but an expression of her hunger for death; and her hunger for death is but an expression of the intensity of her life. In cruder terms people often observe such a paradox. A person who is most alive and energetic is usually the person who indulges in dangerous sports and occupations and who flirts with death. Death and life define and fulfill each other.

In the first five lines of the poem the poet gives little more than a flat statement of the idea. But the poet not only wants to state the idea; he wants to make the reader grasp it in more concrete and manageable terms. Therefore he shifts from a general statement to an incident, the incident of the nuptial celebration of a king, beginning with the sixth line.

The poet treats those two parts of his poem, short as it is, in different ways. This difference can be observed in (1) imagery, (2) rhythm.

In the first five lines, as has been pointed out, there is a general statement about the character. Here the image and figures used are not emphatic and are conventional. For instance, the phrase "storm and strife" is not original; it has been used for many years and has become really a *cliché* which has been absorbed into ordinary speech. The phrase "proud death" has not entered into general use as a figurative expression, but it has been used by poets and preachers for hundreds of years and is, also,

a *cliché*. Usually, *clichés* impair the effect of a poem, but sometimes their use is justified. Here the very fact that they are conventional and somewhat flat or stale fits the easy, almost conversational, tone with which the poem begins. The same is true of "common good." The poet does not want to startle or surprise the reader. Instead, he wishes to start the poem with a subdued tone and then leap to a rapid climax. This contrast makes the final effect of surprise and splendor in the comparison with the king's marriage day more emphatic.

In its meter and rhythm the poem has great variety for a piece so short. The prevailing metrical form of the poem is *iambic trimeter*. (The poem rhymes: a-b-c-b-a-c-d-e-f-e-d-f.) But the poem, as can be seen from the marking of accents below, is not perfectly regular:

1. She lived in storm and strife
2. Her soul had such desire
3. For what proud death may bring
4. That she could not endure
5. The common good of life;
6. But lived as 'twere a king
7. Who packed his marriage day
8. With banneret and pennon
9. Trumpet and kettle drum
10. And the outrageous cannon
11. To bundle time away
12. That the night come.

The normal line is composed of three iambic feet, that is, three divisions containing an unaccented and an accented syllable in that order. But the following lines have variations: 6, 8, 9, 10, 12. It will be observed that in the first section of the poem, that is, the first five lines, there are no variations. That is the section which is somewhat flat and conventional and conversational in tone. The variations, most of which are highly expressive and do more than merely lend variety to the meter, are saved for the second section. In the first place, the most general effect of this is to make the second section more interesting metrically; it gives less effect of the cut-and-dried. In the second place, several of the variations are in themselves specially appropriate and expressive; that is, the rhythm they establish bears a definite relation to the idea and feeling the poet wishes to convey. In line 9 the accent falls on the first syllable of *trumpet*, the first word in the line, which coming after the extra weak syllable at the end of the preceding line (feminine ending) gains an added emphasis. This effect is reenforced by the tendency for the second syllable of *trumpet* to be drawn over to the next strong syllable, *ket-*, to make an anapaest and leave the syllable *trum-* isolated with a long drawn-out onomatopoeic emphasis. The reader who surrenders himself to the verse is forced by the metrical situation to pause and dwell on the real nature of the sound. (Observe how the sound is echoed again in *drum* at the end of the line.)

The forcing of the accent to *and* at the first of line 10 also has an expressive force. But first, it may be worth noting the process whereby the accent is forced on a conjunction, an unimportant word which normally would not be accented. If the syllable *out-* of *outrageous* were an accented syllable and were followed by a weak syllable, then the syllable *out-* would be the accented syllable of the first foot of the line, as in the following line:

/ / /
And the outer bound of space

But the word *outrageous* is accented on the second syllable: *out-ra-geous*. Therefore the metrical accent is forced back to *and*. This unusual situation has been prepared for by the similar pattern, more normally arrived at (the syllable *trum-* is always accented in *trumpet*), in the preceding line. But what is the effect of the accent on *and* in line 10? If a person in speaking is giving a list in the usual *a, b, c,* and *d* order and the items in the list are of equal importance, then the conjunction *and* is not emphasized in speaking. But assume a case where the first items in such a series or list are of equal importance; but the last item, the item introduced by *and,* is surprising and of far greater importance, so that it comes as an unexpected climax to the series. In such a case, in speaking, the *and,* which in the previous case was an unemphasized connective, receives an emphasis and is usually followed by a slight pause. For instance:

At Mrs. Smith's house I saw John, Tom, Susie, *and*—Mary. If one emphasizes the *and* in such a series, it implies that for some reason—let us say on account of a quarrel between the two—the appearance of Mary at the house of Mrs. Smith is a cause for astonishment. It forms a surprising climax to the series. The emphasis on *and* in the speaker's voice would cause the listeners to sit up and would create a momentary suspense, for it would be a signal for the climactic revelation. The *outrageous* cannon, the firing of salutes as it were, is the climax of the series in the poem, the banneret, pennon, trumpet, and kettle drum. The *cannon* is given an adjective which calls special attention to it, and it comes at the end of the series where its position, likewise, attracts special attention. But in addition, the accent on the *and* that introduces it has given the signal for the reader to expect the climax. For forcing of the metrical accent back to the connective *and,* therefore, supports the meaning of the line.

The forcing of the accent to the word *that* in line 12 serves a similar poetic purpose, for the coming of night (for the king, the consummation of his love; for the woman who is the subject of the poem, death) is the climax. The accent is forced to *that,* a word which when being used conjunctively, as here, does not normally receive an accent. The normal accentuation of the line might be:

/ /
That the night come.

This would certainly be true if the poem were in dimeter. But in the present case the reader's ear has been chor-

oughly accustomed to a trimeter pattern. Therefore, the only reading for the line is:

/ ˘ / /
That the night come.

But line 12 has other variations. It has only four instead of six syllables, the normal number of an iambic trimeter line. This means that the accented syllables *night* and *come* are forced together instead of being separated normally by an unaccented syllable. This arrangement forces an unusually long pause between the two syllables, a pause that makes up for the missing unaccented syllable. The effect is one of weighty, deliberate, and inevitable conclusion—which is appropriate to the meaning of the line and the poem.

These examples may show how the metrical effects in a poem may emphasize the meaning. It cannot be said that the mere arrangement of sounds, which in the abstract sense, the meter is, would give a specific meaning of its own. In these cases, however, it may be said that it bears an appropriate and emphasizing relation to the meaning. When it is thought of as apart from the meaning, a violence is done to its effect, for the rhythm works with the other elements of a good poem to give a single effect.

THE CLOUD

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills;
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

First, what is the poet's intention in this poem? He is not trying primarily, to give a vivid sense of nature itself, for his description is general. The poem does not have in it those vivid or infrequently seen or homely details drawn from actual observation of clouds—the sort of details which a nature poet like Wordsworth or a modern nature poet like Robert Frost occasionally gives. Moreover, the poet is not trying primarily to interpret nature through a personal mood in which nature seems to reflect his own spirit.

He seems here to be attempting to give primarily a sense of the marvelous variety, and yet unity in variety, of the cloud. It is true that he personifies the cloud; that is, he pretends that the cloud is speaking as a person. But apart from the factual description which the poet has the cloud give of its wanderings, and apart from the many decorative passages which he supplies, the poet's attitude seems to be this: How marvelous and wonderful are the processes of nature. And he has the cloud say something like this: "See how wonderful I am! You thought that I had disappeared, but see, I deceived you. Here I am again!" For example, the cloud laughs as it passes "in thunder," and "laughs at its own cenotaph." A good poem might come out of this intention. But has the poet succeeded in his intention in this particular case?

A detailed criticism of the poem will break up into two parts: (1) a criticism of the monotony of the meter and (2) a criticism of the imagery.

The metrical scheme is quite elaborate. The odd lines have internal rhyming; the basic metrical pattern is anapaestic and Shelley makes a considerable use of feminine rhymes. Presumably the purpose behind this metrical scheme is to give an effect of lightness and rapidity. But does the meter really respond to the play of the thought? The poem has for its subject the eternal variety of the element of water in vapor, hail, snow, storm-clouds, etc. But regardless of the new forms assumed by the cloud, the meter continues with its sameness. Metrical variation there is, but there is not a sense of variety. One of the difficulties of an elaborate and emphatic metrical pattern is that we are overborne by it, and the effect is that of monotony. We cannot hear the poem, for the noise that the meter is making.

The truth of the matter, of course, is this: Shelley is not letting his meter flex and bend to the play of the thought. The poet uses the elaborate metrics for the purpose of decoration—a very gaudy costume in which his cloud can perform her dance.

And this is the generalization which one is forced to make about the imagery: It is merely decorative in the same way as tinsel hung loosely on a Christmas tree. The images have no deeper significance *and the more closely one considers them the weaker and less appropriate they become.* Great poetry we know becomes richer on successive readings. It is something of an indictment, therefore, when we find that this poem seems better the more *carelessly and superficially we read it.*

For example, in the third stanza the sunrise is sanguine, that is, has a ruddy complexion; it has meteor eyes and *burning plumes.* This strange creature is made to leap on the back of the cloud. How may readers visualize the image? And is the poem any more vivid if one does visualize it? Is it not in effect worse? Shelley evidently wants us to take the individual elements in the description, but he does *not want* us to take them in combination.

This superficial use of images is very well illustrated by the final figure:

Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb.

Does the cloud emerge from the "caverns of rain" in the way that a child comes from the womb? Or for that matter, is the child coming from the womb really very much like a ghost coming from the tomb? We have no right to demand a point to point resemblance in a comparison, and we have no right to object to a mixture of figures *in itself.* Each mixed figure must be considered as a separate case. The poet may be using it for a good purpose. But what is Shelley using this particular figure for? We do have a right to ask that. Obviously, he is trying to say that the apparent death of the cloud is in reality its rebirth. That is why he is using a figure of birth and a figure of death. He is trying to use the poetic method of finding concrete images through which to make his statement. But does he succeed in finding images which really say what he wants to say? He does not. One gathers in general from the two figures that the cloud's death is really a birth, but the images do not work together, and instead of the concrete images making the statement rich and full, they give the idea vaguely and loosely. And if we try to *see* the figure, the figure breaks down completely. What does a babe at birth really look like? How does a ghost emerge from a tomb? The poet has not *assimilated* his materials—he has not turned the work into *poetry.* One suspects that he has used *womb* and *tomb* because they give him a convenient rhyme.

And what is true of the figures is true of the adjectives, and true of the various allusions in the poem. The adjectives are the usual and expected ones—*thirsting* flowers, *great* pines, *purple* sea, etc. There are hardly any new and vivid perceptions to be found here. Other allusions are merely decorative: for example, in the second stanza, the lightning, the pilot of the cloud, is lured by the genii (that is, by the spirits) of the purple sea. But after these special sorts of spirits (out of the *Arabian Nights*) are mentioned, they are dropped and nothing more is done with them. In the fourth stanza, the feet of the moon are heard only by the angels, and again the angels with their allusion to the Jewish or the Christian heaven drop out of the poem. One must point out very clearly that a poet has a right to use many figures and that these figures need not be of the same type or be connected logically with each other. But as we examine the poem closely, we see that Shelley is merely picking up certain figures for a momentary effect; that there is no

central tone which unifies the poem and to which the various figures contribute: and that as a matter of fact the whole decoration of the poem is a rather loose sort of thing.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead."

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethern stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries: "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.
Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation.
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.
Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

Questions:

1. Is the poet here actually imitating the sounds of various musical instruments? Is he imitating the effect of the various instruments?
2. What is the difference in effect between the fourth and fifth stanzas? How do the metrical schemes of the two stanzas contribute to this difference?

ON TIME

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

Fly envious *Time*, till thou run out thy race,
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace;
And glut thy self with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain.
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,
And last of all, thy greedy self consum'd,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss;
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood,
When every thing that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever shine

About the supreme Throne
Of him, t'whose happy-making sight alone,
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall clime,
Then all this Earthy grossnes quit,
Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee O Time.

Questions:

1. How much variation in movement does this poem have? Can you indicate how the poet accomplishes this variation?
2. How does the poet make the last line of the poem seem so long? Why should he want to make it seem long?

SONG

From *The Tempest*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them—
Ding-dong, bell!

FAIR AND FAIR

GEORGE PEELE (1558?–1597)

Enone. Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.
Paris. Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady.
Enone. My love is fair, my love is gay,
As fresh as bin the flowers in May,
And of my love my roundelay,
My merry, merry, merry roundelay,
Concludes with Cupid's curse—
Ambo Simul. "They that do change old love for new
Pray gods they change for worse!"
They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!
Enone. Fair and fair, etc.
Paris. Fair and fair, etc.
Thy love is fair, etc.
Enone. My love can pipe, my love can sing,
My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring
My merry, merry, merry roundelays.
Amen to Cupid's curse,—
"They that do change," etc.
Paris. They that do change, etc.
Ambo. Fair and fair, etc.

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

THOMAS MOORE (1779–1852)

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me:
The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere, slumber's chain has bound me.
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

Question

Try to analyze the somewhat monotonous effect of this poem in contrast with the four preceding poems. What qualities does it share with "The Cloud?"

COME DOWN, O MAID

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?

But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Question

The last two lines of this poem are usually pointed out in books on the technique of poetry as a good example of onomatopoeia Why?

FROM "SONG OF MYSELF"

WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul.
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me;
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough.
I show that size is only development.
Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle; they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night;
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.
Press close, bare-bosomed night—press close, magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
Still, nodding night—mad naked summer night!
Smile, O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!

Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.
Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

Questions·

This is free verse; that is, there is no basic metrical pattern. To what extent are the rhythms regularized? Are they regularized enough to deserve the name *verse?* On what principle is the length of the lines based? What are the advantages of the verse form used here? The disadvantages?

SEVEN EXAMPLES OF BLANK VERSE

The following selections are all written in blank verse. Notice, however, how different in movement are the various sections. What is the movement in each? Can you explain by reference to variations in the general blank verse pattern how these differences are secured?

A VOYAGE

From *Comedy of Errors*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:
But longer did we not retain much hope;
For what obscurèd light the heavens did grant,
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death;
Which, though myself would gladly have embrac'd,
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,

Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
Forc'd me to seek delays for them and me.

JULIET APPEARS AT THE WINDOW

From *Romeo and Juliet*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off;
It is my lady; O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks, yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW

From *Macbeth*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

THESE OUR ACTORS

From *The Tempest*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

DESCRIPTION OF HELL

From *Paradise Lost*

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

At once, as far as angels' ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the center thrice to the utmost pole.
O, how unlike the place from whence they fell!

FLIGHT OF THE FIEND

From *Paradise Lost*

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian, who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold: so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep!

HOW FRA LIPPO LIPPI PAINTED THE CHURCH

From "Fra Lippo Lippi"

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

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.

DEDICATION TO *DON JUAN*

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

Bob Southey! You're a poet—Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 'tis true that you turned out a Tory at
Last,—yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;

"Which pye being opened they began to sing"
(This old song and new simile holds good),
"A dainty dish to set before the King,"
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food;—
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumbered with his hood,—
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob!

Questions:

1. What is the effect of rhymes like *laureate—Tory at?*
2. What is the general tone of the poem?
3. How do the metrical effects support this tone?

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909)

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,

Pale beds of blowing rushes,
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
  For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
  In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
  All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
  Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
  He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
  Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
  In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
  Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
  With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her
  From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
  She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
  The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
  And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
  The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
  And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
  Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow;
  And joy was never sure;
Today will die tomorrow;
  Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
  Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
  From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
  Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
  Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
  Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
  Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
  In an eternal night.

Questions:

1. What is the effect of the various metrical devices to be found in this poem?
2. Is anything sacrificed to these effects?

FROM AN *ESSAY ON CRITICISM*

ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

But most by Numbers judge a Poet's song;
And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong:
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to Church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rimes;
Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees":
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep";
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

Leave such to tune their own dull rimes, and know
What's roundly smooth or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigor of a line,
Where Denham's strength, and Waller's sweetness join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Questions:

1. How sound is Pope's criticism here?
2. How much variation in the verse pattern does Pope get in this passage?
3. What means does he use to give the effect of (a) smoothness, (b) roughness, (c) slowness, (d) speed?

PORTRAIT OF GARRICK

From "The Retaliation"

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;
As an actor, confessed without rival to shine;
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line;
Yet with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art;
Like an ill-judging beauty his colors he spread,
And beplastered with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turned and he varied full ten times a day:
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick;
He cast off his friends as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame;
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who peppered the highest was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind:
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub Street reecho the shouts that you raised,
When he was be-Roscused, and you were bepraised!
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel, and mix with the skies!
Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will;
Old Shakespeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above. . . .

Question:

For what principal effect is Goldsmith using the couplet in this passage?

SECTION VI

In the poems already studied attention has been called to the importance of the *imagery*. The poems in the present section do not differ in principle in their use of imagery from the preceding ones; for all poems, to a degree, use imagery, and it has been said that a poet thinks, to a large extent, by means of his images. Images, as has already been seen, are not merely pictures the poet describes, they are one of the most important instruments the poet can use for communicating to the reader the ideas and feelings which make up the poem. The poems in the present section, however, do give more complicated uses of imagery than appear in most of the previous poems.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist
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.

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 a salt sand-wave,
    Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
  Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
    And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

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
  Veil'd 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.

The poem makes a rather simple statement. The poet is saying: the intensity of sorrow is not to be found in the usual places where one has been taught to expect it, it is to be found in scenes of greatest beauty, for beauty fades and joy does not endure.

It will be apparent at once that much of the poem is concerned with enriching and developing this comparatively simple thought so that the reader will *feel* it as well as *understand* it. Therefore, it is important to examine each image in the poem in order to find what relation it bears to the meaning of the poem

But before beginning a detailed study of the imagery, one may ask the question: Why does the poet begin the poem as he does? The first stanza is the answer to an implied *if*. If you desire to find a proper subject for your sorrowful thoughts, then

> . . . go not to Lethe. . . .
> . . . . . .
> But when the melancholy fit shall fall
> . . . . . .
> Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose.

Does the poet gain anything by beginning so abruptly—by giving the advice before the reader knows fully what is the occasion for it? He does, for he creates a sort of suspense as the poem opens which gives an effect of climax to the last stanza Furthermore, the direct address gives a dramatic effect to a poem which might seem at first glance largely rich embroidery work And the sacrifice in clearness which the poet incurs by his abrupt beginning is not very serious. The reader knows that the poem is about melancholy, and the objects which are assembled in the first stanza are those usually associated with melancholy.

Notice that as the first stanza with its imagery of melancholy draws to a close, Keats tells his friend to avoid these things because they

> . . . will drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

The advice is addressed to someone who, evidently, does not wish to drown his sorrow—wishes indeed to cultivate it and to understand what it means. But is this advice given by a sentimentalist, and can it ever be adopted by a person who is not a sentimentalist? The love of melancholy for most people is a kind of wallowing in a "sweet sadness"—a sentimental self-indulgence. Is Keats successful in making his love of melancholy something other than this sentimental indulgence? If he does succeed he must do so by relating the melancholy mood to some constant truth about human life. What part does the imagery play in making this relation?

The first figure in the second stanza tends to separate the mood of melancholy from mere sentimentality. The poet identifies the melancholy mood with the inevitability of the processes of nature; this is one of the methods the poet uses to connect the melancholy mood with something that is permanently true about human life. The melancholy comes unasked and unsought, like a summer shower. But the figure of the shower carries other meanings. In the first place, the "weeping cloud" is something that is easily associated with melancholy, and so also is the "shroud" that is cast about the hills. But the poet is not content to depend on the usual associations. He calls it an "April shroud," and the word *April* brings in a new set of associations, the joyousness and fruitfulness of spring. What is the effect of the contrast of these associations with the ones ordinarily provoked by the word *shroud?* The cloud is an emblem of mournfulness, but the poet is reminding the reader that it is an emblem of fruitfulness too. He tells the reader explicitly that the cloud "fosters the droop-headed flowers." Apparently the poet is implying that his melancholy, like the cloud, has a fruitfulness of its own. The mood may help us to see more clearly into the meaning of life—to see the close connection of joy and sorrow, a paradoxical unity in their contrast. This use of the cloud, therefore, is one example of the poet's attempt to avoid sentimentality.

At the fifth line of the second stanza, the poet begins to name other scenes and objects appropriate for the melancholy mood.

(1) a morning rose.

Why *morning?* Because he is thinking of the rose as an instance of beauty rapidly fading.

(2) the rainbow of a salt-sand wave

The rainbow made by the sunlight falling on the spray of an ocean wave breaking on the sandy beach is another example of beauty perishing almost as quickly as seen.

(3) globèd peonies.

With this figure the fleetingness of the beauty is not emphasized and the climactic order of the images which the poet has been building up is broken—and broken, probably to no good purpose.

(4) thy mistress.

The figure here is unsuccessful. The poet considers the woman in her beauty which must pass as the supreme instance of melancholy, and as such she is treated in the very fine last stanza. But not only does the poet defer emphasis on the fleeting quality of her beauty as he first introduces her, he patronizes her, and indeed brings in a scene which the reader feels is unprepared for by what has gone before and which breaks the line of development of the poem. He patronizes the woman because he does not treat her as an equal. Her anger is evidently not a serious matter—it is merely a sort of pettishness which need not be attended to ("and let her rave"). It is merely important as a sort of agitation which sets off her beauty to advantage. The connoisseur of melancholy is

to savor it as he would a particularly fine wine The whole attitude is that which one might hold toward a pretty child whose anger affords a setting for its beauty.

This particular digression really weakens the poem considerably, and does much to offset the effect of the "weeping cloud" figure. It tends to make the experience seem unreal and to make the melancholy seem trivial and self-centered.

There is a remarkable recovery in the third stanza, however, where the poet returns to his central theme of melancholy at the fleetingness of beauty, and considers the woman as the supreme instance of "Beauty that must die."

The question which perhaps most needs answering for our purposes is this: Why is it possible for the poet to associate the mistress with the allegorical figures like Melancholy and Joy and yet make the scene real to us so that we do not feel a strain or affectedness? The answer may reside in part in this, that the girl is considered as a sort of priestess of Melancholy residing in her temple where also Joy and Pleasure abide. This image becomes explicit in the statement that

Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine

in the temple of Delight. But the temple figure has already been prepared for—perhaps unconsciously in our minds, but prepared for nonetheless—in the first stanza. There the poet refers to the one possessed by melancholy as one indulging in a religious rite:

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries.

(*Mysteries* has among its meanings the rites of certain religions, especially secret and esoteric religions.) The assembly of objects in the first stanza thus finds its balance and contrast in that in the third stanza. Melancholy is to be worshipped in the temple mentioned in the last stanza —the temple of Delight. This paradox helps again to give the force of contrast to the almost too rich and sensuous imagery of the poem.

But the finest and most forceful figure of the poem occurs in the seventh and eighth lines of the last stanza:

Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine.

The image is not "prettified." The poet is choosing this image, not because it is pretty, but because he needs it. The requisites for feeling the full force of melancholy are these: (1) the sensitiveness (the "palate fine"), but in addition (2) the force and penetration of insight to see that Joy itself begets the greatest sorrow in that all Joy must pass even as it is tasted. The figure of the bursting of Joy's grape is even dramatic. It is only the strenuous (i.e., powerful) tongue which can burst it, and the word *burst* gathers up into itself both elements: the flood of rich sweetness on the bursting, and the destruction, the simultaneous loss of joy.

And even this account does not explain why the figure works as it does. This figure too has been prepared for. One may go back and notice how many are the images of taste which appear in the poem, preparing for this last great figure of tasting which shall gather up and complete those which have gone before. Tasting the water of the river Lethe gave forgetfulness; the "poisonous wine" implies tasting; then, *glut* and *feed* are used in the second stanza: and in the third, *poison* and "while the bee-mouth sips." These and the great taste image which completes them make the line

His soul shall *taste* the sadness of her might

not prosaic, but rich and emotional.

As a matter of fact, the image of tasting and the image of the temple rites—images which run through the poem —bind the poem together. The poet has built his poem around these two basic images.

The poem, as has already been indicated, is not altogether successful, though parts of it are very fine. Despite individual passages of fineness, one must still ask the question: Why cannot we put it beside the greatest poems? Individual faults have already been commented upon. One might give a general explanation as follows: Keats has for his theme a variation of the old theme used so often by Shakespeare, for instance: the passing of beauty, or beauty destroyed by time. There are in general two approaches: (1) a rather straightforward, direct approach, or (2) an ironical approach. Keat's poem falls somewhere between the two. He is really using an indirect ironical approach: Don't look there for melancholy; if you want something really to be sad about find the most beautiful thing that you can, for the loveliest things must perish. His poem requires irony, therefore. But the poem does not have enough irony. It depends too much on the embroidery work of the decorative imagery. The most successful passages which we have found are ironical or tend to irony. But the poem does not have enough to be entirely successful.

It is far more successful, however, than a very similar poem by the same author, and it may be interesting to compare the "Ode" to Keats' sonnet "Bright Star."

BRIGHT STAR

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendor 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 steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd 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.

In this sonnet Keats is still occupied with the transience of all earthly beauty. He wishes that he might live with it eternal and changeless as does the bright star of his poem. The poem, a careful reader will observe, breaks up into two parts: (1) a description of the star as it watches the processes of nature, steadfast and unchanged; (2) a description of the eternity as the poet would spend it had he the unchanged character of the star. Moreover,

the careful reader will observe that what Keats is asking for in reality is to eat his cake and have it too. He would have the immortality of the star, an immortality which he identifies with its isolation from human life, however; but he would have in addition along with this immortality, not isolation from life, but indeed, the satisfaction of his own particular personal desires.

Now such a theme in itself is not enough to wreck a poem. One might cite many poems where this theme is used successfully But the successful cases usually employ irony—a vivid sense of the fact that the wish could not possibly be achieved, and indeed often a sort of self-mockery on the poet's part that he could even half-seriously wish for such a thing. This poem is completely devoid of irony, however, and the end therefore dissolves into sentimentality.

Let us consider the poem in some detail, however. The first eight lines of the poem are rather fine. They describe the immutability of the star and enlarge on its changeless isolation. It gazes down on the world with a complete detachment. Notice the imagery: "lone splendor"—"like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite." An Eremite is a hermit, one who retires from the world of men to engage in meditation and prayer. And what the star looks down upon supports still further this atmosphere of patient detachment:

> The moving waters at their *priest*like task.

We usually think of a priest as detached from the world, devoted to something higher and apart. And yet the hermits were even more detached than the priests, not even associating with the world in the sense in which the priests did.

The rest of the imagery, "pure ablution," the snow as a "soft mask" affording anonymity and isolation—builds up the conception of immortality as separate from human concerns—something cold, and without will, and apart.

But the occupation to which Keats would put *his* immortality is diametrically opposed in every way to that of the star. And the atmosphere of the last six lines is lush where that of the first eight is cold and bare. Such a shock of contrast can often be effectively used by the poet as a part of the poem. But does Keats consciously use the contrast here? Does he point up the shock for an ironical tone; or does he not rather disregard it, and indeed attempt to smooth it over? He does not apparently see the contrast himself, and we have the feeling accordingly that the artist is inadvertently betrayed into childishness.

One can look at the matter in a slightly different way. Keats draws upon nature for a particular image of immutability, and does justice to it in its special setting: but then he suddenly applies the image to himself, attempting to invest with dignity and beauty of the star's changelessness his own personal love. The application betrays a lack of a sense of proportion. The poet by implication magnifies his own importance. And these phenomena are all related to a lack of a sense of humor. We say that the ending of the poem is sentimental, and in this case, as usually in cases of sentimentality, we see that the emotion is serious for the poet but we do not share it with him—we are inclined to laugh. Few poems begin so auspiciously as this one, to crumble at the end.

KUBLA KHAN: OR A VISION IN A DREAM

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree;
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,—
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!—
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Questions:

1. This poem is celebrated for its "suggestiveness"—that is, its power to stimulate the imagination. Notice that a very large part of this power resides in its imagery. Is the unity of the poem to be found in the likeness of the associations which the various images bear?
2. What are these associations?

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

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.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd 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:

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 specter-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.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted 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,
Clustered 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.

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.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd 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.

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.

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 famed 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?

Questions:

1. How much more statement is there in this poem than in "To Autumn?"
2. In which is the theme more definite? Compare both to the "Ode on Melancholy."
3. Which poem is more personal? Consider also "The Wild Swans at Coole" in this respect.
4. What is the tone of this poem? Compare it in tone to "The Wild Swans at Coole."
5. Study the metrics of the first stanza and the seventh stanza. Study the sound effects of both stanzas. How are the metrics and the sound effects related to the subject matter of each stanza? In the fifth line of the seventh stanza there is a change to a meditative tone similar to that in the first stanza. How is that reflected in the meter?

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–)

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;
Imagined, 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,
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 bride-groom 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.

Questions:

1. This poem has three elements: description, statement, and metaphor and symbol. Distinguish these

elements. What is the meaning of the horn? The tree? The bellows? How does the poet relate the various elements to each other?
2. What is the relation of stanza four to stanza three?
3. What is the tone of this poem?

PRIVATE WORSHIP

MARK VAN DOREN (1894–)

She lay there in the stone folds of his life
Like a blue flower in granite—this he knew;
And knew how now inextricably the petals
Clung to the rock; recessed beyond his hand-thrust;
More deeply in, past more forgotten windings
Than his rude tongue could utter, praising her.

He praised her with his eyes, beholding oddly
Not what another saw, but what she added—
Thinning today and sharpening with a slow smile—
To the small flower within, to the saved secret.
She was not his to have—except that something,
Always like petals falling, entered him.

She was not his to keep—except the brightness,
Flowing from her, that lived in him like dew;
And the kind flesh he could remember touching.
And the unconscious lips, and both her eyes:
These lay in him like leaves—beyond the last turn
Breathing the rocky darkness till it bloomed.

It was not large, this chamber of the blue flower,
Nor could the scent escape; nor the least color
Ebb from that place and stain the outer stone.
Nothing upon his grey sides told the fable,
Nothing of love or lightness, nothing of song;
Nothing of her at all. Yet he could fancy—

Oh, he could feel where petals spread their softness,
Gathered from windfalls of her when she smiled;
Growing some days, he thought, as if to burst him—
Oh, he could see the split halves, and the torn flower
Fluttering in sudden sun; and see the great stain—
Oh, he could see what tears had done to stone.

TO A SKYLARK

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,—
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,—
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen—but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As when Night is bare
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not:
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love,—which overflows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In the dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose, embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields or waves or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be;
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee;
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream—
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear:
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

Questions:

1. What is the function of the imagery in this poem?
2. How are the images related?
3. How closely are the images related to the theme of the poem? Compare with Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale."
4. Compare the last stanza with the last lines of "Kubla Khan."

SONG

THOMAS CAREW (1595?–1639?)

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars 'light
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The Phoenix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

In this poem, the poet praises his mistress by finding in her the various beauties of nature. In her cheeks, he finds roses; in her hair, the golden light of day; in her voice, the music of the nightingale; in her eyes, the flash of stars. The poem is akin, as the reader will easily see, to many poems which undertake to praise a beautiful woman by comparing her to the various beauties of na-

ture. One of the most interesting things about the poem, therefore, is the manner in which this poem is set off from other poems which intend to do the same sort of thing.

In the first place, the praise (like the praise of most love poems) is extravagant. And extravagant praise often sounds flat or glib. It gives one the impression of being glib if the reader feels that the poet is merely tossing off compliments. It gives the impression of being sentimental or flat if we feel that the poet is quite sincere but is betrayed by his own enthusiasm so that he says things, blinded by his enthusiasm, which clear-eyed he would not say; or which, we, unmoved by his personal enthusiasm, are ashamed for him to say.

The *tone* of the poem (which reflects the attitude of the poet towards his mistress and towards what he says about her) is, even in a relatively simple poem like this one, of great importance. What is that tone? And how does the poet establish it?

In attempting to determine this matter, an important point to notice is the complication which the poet introduces. By *complication* is meant the ways in which the poet adds to and develops the simple idea that his mistress is a compound of all the most beautiful aspects of nature. Obviously, the particular twists, elaborations, etc., which the poet gives to the idea reveal much about his attitude.

One notices, in the first place, that there is considerable complication—more, indeed, than one hasty reading might indicate. The mistress is not merely a person possessing cheeks like roses and eyes like stars. She is a sort of repository or store-house where the aspects of nature which perish with the seasons or which die in a moment are kept safe. Notice that each element of natural beauty mentioned by the poet is one which is described in terms of its transience. The rose dies with summer, the golden light of day gives way to night, the nightingale is heard no more in the winter, the falling star shines for only a few seconds, the phoenix was remarkable in that when it was about to die, it burned itself in its nest, a new bird arising from the ashes; and here the phoenix is mentioned in the act of dying, building its "spicy nest." The mistress becomes, thus, a type of permanent beauty in a world of passing beauty. The poet, it is true, does not insist upon this interpretation, but he suggests it, and if we read the poem carefully, we feel the suggestion.

Notice too the complication involved in the individual comparison. In the mistress's beauty the roses "as in their causes, sleep." A result may be said to sleep in its cause, for the cause contains the germ of the result which it operates to cause. The figure is rather daring; it carries over to a philosophical idea. But notice the preceding line: "for in your beauty's orient deep." *Orient* comes from the Latin word meaning *rising,* and because the sun rises in the east, *oriental* came to mean east, but the east primarily as we associate it with the dawn. The line refers to the girl's cheeks which are rosy like the dawn. But *orient* retains its meaning of *rising* and connects with the idea of the flowers sleeping in their causes. The images tie together very neatly, therefore. The poet is referring primarily to the dawn-like beauty of her cheeks, but the last line of the stanza develops a deeper meaning in addition to the surface meaning. Notice that the deeper meaning is *in addition to.* It does not contradict the surface meaning, but grows out of it. It is perhaps this sort of thing that critics have in mind when they speak of a poet's ability to carry a complex meaning in his poem without breaking the lyrical tone.

Notice too the third stanza. The nightingale with winter goes to a warmer place to wait until spring returns. The poet has the bird winter in her throat. She keeps her note warm there. And the adjective *warm* offers many suggestions. The music of the nightingale may be said to be warm; certainly the throat of the girl, it is suggested, is warm. And both of these suggestions of *warm* grow out of the poet's primary use of the term with regard to the nightingale's wintering.

Notice also the fourth stanza. In the old astronomy, the planets and the stars were thought to be fixed in transparent spheres which were concentric with the earth and which revolved around the earth. Each planet had a sphere to itself, and the "fixed stars," that is, heavenly bodies which did not appear to move with relation to other heavenly bodies as the planets did, occupied a special sphere of their own. The poet's mistress's eyes are spheres also. And the falling stars find there, the poet says, *their* sphere, becoming fixed stars. Many poets have said that a lady's eyes were like stars. The comparison has become a *cliché.* But Carew, by expanding it with new detail, makes it again fresh and real.

What does this neat, even ingenious, working out of the parallel between the beauties of nature and the poet's mistress tell us of the poet's attitude?

In the first place this complication removes any sense of glibness. The praise is measured, calculated, and fully realized by the poet. In the second place, ingenuity and sentimentality do not mix. Extravagant, the praise may be, but we have no sense of the poet's having been caught off guard—having been betrayed by his fervor.

Notice also that the recurring phrase, "ask me no more," which seems so simple, helps to define the poet's attitude too. The poet implies, as he opens each stanza, that he has arrived at a solution to a perplexing problem. There will be no need, he seems to say, to ask further what happens to beauty that dies. The phrase therefore implies the study of a problem, a calculated judgment, and a certain assurance as to the answer. And the implication of a problem thoroughly studied, carefully analyzed, and solved is corroborated by the elaboration of each point in the various stanzas. The poem does not give the sense, therefore, of a glib effusion.

One should also observe that the poem comes to a climax. It is not a mere bundle of compliments. The phoenix stanza gathers up the other compliments and caps the series with a final intensity. Heretofore, the poet has compared his mistress to various beauties of nature which perish In this last stanza he used the last and most extreme symbol of beauty which perishes only to renew itself in beauty. This image, like those before it, is related ingeniously to the living woman. Her "fragrant bosom" is like the phoenix's "spicy nest." Moreover, this comparison which makes her the source of beauty catches up and brings to an emphatic conclusion the hints of this given in earlier stanzas, "beauty's orient deep," and "as in their causes, sleep," and thus ties up the beginning of the poem with the end. In fact, to show how neatly the poem is tied together, and how the last stanza refers to the first, one may consider the question: where did the phoenix die? It died (according to the legend) in the Orient, and therefore the death of the phoenix in the "fragrant bosom" of the mistress echoes the third line of

the first stanza, "For in your beauty's orient deep." The mistress, therefore, is not merely the repository of the fading beauties of nature, she is a source of beauty. And this twist of the thinking forms a contrast with what has gone before: the passive repository has become an active source.

THE IMMORTAL PART

A. E. Housman (1859–1936)

When I meet the morning beam,
Or lay me down at night to dream,
I hear my bones within me say,
"Another night, another day.

"When shall this slough of sense be cast,
This dust of thoughts be laid at last,
The man of flesh and soul be slain
And the man of bone remain?

"This tongue that talks, these lungs that shout,
These thews that hustle us about,
This brain that fills the skull with schemes,
And its humming hive of dreams,—

"These today are proud in power
And lord it in their little hour:
The immortal bones obey control
Of dying flesh and dying soul.

" 'Tis long till eve and morn are gone:
Slow the endless night comes on,
And late to fullness grows the birth
That shall last as long as earth.

"Wanderers eastward, wanderers west,
Know you why you cannot rest?
'Tis that every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton.

"Lie down in the bed of dust;
Bear the fruit that bear you must;
Bring the eternal seed to light,
And morn is all the same as night.

"Rest you so from trouble sore,
Fear the heat o' the sun no more,
Nor the snowing winter wild,
Now you labor not with child.

"Empty vessel, garment cast,
We that wore you long shall last.
—Another night, another day."
So my bones within me say.

Therefore they shall do my will
Today while I am master still,
And flesh and soul, now both are strong,
Shall hale the sullen slaves along,

Before this fire of sense decay,
This smoke of thought blow clean away,
And leave with ancient night alone
The steadfast and enduring bone.

Questions:

1. How does the poet insist on the impermanence of the flesh? What is the effect of the imagery in this regard: "slough of sense," "dust of thoughts," the flesh as an "Empty vessel"? Find other examples.
2. In this poem he speaks of the bones as if they were a child to be born and brought to light. What is the effect of this in the poem?

EXPERIENCE OF THE WEST

John Peale Bishop (1892–)

They followed the course of heaven, as before
Trojan in smoky armor westward fled
Disastrous walls and on his shoulders bore
A dotard recollection had made mad,

Depraved by years, Anchises: on the strong
Tall bronze upborne, small sack of impotence;
Yet still he wore that look of one who young
Had closed with Love in cloudy radiance.

So the discoverers when they wading came
From shallow ships and climbed the wooded shores;
They saw the west: a sky of falling flame
And by the streams savage ambassadors.

O happy, brave and vast adventure! Where
Each day the sun beat rivers of new gold;
The wild grape ripened; springs reflected fear;
The wild deer fled; the bright snake danger coiled.

They too, the stalwart conquerors of space,
Each on his shoulders wore a wise delirium
Of memory and age; ghostly embrace
Of fathers slanting toward a western tomb.

A hundred and a hundred years they stayed
Aloft, until they were as light as autumn
Shells of locusts. Where then were they laid?
And in what wilderness oblivion?

Questions:

Aeneas escaped from Troy, when the Greeks captured the city, carrying his old father, Anchises, on his back. Later Aeneas pushed on to the west to found Rome. "They" in the first line refers to the settlers of America. What does Anchises stand for in the poem? Does the poet lean too hard on this single dominant figure?

HAMLET SOLILOQUIZES

(*Hamlet,* Act III, Scene I)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

Questions:

Here Hamlet is debating the matter of suicide. The reader will observe, however, that the debate is carried on, not by a series of general statements, but by a series of metaphors. The mind of the poet has leaped from one metaphor to another, even though the metaphors may not be consistent with each other. For instance, in the first sentence there are "slings and arrows," "outrageous fortune," and a "sea of troubles." Has the poet mixed his figures too much? Does the mixing of figures in this case differ from the mixing of them in "The Cloud," by Shelley? If it is different, would it be possible to state the difference in these terms: Shakespeare has made each figure so sharply and accurately expressive, that the reader, though he is hurried on from figure to figure, has a sense of speed and concentration rather than confusion? One element that would seem to bear out this view is the fact that Shelley's figures are primarily decorative, whereas Shakespeare's figures actually carry on the movement of the thought. They are chosen because they are the most vivid and concrete way of saying what the poet thinks, and not because they are merely "pretty." Investigate the comparisons in the remainder of the passage, and define their use in each instance. What does the metaphor say? What is the effect of this use of metaphor?

MACBETH THINKS OF MURDERING THE KING

(*Macbeth,* Act I, Scene VII)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

VOYAGES VI

HART CRANE (1899–1932)

Where icy and bright dungeons lift
Of swimmers their lost morning eyes,
And ocean rivers, churning, shift
Green borders under stranger skies,

Steadily as a shell secretes
Its beating leagues of monotone,
Or as many waters trough the sun's
Red kelson past the cape's wet stone;

O rivers mingling toward the sky
And harbor of the phoenix' breast—
My eyes pressed black against the prow,
—Thy derelict and blinded guest

Waiting, afire, what name, unspoke,
I cannot claim: let thy waves rear
More savage than the death of kings,
Some splintered garland for the seer.

Beyond siroccos harvesting
The solstice thunders, crept away,
Like a cliff swinging or a sail
Flung into April's inmost day—

Creation's blithe and petaled word
To the lounged goddess when she rose
Conceding dialogue with eyes
That smile unsearchable repose—

Still fervid covenant, Belle Isle,
—Unfolded floating dais before
Which rainbows twine continual hair—
Belle Isle, white echo of the oar!

The imaged word, it is, that holds
Hushed willows anchored in its glow.
It is the unbetrayable reply
Whose accent no farewell can know.

Questions:

1. Why is Belle Isle called a "white echo of the oar"?
2. How are the various images in this poem related?
3. Analyse the function of each of the various figures.

SECTION VII

The poems in this section are closely related to those in Section VI. They may be studied, however, with special reference to the poet's treatment of an idea. Many of the poems which we have already studied involve this same problem, but the poems of this section represent special emphasis on the idea, and represent use of relatively complex ideas. Obviously, the student should bring to bear in his study of these poems all that has been said on the subjects of imagery, verse, tone, etc., for, as we have seen again and again, the poet attempts to convey not an abstraction, but a concrete experience —ideas and feelings about the ideas.

THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

Lines on the loss of the *Titanic*

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: "What does this vaingloriousness down here?" . . .

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

The subtitle of the poem tells us that it was written upon the loss of the *Titanic,* which was struck by an iceberg on her maiden voyage. Many different kinds of poems might have been written upon such a subject: this particular poem, however, is not a narrative, nor is it an objective description. It very frankly tries to read a meaning or an interpretation into the event. The meaning is, in part, the "vanity of human wishes." The great ship, which represented the peak of man's ambition and attainment in his attempt to conquer nature, does not conquer, but is conquered by, nature.

The poem begins, indeed, with the interpretation. The ship, planned by "the Pride of Life," finds its place of rest in the loneliness of the sea, "Deep from human vanity." The reader expects the more usual phrase, *"far* from human vanity." But *deep* is correct. The ship is on the seafloor, and the phrase is important for two considerations: it helps prevent the interpretation from falling into a conventional moralization—the poet twists the conventional phrase into a more subtle and accurate one; and it directs our view to the seafloor where the ship reposes.

The first two lines in each stanza (which are short) give a sense of rapidity which contrasts sharply with the slow and heavy march of the long last line. Notice too that Hardy associates this rapidity with a sense of frail instability. He uses the first two lines in each case to describe some detail of the ship, and then the last line for his ironical comment on that detail, thus associating the long roll of the line with the sea and with the dark irony of fate itself.

This is in general the plan of rhythmic effects in the poem: the contrast between the rhythms supports the ironical contrasts in the poem. But Hardy does not allow the rhythm to become monotonous. For example, in the second stanza there is a competition between *cold* and *current* for the accent with the result that *cold* takes a heavier accent than usual. To take another example, in the third stanza it is impossible to read the last line without giving a heavy and separate emphasis to each of the adjectives: *grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.*

Not the least of the ironical effects which Hardy employs in the earlier stanzas of the poem is that of putting in the mouths of the fishes a question which in phrasing and rhythm might have come out of Ecclesiastes: "What does this vaingloriousness down here?"

So much for the poet's comment on the vanity of human wishes. Up to this point the poem has occupied itself with the large, sardonic handling of a conventional theme. But Hardy does not risk tiring the reader. He has another theme to state which is a matter for irony no less than the theme just mentioned and which forces the poem out of sardonic comment into ironic interpretation—an interpretation not narrowed to one event but valid for the whole wider implications of life.

The transition from the first section of the poem to the second is afforded by the question asked by the fishes. Hardy decides to answer their question. The colloquial word *Well* is tremendously important. It is as if Hardy had said, "I shall put a period to my sardonic play with the idea. If you really want to know what happened, this is what happened." And the rhythm supports this also. There is a heavy pause on the word *Well,* and the pause effectively contrasts with, and breaks the rhythm of, what has gone before, and introduces the new section.

The reader should be warned here, that the foregoing sentences do not mean that Hardy has broken his poem in two. Far from it. The irony built up in the preceding sections between the vanity of man's frail works and the elemental strength of nature is employed in the stanzas that follow. Fate, Hardy says, unknown to man, had planned all along the meeting of the iceberg and the *Titanic.* He proceeds then to prove it, with irony again; this time, however, there is not only the ironical contrast between man's works and nature's, there is another contrast between the foreknowledge of man and that of fate. The eighth, ninth, and tenth stanzas develop the contrast between the iceberg and the ship, contrasting them in extremes, but each time, in the last lines, tying them together again. Our acceptance of the paradox is in large part the result of Hardy's figures in these stanzas. For example, "intimate welding": the figure is that of the most stable form of union possible, where one piece of metal becomes an integral part of another And the further we explore the figure, the more appropriate it becomes. The ship and iceberg fuse into tragedy when they meet. The figure in the tenth stanza is drawn from mathematics, and gives to the meeting of the two objects the inevitability of mathematics. The paths which the two travel, are in the purposes of fate, lines which are *coincident.* The phrase, "august event," in this stanza also deserves notice. *August* means imperial in splendor, impressive, commanding dignity. We are now far from the more conventional contrasts of the first part of the poem. The sinking of the great vessel is an *august* event, and Hardy having fully established the power and inevitability of fate, is prepared now to let man have his due to this extent at least.

The climax of the poem comes, of course, in the last stanza. Both man and nature are in the grip of a master power which uses the works of both indiscriminately. When fate, the Spinner of the Years, gives the command, they leap to their places. Here the rhythm of the lines rises to the situation There is a pause after the heavy "Now" of command and the rest of the second line leaps forward with the first part of the last line to come to a momentary pause on *comes,* with another pause on *jars.* If one asks how the poet manages this, one can point out the effect of alliteration in the last line, and the fact that there can be only a partially heavy accent on the third syllable of *consummation. Comes* is the first word in the line which can be stressed heavily.

The whole poem is a splendid study in the variations of meter which a poet may use, as it is also a fine study in contrasts of varying degree and of varying effect.

The ground plan of the poem is a system of contrasts and fusions of opposites—a ground plan used in many of the greatest poems. In the case of this poem, the welding of the ship and the iceberg into "one august event" is a sort of parable of the internal structure of the poem, so that the story of the poem itself reflects what the poet is doing beneath the surface.

SONNET 55

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes.

Questions:

1. The idea stated in this poem is a commonplace. Does the poet succeed in giving it dignity and seriousness?
2. Analyze the imagery used here in the light of this purpose.

ELEGY

Written in a Country Churchyard

THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through [illegible] to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The [illegible] pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their names, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of the unhonored dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

The Epitaph

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Questions:

1. How are the various comments made by the poet related to the dominant mood of the poem?
2. How is the mood defined by the setting and the imagery?
3. Compare this poem with "A Psalm Of Life" by Longfellow.

DOVER BEACH

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

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-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw 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 Aegean, 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 furl'd.
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.

Questions:

1. What does the poet gain by using the symbol of the ebb tide for the abstract statement, "decline of faith"?
2. Why does he wait until the second section of the poem to declare his symbol?
3. Does the poet use any onomatopoeic effects?

TO MARGUERITE

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

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 order'd that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A God, a God their severance ruled;
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

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?

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:

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.

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 dressed?
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.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens over wrought,
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.

Questions:

1. What do the famous last lines of the poem mean?
2. Can they be considered as having any abstract meaning? Or do they need to be defined in terms of the imagery of the poem?
3. What is the attitude of the poet? Compare it with that of the poet in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 55."

THE SECULAR MASQUE

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

Janus: Chronos, Chronos, mend thy pace,
An hundred times the rolling sun
Around the radiant belt has run
In his revolving race.
Behold, behold, the goal in sight,
Spread thy fans, and wing thy flight.

Chronos: Weary, weary of my weight,
Let me, let me, drop my freight,
And leave the world behind.
I could not bear,
Another year,
The load of human-kind.

Momus: Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! well hast thou done
To lay down thy pack,
And lighten thy back,
The world was a fool, e'er since it begun,
And since neither Janus, nor Chronos, nor I,
Can hinder the crimes,
Or mend the bad times,
'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

Chorus of all three: 'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

Janus: Since Momus comes to laugh below,
Old Time begin the show,
That he may see, in every scene,
What changes in this age have been.

Chronos: The goddess of the silver bow begin.

Diana: With horns and with hounds, I waken the day;
And hye to the woodland-walks away:
I tuck up my robe, and am buskin'd soon,
And tie to my forehead a wexing moon.
I course the fleet stag, unkennel the fox,
And chase the wild goats o'er summits of rocks,
With shouting and hooting we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

Chorus of all: With shouting and hooting we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

Janus: Then our age was in its prime:

Chronos: Free from rage:

Diana. —And free from crime:

Momus: A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

Chorus of all: Then our age was in its prime,
Free from rage, and free from crime,
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

Mars: Inspire the vocal brass, inspire;
The world is past its infant age:
Arms and honor,
Arms and honor,
Set the martial mind on fire,
And kindle manly rage;
Mars has look'd the sky to red;
And Peace, the lazy good, is fled.
Plenty, peace, and pleasure fly;
The sprightly green,
In woodland-walks, no more is seen;
The sprightly green has drunk the Tyrian dye.

Chorus of all: Plenty, peace, &c.

Mars: Sound the trumpet, beat the drum;
Through all the world around,
Sound a reveillé, sound, sound,
The warrior god is come.

Chorus of all: Sound the trumpet, &c.

Momus: Thy sword within the scabbard keep,
And let mankind agree;
Better the world were fast asleep,
Than kept awake by thee.
The fools are only thinner,
With all our cost and care;
But neither side a winner,
For things are as they were.

Chorus of all: The fools are only, &c.

Venus: Calms appear, when storms are past;
Love will have his hour at last:
Nature is my kindly care;
Mars destroys, and I repair;
Take me, take me, while you may,
Venus comes not every day.

Chorus of all: Take her, take her, &c.

Chronos: The world was then so light,
I scarcely felt the weight;
Joy rul'd the day, and Love the night.
But since the queen of pleasure left the ground,
I faint, I lag,
And feebly drag
The pondrous orb around.

Momus: All, all of a piece throughout:
To Diana. Thy chase had a beast in view.
To Mars. Thy wars brought nothing about;
To Venus. Thy lovers were all untrue

Janus: 'Tis well an old age is out.

Chronos: And time to begin a new.

Chorus of all. All, all of a piece throughout;
Thy chase had a beast in view:
Thy wars brought nothing about;
Thy lovers were all untrue.
'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new.

Questions:

In this poem, Dryden celebrates the turn of the century. He employs allegorical figures (Janus, the god of beginnings; Chronos, time; Momus, laughter, etc.) to describe the passing seventeenth century and his attitude toward it. He treats the century under three main headings: the early century under James I, the wars of Charles I, and the gay and licentious courts of Charles II and James II.

1. What is the poet's attitude?
2. Is he merely cynical?
3. Is his use of allegorical figures justified?
4. How does he use rhythmical effects to express his attitude?

LONDON

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice; in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

LONDON, 1802

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

Both poets are writing of the degradation which had befallen London near the turn of the eighteenth century. Both think of this degradation in spiritual terms: the fetters which London wears, according to Blake, are "mind-forged"; the happiness which Wordsworth wishes restored is an "inward happiness." And both poets think of the degradation as a loss of power: Blake says the city is "sold out" and that the inhabitants have been sold out; Wordsworth thinks of the city as a marsh full of stagnant waters. But in both cases energy, whether

bound or reduced to torpor, is not able to exert itself. So far the poems run parallel, but in other respects they diverge widely, and a comparison of the two poets' intentions and accomplishments will indicate vividly the fact that poetry does not reside in a particular subject but in a treatment of the subject.

Blake's poem is essentially simpler than Wordsworth's. Blake organizes his poem on this scheme: what the poet sees, and more important, what he hears as he traverses London. Wordsworth makes his scheme of organization an appeal to Milton to return with his life-giving power to restore England to its spiritual health. Blake's method is not inherently superior to Wordsworth's, but in the case of these particular poems, Blake gives an effect of concentration and intensity which Wordsworth's poem lacks. In the next paragraphs we shall try to indicate why.

In the first place, notice the climactic order in Blake's poem. The first stanza is introductory as compared with the rest of the poem: that is, it gives the occasion for what is to follow. But though it is introductory, it does not postpone the poem; the poem begins with force. *Chartered* is used in two senses that mutually reinforce each other: first, in the sense of laid out and bound by a chart or plan; and second, in the sense of hired, or bought up. (It is possible to read even a third meaning into *chartered* charters are documents which originally guarantee liberties to men, but which in the course of time become a means of enslavement.) The streets and the people whom the poet meets in them are not free, they are enslaved. The river itself down to which the streets lead is *chartered,* even though one thinks of a river as being a kind of symbol of natural and free movement. The three-fold repetition of *mark* in this first stanza suggests directness and simplicity·

> And mark in every face I meet
> Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

This is akin to the child's way of saying something: "I marked a mark," or "I bled blood." But the statement converts the elemental directness and simplicity of the child into a device of terrific emphasis, for the poet is dealing with a very complex and adult idea (Observe also how the poet uses the repetitions of the word *cry* in the remainder of the poem.)

The climactic scale of the poem begins in the various cries which the poet hears, and the meaning of those cries. The second stanza states that in every cry that he hears, he hears the clanking of fetters. In the third and fourth stanzas he goes on to give concrete examples of particular cries and their particular meanings—all of them aspects of the great general meaning of self-enslavement.

The chimney-sweeper's cry appalls the church. Why? Because the child, enslaved in a deadening and disagreeable trade (the chimney-sweeps were often children at this time) shakes the church, the institution consecrated to fight against things so unchristian. Why *blackening church?* London churches are, as a matter of fact, blackened by soot, but the poet seizes upon this detail for a special reason: he suggests that they share in the degradation of the children whom they should protect—both are blackened by the soot. In the same way, the soldier's sigh runs like blood down the palace-walls. Sighs do not literally flow like blood, of course, but Blake is justified in saying so; for what he is really saying is this: that soldiers mistreated by the state place a blood-guilt on the state, whether or not the blood is warm, red, and liquid.

Blake thus makes his indictment through vivid, concrete images. He is daringly imaginative. Wordsworth's figures are very pale indeed beside his, and Wordsworth's figures are, none of them, so tightly tied up with each other, and with the poem, as are Blake's Let us run over Wordsworth's comparisons for a moment: England is like a stagnant fen; Milton's soul was like a star; Milton's voice was like the sound of the sea; Milton was like the naked heavens. These figures are easier for the careless reader to accept than are Blake's, but they do less work in the poem, and as a matter of fact, they serve as little more than decorations to some of Wordsworth's ideas. The star, the sound of the sea, and the unclouded sky are alike in their dignity, and the last two in the sense of grandeur and noble severity which they imply. But what have they to do with the return of Milton as a cleansing and revivifying power? What have they to do with the fen of stagnant waters? Nothing. They are loose decorations which add dignity to Wordsworth's conception of Milton, but they do not drive the central idea of the poem forward, and it is of some importance to notice that they have nothing to do with the aspect of Milton dominant in the first lines of the poem. As a matter of fact, these images in themselves indicate the basic fault of this sonnet: the sonnet is not thoroughly unified, and the various parts of the poem pull against each other. Wordsworth begins by invoking Milton's aid to a degraded England, but in the latter part of the poem he goes off into a tribute to Milton as a clear and unperturbed spirit who lived in "cheerful godliness."

Blake's poem does not split apart in this fashion. The indictment piles up to a terrific climax in the last stanza. Up to this, the fourth stanza, the poet has revealed an enslaved town, with the exploitation of both children and adults. In the last stanza he indicates that the very roots of life itself are poisoned. The fact that love is so misused that it can be bought and sold proclaims a curse on the child in the cradle and on love itself. The union of the sexes is the well-spring of life. To find poison there is the logical climax of the indictment. But Blake has pointed the climax up for us. "But most," he says, as this stanza begins. The phrase is not finished, and the fact that it is not and the resulting ambiguity is made use of by the poet. He may mean "But most frequent of all these cries," or "But most damning of all the cries of woe" or some other such phrase, and since he might mean any of them, and since he does not particularize any single one, the effect we receive is that of all of them combined. The ambiguity itself is *rich.* The phrase as it stands is ungrammatical, it is true, but it does not impress one as strained or affected—as a willful violation of grammar. Indeed, it gives the impression of a man speaking rapidly and forcefully, anxious to hurry on to something tremendously important, and so leaving unfinished an introductory phrase which will be supplied by the reader anyway. And this is just the effect appropriate to the force and power of the climax of the poem.

Wordsworth's conclusion is much less powerful. The poem as a matter of fact comes to no climax—instead

it tails off. The only strength in the concluding lines rests in the contrast—

and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay—

a rather tame and commonplace paradox.

As a matter of fact, the more closely one examines the Wordsworth sonnet, the more fully convinced he becomes that the reference to the stagnation of England—whatever Wordsworth's original intention in writing the poem—is itself only an added piece of decoration for the compliment to Milton. Milton was like a star, and he would help England if living now, and his voice was like the sea, etc. At any rate, the poem is loose. It sprawls. And so we come upon the interesting paradox, that it is Blake's poem, the poem which seems the more direct and straightforward of the two, the one which seems less carefully contrived, which as a matter of fact has the more careful architecture and the more complicated organization. Certainly, of the two it is further from prose.

The complications and the means by which Blake knits together the various elements would bear even further investigation. For example, in each of the last three stanzas, the adult and the child are mentioned (infant's cry· cry of every man, chimney-sweeper's cry: soldier's sigh, harlot's curse infant's tear) and this may be accidental. And yet we have found so many details that have a definite meaning, that one is tempted to see a meaning here, or at least an explanation for the feeling of conclusive totality in the poem. It is as if Blake were saying in each stanza that England is damned, *both child and man,* and more than saying it—hammering it home in every stanza, so that while he is giving new instances of woe in every stanza, each pair of instances reemphasizes the fact that young and old are both involved. By comparison Wordsworth's list of instances of the degradation of England—altar, sword, and pen—is loose and haphazard. The sonnet by Wordsworth lacks the concrete and dramatic quality in the poem by Blake.

A few additional examples of the tightness of Blake's structure may be given. "Midnight streets" applies literally. The poet is walking the streets at midnight, and it is then that he would be most likely to hear the harlot's curse; but "midnight" has an additional force. The streets of the damned city are midnight in the sense of dark—it is appropriate that the powers of evil should possess them. Again, "youthful" is an adjective which in English poetry is usually associated with joyfulness, freshness, springtime. Literally considered, the adjective does apply to *harlot,* but in applying it Blake is bringing these associations into contrast with the quite different associations which are usually related to *harlot.* The contrast has the effect of a bitter irony. Once more, the "harlot's curse" is apparently not directed by the harlot at love at all. It is merely an aspect of her degradation. But curses are supposed to blight. *Curse* is really being used in two senses, therefore. The curse refers primarily to the harlot's drunken profanity, but in another sense—and in a sense not intended by the harlot—it is a blighting and blasting anathema on all the institutions of love. The primary meanings in all three of these last examples fit the stanza literally; and yet in all three cases there are other meanings which supplement the indictment which Blake is making. We may say then that Blake is using the *denotations* of his words in straightforward enough fashion but that in addition these primary meanings draw along with them a whole train of *associations.* Blake's language is therefore very efficient. Blake extracts all the possible meaning from his words; Wordsworth makes only a superficial use of his. And this is probably the best explanation of two things: (1) why Blake's poem rings with such an intensity; and (2) why Blake's poem grows richer on further reading, whereas Wordsworth's grows dull.

In both of these poems the writer has expressed an indictment of the society in which he was living. The idea in each case may have been held with equal sincerity, and may have been equally justified by the different observations of the two poets. But in Blake's case the idea has been assimilated into the poem and comes to the reader in terms of the poet's observations. This means that the idea is no longer abstract and general, but has been expressed by the poet in concrete symbols; that is, the idea has been turned into poetry. Here one may generalize to this extent: an idea has no value for poetry until it can be made to appeal directly to the reader's feelings. The total effect of the poem must be directed toward this end.

THE LIE

SIR WALTER RALEGH (1552?–1618)

Go, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless arrant:
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant:
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good, and doth no good:
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live
Acting by others' action;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by their faction:
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That manage the estate,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate:
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,
  They beg for more by spending,
Who, in their greatest cost,
  Seek nothing but commending:
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion;
  Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it is but motion;
  Tell flesh it is but dust:
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
  Tell honor how it alters;
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
  Tell favor how it falters:
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
  In tickle points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles
  Herself in over-wiseness:
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
  Tell skill it is pretension;
Tell charity of coldness;
  Tell law it is contention:
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;
  Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
  Tell justice of delay;
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,
  But vary by esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
  And stand too much on seeming:
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
  Tell how the country erreth;
Tell, manhood shakes off pity;
  Tell, virtue least preferreth:
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
  Commanded thee, done blabbing,—
Although to give the lie
  Deserves no less than stabbing,—
Stab at thee he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.

Questions.

1. What is the tone of this poem? Does the poet become hysterical in charging everything with rottenness?
2. Why does he use the word *blabbing* in the last stanza? Why not some more dignified word?

TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631)

You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
  That honor still pursue;
  Go and subdue!
Whilst loitering hinds
Lurk here at home with shame.

Britons, you stay too long;
Quickly abroad bestow you!
  And with a merry gale
  Swell your stretchèd sail,
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you!

Your course securely steer,
West-and-by-south forth keep!
  Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals,
  When Eolus scowls,
You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And, cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice,
  To get the pearl and gold;
  And ours to hold,
Virginia,
Earth's only Paradise.

Where Nature hath in store
Fowl, venison, and fish;
  And the fruitful'st soil,—
  Without your toil,
Three harvests more,
All greater than your wish.

And the ambitious vine
Crowns with his purple mass
  The cedar reaching high
  To kiss the sky,
The cypress, pine,
And useful sassafras.

To whom, the Golden Age
Still Nature's laws doth give:
  Nor other cares attend,
  But them to defend
From winter's rage,
That long there doth not live.

When as the luscious smell
Of that delicious land,
  Above the seas that flows,
  The clear wind throws,
Your hearts to swell,
Approaching the dear strand.

In kenning of the shore
(Thanks to God first given!)
  O you, the happiest men,
  Be frolic then!
Let cannons roar,
Frightening the wide heaven!

And in regions far,
Such heroes bring ye forth
  As those from whom we came!
  And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our North!

And as there plenty grows
Of laurel everywhere,
  Apollo's sacred tree
  You may it see,
A poet's brows
To crown, that may sing there.

Thy Voyages attend,
Industrious Hakluyt!
  Whose reading shall inflame
  Men to seek fame;
And much commend
To after times thy wit.

Question·

Compare this poem with Bishop's "Experience of the West."

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

THOMAS HOOD (1798–1845)

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
  She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

"Work! work! work!
  While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
  Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's Oh! to be a slave
  Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
  If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work,
  Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work,
  Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
  Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
  And sew them on in a dream!

"Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!
  Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out
  But human creatures' lives!
Stitch--stitch--stitch,
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
  A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
  That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear its terrible shape,
  It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
  Because of the fasts I keep;
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
  And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!
  My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
  A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof—this naked floor- -
  A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
  For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!
  From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work,
  As prisoners work for crime!

Band, and gusset, and seam,
  Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
  As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
  In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
  When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
  The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
  And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath
  Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
  And the grass beneath my feet;
For only one short hour
  To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
  And the walk that costs a meal.

"Oh! but for one short hour!
  A respite however brief!
No blessèd leisure for Love or Hope,
  But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
  But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
  Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
  In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!—
  She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

Questions:

1. Is the verse form of this poem appropriate to the theme?
2. Does the poet gain anything by shifting in the last stanza from the woman's statement to his own comment? Does he lose anything?
3. Does the poem call for ironical treatment? Would the poet have gained anything by using more irony?

PRAYER FOR MERCY

(*In Memoriam . . . July 5, 1934 . . . San Francisco*)

LINCOLN FITZELL

Dark goddess of the sickle shade between the shadow and the wall,
Sweet Death, now wrap them in your black and heavy shawl.
These hands are work-lined, fold them soft, in earth their tortured shapes conceal,
Calm, blameless Deity, deep now the rash, blind spirit heal.

O say that winter lies too long in white of hollow, clutch of snow,
Breathe, Death, more gently in your trade than now the gusty seasons blow.
These fell in toil and ask alone the long peace of a shadowed bed,
Receive their labors, Death, and sweet into their souls your slumber shed.

Pure guardian of unlived days between the weather and the sun,
Sweet Death, now raise from nettle ground these bodies wearied and undone.
To these who crumpled on their wounds be kind, Dark One, O wrap them well
In dusk no bullet-wage can pierce, for by such gratitude they fell.

Question:

This poem is written on the death of some workmen, killed in a strike. Compare it carefully with the preceding poem.

HIS PILGRIMAGE

SIR WALTER RALEGH (1552?–1618)

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
  My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
  My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer;
  No other balm will there be given;
Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,
  Travelleth towards the land of heaven;
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains:

There will I kiss
The bowls of bliss;
And drink my everlasting fill
Upon every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before;
But, after, it will thirst no more.

Then by that happy blissful day,
More pilgrims I shall see,
That have cast off their rags of clay,
And walk apparelled fresh like me.
I'll take them first
To quench their thirst
And taste of nectar suckets,
At those clear wells
Where sweetness dwells,
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.
And when our bottles and all we
Are filled with immortality,
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,
Strowed with rubies thick as gravel;
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral and pearly bowers.
From thence to heaven's bribeless hall,
Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold,
No forged accuser bought or sold,
No cause deferred, no vain-spent journey,
For there Christ is the King's Attorney,
Who pleads for all without degrees,
And He hath angels, but no fees.
And when the grand twelve-million jury
Of our sins, with direful fury,
Against our souls black verdicts give,
Christ pleads His death, and then we live.

Be Thou my speaker, taintless Pleader,
Unblotted Lawyer, true Proceeder!
Thou givest salvation even for alms;
Not with a bribèd lawyer's palms.
And this is mine eternal plea
To Him that made heaven, earth, and sea,
That, since my flesh must die so soon,
And want a head to dine at noon,
Just at the stroke, when my veins start and spread,
Set on my soul an everlasting head!
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit,
To tread those blest paths which before I writ.
Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,
Who oft doth think, must needs die well.

Questions·

1. In the fourth section of the poem, *angels* refers to a certain kind of gold coin of Elizabethan times as well as to the celestial beings. Is there any justification for the poet's punning in a poem evidently intended to be so serious?
2. Does the realistic reference to the beheading (Ralegh was, as a matter of fact, beheaded) in the last section of the poem break the tone of seriousness?

MUTABILITY

From Book VII of *The Fairie Queene*

EDMUND SPENSER (1552–1599)

When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare,
Of *Mutability,* and well it may:
Me seemes, that though she all unworthy were
Of the Heav'ns Rule; yet very sooth to say,
In all things else she beares the greatest sway.
Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
And love of things so vaine to cast away;
Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short *Time* shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
Of that same time when no more *Change* shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie:*
For, all that moveth, doth in *Change* delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabbaoths sight.

ODE

On intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
thou happy shepherd-boy!

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is [illegible]
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling,
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral,
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage,
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In the darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

Oh joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which be what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts today
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance that was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality,
Another race hath been, and other palms are won
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Questions:

1. Trace out the development of idea in the poem.
2. Does the poet find fitting symbols for the various stages in the development of the idea?
3. What is the "truth" of the last two lines of the poem? What meaning do they have apart from the total experience of the poem? Compare with Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

ANDREW MARVELL (1621–1678)

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 would grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years would 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 dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous 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
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

The situation of the poem is this: a lover is trying to persuade his mistress to accept his suit. The three parts of the poem are really the three steps in his argument: (1) If life were not so short, the delays of your coyness would be appropriate, and I should be willing to gratify it by praising you for thousands of years before you eventually accepted my love. (2) But life is short, and in death both love and honor are meaningless. (3) Therefore, accept what pleasure there is in love while there is yet youth and time. That is the bare outline of the argument, and is all of the poem that comes out in a direct and general statement.

The question is, what use does the poet make of such an outline of argument? In other words, how does the meaning of the poem differ, in the end, from the meaning of the argument?

It is a question that cannot be answered explicitly and at once. It can only be answered by investigating various aspects of the poem.

First, one may notice how the tone of the poem changes from section to section (See "Neutral Tones" and analysis). The poem starts with the tone of almost playful conversation, the tone of polite and not-too-serious verse, usually called *vers de société*. The poem introduces certain exaggerations so tremendous that they become a kind of playful and witty absurdity. While the lady picked up rubies by the Ganges in India, the lover, in England by the side of the Humber, would perform some of the polite preliminaries of his courtship by "complaining" on the subject of his love. All history, from before the Flood to the "conversion of the Jews," an event so remote as to be inconceivable, would be but the history of their courtship. But the phrase "vegetable love" introduces an exaggeration of another kind: why would such a kind of love be *vegetable*? The poet means *vegetable* in the sense of belonging to the vegetable kingdom, simply some great plant, like a sequoia, the life span of which would be greater than that of any other living thing. But vegetable growth is a kind of blind, aimless, and undirected growth, farther removed from the direction of the intelligence and will found in man than any form of animal life whatever. So the phrase serves as a kind of commentary, and a serious one, on the imagined courtship described. It implies the idea of an almost endless time, and as well the idea of the lack of intelligent direction in such a courtship. But on the surface, by the superficial absurdity of the phrase, the playful attitude is reenforced. The last two lines of the section give a kind of summarizing couplet which is a compliment to the lady.

But the poet has deliberately made the first section of the poem playful, conversational, and absurd, not because he intended the poem to keep that level, but because he wanted the effect of sharp and dramatic contrast. Observe the sudden and shocking turn to the serious in the first couplet of the second section. The lover is haunted by the brevity of life. And observe the different kind of imagery used, imagery no longer absurd or playful but grand: "Time's wingèd chariot," "Deserts of vast eternity," and the stillness of the "marble vault" of the tomb. But then the poet again changes the tone, and the approach to his subject by establishing another contrast. From the grand imagery of the marble vault, the chariot and the desert, he turns to the worm, presenting, with a kind of suppressed sarcasm, the idea of the grave worm as a lover. The implied question to the lady is this: which lover does she prefer, the speaker or the worm—for the worm will later have the freedom of her body no matter how vigilantly she maintains her virtue in life? Then, as in the first section, the poet closes with a kind of summarizing couplet:

> The grave's a fine and private place,
> But none, I think, do there embrace.

The couplet is all the more effective because it says less than could be said. It is an understatement. The poet

even pretends that he does not know, that he has only heard it reported, that there is no love in the grave. Furthermore, it is ironical, because the poet says that the grave has the very finest quality of a place for love, for it is "private." In the last six lines of the second section the poet repeats the playful and politely ironical manner of the first section, but now the subject matter, death and physical decay, is one of terrifying seriousness. But the poet refuses to surrender to that, and so treats it indirectly. The ironical overstatement, or exaggeration, of the first section is contrasted with the ironical understatement of the second section. The contrast gives an added point to each section after the reader is acquainted with the poem.

The third section, which gives the conclusion of the argument, also gives a resolution of the ironical contrasts built up in the preceding parts of the poem, just as a chord may resolve a musical composition. Observe the exciting quality of the imagery: "instant fires," "amorous birds of prey," "at once our time devour," "tear our pleasures," etc., the faster rhythm, etc. All of the imagery is directed, without irony or reservation on the part of the poet in the immediate statement, toward giving the effect of swiftness and exuberant vitality. But observe how the last couplet changes the effect from one of sheer exuberance and uncontrolled vitality by bringing the last section into a more complicated relation with the preceding sections. The last couplet is a kind of epigram, a paradox, a summary of the whole poem. It says: if we are not strong enough to conquer time and make ourselves immortal, we at least can be strong enough to make time pass faster. This connects the last section with the other two by emphasizing again the ideas of time and death. Furthermore, it makes the connection, by the very tone of the statement, for the couplet is again ironical and conversational, in contrast to the tone of the preceding ten lines; therefore, it echoes effect found earlier in the poem.

This discussion began with one question stated in two different ways. What use does the poet make of the outline of his argument? How does the meaning of the poem differ, in the end, from the meaning of the argument? It may now be easier to give some answer.

The poet merely uses the argument as a framework for the poem, for the situation of a lover speaking to his mistress is a fiction adopted by the poet to give a dramatic form to his theme. This theme may be stated in the form of a question: what should man's attitude be in the face of death and his ignorance of any life after death? He proposes this question, through the lips of the lover, to the mistress, and then gives the answer: man cannot master death, but he can attempt, by an exercise of his will, to master life by living as intensely as possible. But the poet wanted to indicate that his theme was important and his subject complicated and difficult. Therefore he used variations of tone, contrasted overstatement and understatement, and employed irony. He did not want the reader to feel that any one part of the poem was, as it were, ignorant of the rest of the poem. He did not want the poem to appear too glib and easy, for he believed that that would insult the underlying seriousness of his subject. He wanted the poem to appear controlled, and self-possessed; to give this effect he used overstatement only for the witty and playful part of the poem, and understatement for the most serious parts. He did not want to give an impression of simple pathos over the fact that beauty must fade and love must pass, etc. He wanted to give a more mature impression, one mixed with intelligence and will. After this examination, one may see that the prose paraphrase of the poem—the attempt to say the thing directly in so many words—will result in a forced and didactic effect. That is, the idea of the poem has to be communicated through the operation of many factors: tone, attitude, imagery, rhythm, etc. The paraphrase is not a true paraphrase, and can never be, because it must remain too simple; it omits most of the things that make the poem what it is—an experience in itself.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

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.

Questions:

1. Analyze the images in relation to the theme.
2. Does the poet mix any figures in this poem? If so, can the mixing be justified?

SONNET 129

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Th' 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;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despisèd straight;
Past reason hunted; and, no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd 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.

Questions:

1. How complex is the idea expressed in this sonnet?
2. Is the complexity justified? How?

SONNET 146

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
Thrall to 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 shall thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

A PSALM OF LIFE

What the Heart of the Young Man Said to the Psalmist

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807–1882)

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
Find us farther than today.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Questions:

1. The morals proposed in this poem are excellent. Is the work, however, good poetry?
2. What is the relation of the figures used to the theme?
3. What is the tone?

THE FUNERAL

JOHN DONNE (1573–1631)

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward soul,
Viceroy to that which, unto heav'n being gone,
Will leave this to control
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
Through every part
Can tie those parts, and make me one of all;
Those hairs, which upward grew, and strength and art
Have from a better brain,
Can better do 't: except she meant that I
By this should know my pain,
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemn'd to die.

Whate'er she meant by 't, bury it with me,
For since I am
Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry
If into other hands these reliques came.
As 'twas humility

T' afford to it all that a soul can do,
So 'tis some bravery
That, since you would have none of me, I bury some of you.

Questions:

The poet's mistress has evidently given him a bracelet made out of her hair which he intends to wear when he is buried.

1. What is the poet's attitude toward his mistress?
2. What is the effect of the complex reasoning on the tone of the poem?

THE SALUTATION

THOMAS TRAHERNE (1637?–1674)

These little Limbs,
These Eyes and Hands which here I find,
This panting Heart wherewith my Life begins;
Where have ye been? Behind
What Curtain were ye from me hid so long?
Where was, in what Abyss, my new-made Tongue?

When silent I
So many thousand thousand Years
Beneath the Dust did in a Chaos lie,
How could I *Smiles,* or *Tears,*
Or *Lips,* or *Hands,* or *Eyes,* or *Ears* perceive?
Welcome ye Treasures which I now receive.

I that so long
Was *Nothing* from Eternity,
Did little think such Joys as Ear and Tongue
to celebrate or see:
Such Sounds to hear, such Hands to feel, such Feet,
Such Eyes and Objects, on the Ground to meet.

New burnisht Joys!
Which finest Gold and Pearl excell!
Such sacred Treasures are the Limbs of Boys
In which a Soul doth dwell:
Their organizèd Joints and azure Veins
More Wealth include than the dead World contains.

From Dust I rise
And out of Nothing now awake;
These brighter Regions which salute mine Eyes
A Gift from God I take:
The Earth, the Seas, the Light, the lofty Skies,
The Sun and Stars are mine; if these I prize.

A Stranger here
Strange things doth meet, strange Glory see,
Strange Treasures lodg'd in this fair World appear,
Strange all and New to me:
But that they *mine* should be who Nothing was,
That Strangest is of all; yet brought to pass.

Questions:

1. Compare the theme of this poem with Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."
2. What is the tone of this poem?

THE CHARIOT

EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)

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,
Their lessons scarcely done;
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.

Questions:

Why does the poet picture death as a gentleman taking a lady out for a drive? What is the effect of this figure on the seriousness of the poem? What is its effect on the tone?

UPON NOTHING

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER (1648–1680)

Nothing! thou elder Brother ev'n to Shade,
Thou hadst a being ere the World was made,
And (well fixt) art alone, of Ending not afraid.

E'er time and place were, time and place were not,
When primitive *Nothing* something streight begot,
Then all proceeded from the great united—What.

Something, the gen'ral Attribute of all,
Sever'd from thee, its sole Original,
Into thy boundless self must undistinguish'd fall.

Yet Something did thy mighty Pow'r command,
And from thy fruitful Emptiness's hand,
Snatch'd Men, Beasts, Birds, Fire, Air, and Land.

Matter, the wickedest Off-spring of thy Race,
By Form assisted, flew from thy embrace,
And Rebel Light obscur'd thy reverend dusky Face.

With Form, and Matter, Time and Place did join,
Body, thy Foe, with thee did Leagues combine,
To spoil thy peaceful Realm, and Ruin all thy Line.

But turn-coat Time assists the Foe in vain,
And, brib'd by thee, assists thy short-liv'd Reign,
And to thy hungry Womb drives back thy Slaves again.

Tho' Mysteries are barr'd from Laick Eyes,
And the Divine alone, with Warrant, pries
Into thy Bosom, where the Truth in private lies,

Yet this of thee the Wise may freely say,
Thou from the Virtuous nothing tak'st away,
And to be part with thee the Wicked wisely pray.

Great Negative, how vainly would the Wise
Enquire, define, distinguish, teach, devise,
Didst thou not stand to point their dull Philosophies?

Is, or *is not,* the two great Ends of Fate,
And, true or false, the Subject of Debate,
That perfect, or destroy, the vast Designs of Fate,

When they have rack'd the *Politician's* Breast,
Within thy Bosom must securely rest,
And, when reduc't to thee, are least unsafe and best.

But, *Nothing,* why does *Something* still permit,
That Sacred Monarchs should at Council sit,
With Persons highly thought at best for nothing fit.

Whilst weighty *Something* modestly abstains
From Princes Coffers, and from Statesmen's Brains,
And Nothing there like stately *Nothing* reigns.

Nothing, who dwell'st with Fools in grave disguise,
For whom they reverend Shapes, and Forms devise,
Lawn Sleeves, and Furs, and Gowns, when they like thee look wise.

French Truth, *Dutch* Prowess, *British* Policy,
Hibernian Learning, *Scotch* Civility,
Spaniards Dispatch, *Dames* Wit, are mainly seen in thee.

The great Man's Gratitude to his best Friend,
King's Promises, Whores Vows, tow'rds thee they bend,
Flow swiftly into thee, and in thee ever end.

Questions:

1. Is this poem anything more than an ingenious play on the concept of Nothingness?
2. What is the function of the satire of the poem?
3. How serious is the poem? What is the poet's attitude toward Nothing?

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD

(1861–1865)

ALLEN TATE (1899–)

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death,
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their business in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories grow
From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
Dead, but feed the grass row after rich row:
Remember now the autumns that have gone—
Ambitious November with the humors of the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there:
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you, like them to stone,
Transforms the heaving air,
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly,
Heaving, turning like the blind crab.

Dazed by the wind, only the wind
The leaves flying, plunge

You know, who have waited by the wall
The twilit certainty of an animal;
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know—the immitigable pines, the smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call; you know the rage—
The cold pool left by the mounting flood—
The rage of Heraclitus and Parmenides.
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision—
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the wall.

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past,
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth—they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall—and the sunken fields of hemp—
Shilo, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run.
Lost in that orient of the thick and fast
You will curse the setting sun.

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm

You hear the shout—the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in time. The hound bitch
Toothless and dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we, who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe,
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean—
Their verdurous anonymity will grow—
The ragged arms, the ragged heads and eyes
Lost in these acres of the insane green?
The gray lean spiders come; they come and go;
In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's bright
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We shall say only, the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

We shall say only, the leaves whispering
In the improbable mist of nightfall
That flies on multiple wing:
Night is the beginning and the end,
And in between the ends of distraction
Lurks mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For his own image in a jungle pool, his victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now
The turnstile and the old stone wall:
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush.
Sentinel of the grave who counts us all.

THE PHOENIX AND THE TURTLE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near!

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

And thou treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender makest
With the breath thou givest and takest,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Here the anthem doth commence;
Love and constancy is dead;
Phoenix and the turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they loved, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance, and no space was seen
'Twixt the turtle and his queen:
But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine,
That the turtle saw his right
Flaming in the phoenix' sight;
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appalled,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded;

That it cried, How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love hath reason, reason none,
If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne
To the phoenix and the dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene.

Threnos

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed in cinders lie.

Death is now the phoenix' nest;
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

Leaving no posterity:
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

Introduction to Drama

THE dramatic method of stating a thing is that of letting the characters speak for themselves and act out their action before us. A drama is then a dialogue spoken by the characters, with directions from the author telling what the characters do and perhaps how they speak their lines, and with directions (usually fairly brief) describing the background against which they perform their action.

Dramas are written to be performed, of course, and it may be argued that the appreciation of a play gained from reading it is not quite the same thing as that gained from seeing it performed. This is true. But in reading the play we are only doing what the actors must do before they can help the dramatist interpret it to us. For the performance of a play gains over a mere reading of it largely in terms of the aid in interpreting the play which good actors may render to us. If we have imagination, therefore, the lack of such aid in helping us visualize and interpret the play should not be a crippling handicap.

The dramatic mode, since it is merely one of the modes possible to the artist, has certain advantages and certain disadvantages; that is, it can do certain things much more vividly and intensely than can other literary forms, and correspondingly, it has certain weaknesses upon which the wise dramatist will not lean too hard. The great problem of the artist, of course, remains the same in drama as in poetry and fiction, the problem of transmitting to the reader an experience with intensity and meaning. The dramatic method of organizing his material is properly only one of a number of means to this end.

Some of the general problems which the dramatist shares with writers in other literary forms have been discussed in the "Introduction to Fiction." For example, there is the problem of building up characters in whom we can believe, and relating them to each other and to the action so that we can feel that their action has a logic and a proper motivation; there is the problem of choosing a beginning point, and the problem of exposition—the problem of telling the audience who the characters are and what the original situation is. There is the problem of movement, that of deciding how the various stages of the action are to be presented to the reader, and the problem of complicating the action. Above all, there is the general problem of making the play express the theme which the author wishes to present to his audience.

Some of these problems which allow a number of choices to the writer of fiction admit of only one type of solution in drama. For example, the point of view for the dramatist is always the same—the objective view. But other problems have additional complications for the dramatist. Perhaps, however, our best method for setting forth briefly the differences which separate drama from the novel or short story is to see how the situation in "Porphyria's Lover" would be handled by the dramatist.

Suppose the writer mentioned in the "General Introduction" decided to turn this situation into a play rather than into a story or poem. How, in general, would he have gone about it?

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

Dramatis Personæ

PORPHYRIA

HER LOVER

Time: The late nineteenth century. Night.

Place: The interior of a small English cottage. There is a small table to the left, covered with books and papers. On it a small lamp burns, throwing a dull glow over the room. Two plain straight backed chairs are placed against the wall. To the right there is a small fireplace in which a few coals smoulder. The windows back stage are streaked with rain. Before the fireplace there is a large chair in which a young man sits. He is plainly dressed. His eyes are closed, and he appears either to be asleep or in a coma of inattention. There is a soft knock at the door to the left. The man does not stir. The knock is repeated, and the door opens to admit Porphyria. She is a pretty girl, dressed for a party. Over her dress is thrown a shawl which is wet with the rain. She closes the door softly, and walks toward the man.

PORPHYRIA: John? (*He looks up at her silently, but does not rise.*) Oh, darling, I'm so sorry. (*She throws off her shawl and pulls off her gloves.*) You look so sad, and (*shivering*) you must be cold! (*She hurries over to the fireplace, and begins to build up the fire. The man remains silent while she tends the fire.*)

Now. This will be better. You mustn't take it in this way. You make me feel guilty—guiltier than I already feel.

JOHN: (*bitterly*) Can you feel guilty, Porphyria?

So much for the setting of the play. The dramatist must now by conversation between Porphyria and her lover reveal to us the background of the situation, the characters of the two people involved, their emotional states at the time that this action takes place, and most of all the motivation which makes the tragedy possible. The core of his problem lies here. He must make the lover's action credible to us so that when he strangles Porphyria, we shall accept the action as flowing from what has already occurred. The problem is not an easy one to solve, and our dramatist might well feel that it is impossible to make the tragedy credible to us merely on the basis of the conversation which takes place between the lovers on the eve of the murder. In that case, he might want to develop their characters further by introducing some earlier acts so that we may know more about them on the fatal night, and he might also want to complicate the action further—that is, introduce other characters and other events leading up to the murder, so that this final act, the climax of the situation will be made real and acceptable to us.

But even from so slight a sketch of the possible play that might be written on this subject it will be possible to illustrate some of the special features of the dramatic form.

Suppose we list first some of the limitations of the form.

1. *Description.* The author who depends a great deal upon descriptive writing for securing his effects will probably choose some other form, though some writers, like Eugene O'Neill, for example, describe the setting in much more detail than is usual with playwrights But although we may read the stage directions often with enjoyment, they are essentially *stage directions*—directions as to how the performers are to arrange the stage, or, if we are merely reading the play, hints to us of the setting—something, after all, outside the play itself.

2. *Comment.* The dramatist in writing a play gives up the right to comment on the characters and events. The interpretation otherwise given by such comment must be *implied* by the speeches of the various characters or by their actions. The dramatist gives up his identity, as it were, and speaks only in the person of his characters. But the dramatist's inability to comment on the action directly is far from a crippling handicap, as we have seen in the "Introduction to Fiction." Ernest Hemingway, for example, in his short story, "The Killers," forbears to comment on the action as author and merely implies his comment by the action which he objectively reveals. This lack of direct comment eliminates certain types of material from dramatic treatment. But this means not that drama is an inferior form to fiction, but only that it is a more specialized form.

3. *Direct penetration into the characters' minds.* Perhaps more important of all, the dramatist gives up his right to tell us directly what his characters are thinking or feeling. He limits himself to one means of revelation: the knowledge of their thoughts and feelings which we can draw from what they say and do. There are exceptions, of course: one character may confide in another character what he thinks and feels. And there is the soliloquy in which the character speaks aloud to himself, exposing thus directly to the audience his thoughts. But the confession and the soliloquy are the exception, not the rule. The essence of the dramatic method is to reveal to the audience the feelings of the character not explicitly but by implication—through his conversation with the other characters and through his behavior.

If the dramatist must limit himself rather severely by his methods, what are the corresponding compensations? Where does he really come into his own? What is the characteristic virtue of his method? To answer this, one must define the essential nature of drama. It may be put simply. The basis of drama is conflict. The most obvious feature of a good drama is the clash of wills as the various characters come into conflict with each other's purposes and desires. Even *melodrama* (which corresponds in drama to the crude action story in fiction) will illustrate the point: the wicked villain attempts to win the beautiful heroine, and the handsome hero struggles in the face of tremendous odds to circumvent him, succeeding only in the nick of time. In tragedy, of course, the struggle is much less crude. The protagonist struggles against his environment, or against other men, or even against himself. As already said in regard to fiction, the conflict may be either external or internal. But the dramatic, whether it displays itself in comedy or tragedy, in drama or melodrama, involves a fight.

This quality of tension and conflict is to be found to a degree, and sometimes to a marked degree, of course, in other forms. And frequently, therefore, we may see critics speaking of a "dramatic situation" or a "dramatic story" or even a "dramatic lyric." But obviously the dramatic form allows the author to display most directly and forcibly such a struggle, for he can represent it, not as one might meditate about it long after, but with all the immediacy, intensity, and vividness of the present. He can make the conflict

develop and come to its climax, literally before our eyes. Obviously, one can put the most undramatic tale into the *form* of a play; but this is very different from using the dramatic form as the appropriate vehicle for dramatic material. And if we realize that struggle and conflict lie at the basis of drama, we shall better realize why the great tragedies deal so often with violence and why the great comedies move with such swiftness.

The two great classifications of drama are *tragedy* and *comedy*. These are, of course, not the only possible classifications; nor, on the other hand, do we often find either in an absolutely pure state. They are often mixed; plays partake of both elements. But the comic and the tragic do represent two extremes of drama, and it is important to define them and to say something about their relationship to each other. It is all the more important to define them because the terms are used to apply not only to drama but to other forms of literature. We speak of a "comic story," for example, or of a "tragic ballad."

Tragedy and comedy, though apparently antithetical, as a matter of fact are really very closely related. We can use even a very commonplace example to make this point. Suppose someone slips on a banana peeling and falls into a puddle of mud. We laugh. We laugh all the more if the person who slips is a man dressed in evening clothes. The situation is so incongruous. Men dressed in evening clothes have nothing in common with mud puddles. If the unfortunate person wears patched overalls, the matter is not nearly so funny. It is not nearly so incongruous. There is still another matter involved in our reaction to the situation, that of sympathy. If the dandy dressed in evening clothes is consciously supercilious, very sure of himself, consciously proud, we laugh a great deal. But if he is a feeble old man, whose disaster appeals to our sympathies, we laugh very little—we incline to be sorry for him. And there is still another matter involved, the seriousness of the consequences. If, after our first burst of laughter, we see that the person has hurt himself, broken an arm perhaps, our feeling changes at once. If the unfortunate person should happen to be a little girl on crutches—we are afraid at once of serious consequences—we do not think of laughing at all. And there are mixed cases. A good friend of ours is hurrying along in a fresh linen suit. We happen to know that he is going on an important errand. He slips and falls. We laugh and sympathize at the same time. We are genuinely sorry for him. We say so, but he is, gazing ruefully at his suit, really very funny after all, and we begin to laugh again until a realization that he has been put to real trouble stops us once more.

If this example of an incongruous situation as an instance of potential tragedy or comedy seems too far-fetched, suppose we apply the same principles to a real play.

Othello, Shakespeare's story of how a fine man is so moved to jealousy by a scoundrel as to kill his wife whom he dearly loves, is surely an example of tragedy. The incongruity is shocking in the extreme. Here is a great and finely endowed man who seems to deserve well of life come to a sorry and miserable end. How would we go about changing the play into a comedy?

Let us consider our two principles. First, we make our audience less sympathetic with Othello. He is somewhat pompous and a braggart after all. He does not really love his wife with a fine and sincere love. Second, we make the consequences of his fall less serious. He does not kill his wife. He is simply badly enough fooled to have his ego thoroughly deflated. But the essential situation we need not change. We need to change only our treatment of it in order to have a comedy. And as a matter of fact the jealous husband who is duped by his enemy is one of the stock themes of comedy.

So much for the kinship of tragedy and comedy. They both spring from some fundamental incongruity —some shocking discrepancy between what we think should be and what has actually come to pass. And they become tragic or comic in proportion as we sympathize with the protagonist (the dominant character) or fail to sympathize—in proportion as the consequences are serious or trivial. It is not, then, the bare situation which makes a play tragic or comic—*it is largely the interpretation and treatment of the situation by the dramatist himself.*

If the examples given make this point, they have served their purpose. One feature which the examples lack, however, is this: they do not take into account the fact that in drama the characters are not static but dynamic; they are not merely acted on or have things happen to them, they act. As we have already said, the essence of drama is a struggle, a conflict.

It is especially necessary to make this point in order to see the very important distinction which exists between *tragedy* and *pathos*. It is a distinction which the critics who handle these terms do not make often enough, and yet it is a distinction vital to the whole conception of tragedy. The difference between the pathetic and the tragic may be stated briefly as follows: in the pathetic there is no emphasis on struggle. The protagonist suffers almost passively or struggles so ineffectually that the reader's attitude is one of pity. In the tragic action there is a definite emphasis on the struggle. The protagonist fights back and fights so

effectively that at times the issue of the conflict seems in doubt. He may win, we feel, after all. True tragedy can never be, therefore, merely a matter of pity. The death of a child, for instance, may be pathetic; it cannot be tragic.

From this general principle a number of conclusions may be drawn.

1. The character must not be a sick man. A man dying of tuberculosis may be pathetic; he is hardly tragic. This principle carries over into the realm of mental disease too. An insane man is hardly a tragic figure, though he may be pathetic.

2. The character must not be spineless. Weaknesses he may have, as all human beings do have. But he must be able to put up a fight and a good one.

3. The protagonist must not be sent up against overpowering odds. We must feel that he has a chance to win. For this reason, the struggle of a man against a disease, or a machine, or a completely overpowering environment is hardly tragic. The tragic character is not a worm ground under the heel of fate. He is a man, and a modern critic, Bonamy Dobrée, defines tragedy as the trial of a man's individual strength.

4. The fate of the protagonist must flow from his character. One must not feel that it is merely the result of accident. The dramatist may make use of accident, but as we have pointed out in the "Introduction to Fiction," even then he must still provide us with a "logic" of character. In Shakespeare's tragedies we often speak of the "tragic fault," the one grave defect of character which is responsible for the protagonist's ruin. Whether or not we call it the "tragic fault," the dramatist, no less than the writer of fiction, must relate the characters of his drama to the events which take place in the drama.

5. The dramatist cannot afford to rest in mere character analysis. Tragedy often involves a great deal of psychological study, but it is always more than mere psychological analysis. For example, in the *Emperor Jones,* by Eugene O'Neill, the dramatist offers us a very interesting case study of a civilized negro, who under the influence of a primitive environment, has his rags of civilization stripped from him, until he is a naked savage again, a prey to all sorts of primitive superstitions. The American negro, ruler of the negroes on a West Indian island, finally carries his tyranny too far, and then attempts to escape. But the sound of the drums of his pursuers so works on his imagination, that he goes all to pieces, and after wandering in the forest all night, frightened by phantoms, is captured and killed. The psychology is sound and interesting. But we never imaginatively identify ourselves with the Emperor. We stand aside, as it were, and consequently, the *Emperor Jones* is hardly a tragedy for us.

This identification of ourselves with the tragic protagonist so that he stands for universal human traits, stands indeed for us, brings us back to one of the primary differences between the tragic attitude and the comic—namely, our sympathy for the hero. If in tragedy we stand side by side with the [illegible], even with a protagonist like Macbeth, in comedy we stand in our sympathies with society itself, the laws or customs which the primary figure in the comedy is breaking. And this fact explains why many of the critics who have written on comedy in the past have described the function of comedy as that of a social corrective. In comedy we make vivid and dramatic the breaking of the laws of society, but we stand by the laws, by the average good sense of mankind, and we laugh at the individual who breaks them—laugh at his clumsiness, or his egotism, or his ridiculous vanity. In tragedy, when the protagonist violates the principles on which human society is based, we find our interests sharply divided, for we realize the necessity of the principles but sympathize with the protagonist. In tragedy, then, the defeat of the protagonist produces tragic irony; in comedy, the defeat of the protagonist provokes us to satiric mirth.

To set off tragedy and comedy in such neat antithetical fashion is of course to oversimplify matters. Obviously the above statements are true of only extreme cases, and of course, many actual cases lie somewhere between the extremes. Shakespeare's Falstaff, for example, is a figure so human and in his way so magnificent, and we sympathize with him so much, that our laughter in his case is anything but satiric. Moreover, much of the time the satire is double-edged. We laugh not merely at Falstaff as he breaks the conventions of society; we often laugh with him at the conventions of society. Furthermore, we are moved to a feeling of pathos at his fall—so close he stands to the great figures of tragedy.

But what has been said above is true enough to indicate that in comedy, a vivid sense of the laws, the conventions, the rules of conduct in a society, is present. It is no accident therefore that the most brilliant comedy has usually come out of an urbane, sophisticated society like that of the Restoration Period in England. Nor is it an accident, remembering what we have said about the relative lack of sympathy with the protagonist in comedy, that comedy is usually thought of as a more intellectual, less emotional mode than is tragedy. In the main this is true, subject always of course to the reservations which any student of literature must be prepared to make: the constant realization that definitions and schemes of literary

modes are only *tools* to help the reader in exploring literature and are not exact blueprints of literature itself. And we must remember that tragedy and comedy are ways of looking at life—ways of interpreting it.

There are special terms used in dealing with drama which need mention, or if they have already been mentioned, further comment. Perhaps the best way to define them is to relate them to one of the plays included in this text, *Hedda Gabler.* As a matter of fact many of the terms used in discussing drama, such as *exposition, motivation, movement,* etc., are used with reference to fiction as well as drama and have already been discussed in the "Introduction to Fiction." Their special application to drama is usually apparent at once on a consideration of the obvious differences which separate the dramatic form from that of fiction. For example, as has already been indicated in the "Introduction to Fiction," *movement* in drama is limited by the nature of drama production to one type. The dramatist must present his material in *scenes.* He cannot give us a continuous narrative; he can only give us certain selected sections of it. Obviously, he must choose rather carefully how many scenes he will use, and what materials he will give us in these scenes. *Hedda Gabler* has four such scenes. (In most plays, a distinction is made between a *scene* and an *act.* The division into acts is based, not on breaks in the continuity of action but on a relatively arbitrary principle of unity of function of the action included in the act. An act may include one or more scenes.)

The function of the first scene or scenes in a play is obviously that of *exposition.* We must be introduced to the characters and the general problem with which the play deals. From the nature of drama, exposition must be communicated to the audience by [illegible] of the characters. In the case of *Hedda Gabler,* it is necessary for the audience to have the following information before the play can go forward. We must know: that Hedda has been married for a few months to the pedantic scholar, Tesman; that they have returned to make their home in Christiania; that Tesman is in some need of money in order to support his bride in the style in which she prefers to live; that Tesman hopes to win a university appointment; that Eilert Lövborg a brilliant young scholar who has been in love with Hedda and who has thrown himself away, has been helped by Mrs. Elvsted, another former acquaintance of Hedda's, to get a grip on himself and to write a brilliant book; that Eilert Lövborg has just come to town. Most of all, we must know something about Hedda's pride and independence and of her dissatisfaction at the prospect of a dull, middle-class life.

How does Ibsen present this information to us? We have just said that the dramatist must weave his exposition into the plot. Ibsen has the information come out in the conversation between the various people who come to the Tesmans' house the morning after their arrival in town. In the talk between such *minor characters* as the old servant, Berta, and Tesman's aunt, as well as that between these characters and Tesman and Hedda herself, we learn much about the situation between Hedda and her husband. Mrs. Elvsted's call on this same morning may be thought to smack a little of coincidence. But the dramatist must bring her in in order to tell us about Lövborg, and he has provided her with a motive for making her call just at this time. Lövborg is going to attempt to establish himself as a scholar again, and she has come to ask Tesman's help.

The arrival of Judge Brack, a friend of the family who might be expected to call on the couple soon after their arrival, gives Ibsen an opportunity to bring out the final piece of information necessary to link tightly together the Lovborg-Elvsted and the Tesman-Hedda groups. It seems there is going to be some difficulty about Tesman's appointment after all. The post is to be competed for, and Lovborg, with his brilliant new book, is going to compete.

With this last piece of information, the characters are defined in relation to each other, the situation is set, and the play is ready to go forward.

Obviously, this is only one of a number of possible ways in which the exposition in drama may be set forth; but the present case will illustrate aspects of dramatic exposition which are general: the relative compression of the material and the closeness with which it is related to the plot.

Suspense begins, then, with this news that there is to be a competition for the university appointment, that is, with the first *complication.* This first complication is speedily *resolved,* resolved in part at least, in the second act when it is learned that Tesman's appointment will not be interfered with by Lövborg's competition; but in the meantime a number of other complications have taken place, some of which are not resolved until the very end of the play.

In *melodrama* these complications are rather external and accidental, not related to character; in this play, however, they are very intimately connected with character, and particularly with the character of the dominant figure, Hedda. Hedda, fighting against the drab, middle-class, respectable world in which she lives, decides to take a hand in shaping Lövborg's life. She makes Lövborg drink the punch

and leave for the party which Mrs. Elvsted wishes him to avoid. She does this knowing that if Lövborg goes, he will go to pieces again. Later, she burns the manuscript of his new book (which Lövborg thinks that he has lost); and finally she gives Lövborg one of her pistols with which to commit suicide. Why does she do these things? The answer, of course, lies in the character of Hedda, and this is one of the problems which the reader must solve in reading the play. But what has been said about *motivation* in the "Introduction to Fiction" applies in full measure here. And here, as in the case of fiction, motivation has a double function: it not only accounts for the actions which the characters perform, but it also illuminates the characters by showing them in action.

The high point of the series of complications, the *climax,* occurs at the end of the third act when Hedda deliberately burns the manuscript of Lövborg's new book. With this act, she has definitely committed him to a certain course of action. It is a decisive step.

We are not surprised therefore to hear in Act IV that Lovborg has been killed But Hedda is disappointed that he could not have accomplished his death beautifully as she had intended that he should, and that he has not shot himself in the temple or the heart but in the bowels. The manner in which her plans have gone awry here is a *foreshadowing,* a suggestion in advance, of the more serious way in which her plans have failed. Judge Brack has recognized the gun with which Lövborg has shot himself as belonging to her. Consequently, she is now completely within his power. Rather than accept the situation she shoots herself with the other pistol. Her suicide is the *dénouement,* or *catastrophe,* the final resolution of the major complication set up by the play. Here the resolution is an ironical one, for Hedda, who has attempted to control the lives of others, shoots herself because she is about to become controlled. Her very attempt to dominate has been the means of her becoming dominated.

This conclusion is foreshadowed in another way still earlier, as early as the beginning of the second act where she threatens playfully to shoot the judge. Indeed, the pistols, which she has inherited from her soldier father, come to have a sort of *symbolic* value in the play. Close study of the play will indicate other symbols, for, as we have seen, symbols may be employed not only in poetry but in any kind of literature.

The emphasis in this play is on the character of Hedda—not on some general social problem which the situation outlined in the play illustrates. We generally reserve the term *problem play* for plays of the latter type; but this use of the term should not blind us to the fact that in one sense, of course, almost every serious play, including *Hedda Gabler,* is a "problem play." For, since drama is based primarily on conflict, the protagonist is always faced with a problem. But if the dramatist does choose to emphasize a general idea rather than the particular situation, he should, of course, take care that he does not turn his play into mere propaganda. For in drama, as in all literature, the author attempts to give his theme a concrete statement rather than merely an abstract one.

We have emphasized the fact that the special virtue of the dramatic method is that it allows the author to throw conflict into very sharp focus, and have commented on some of the ways in which this fact influences the various aspects of drama. One further general influence should be mentioned. The emphasis on conflict in drama tends to force the dramatist to bring us on the scene when the problem is well advanced and near its culmination in *direct* conflict. Since he is interested in the actual conflict, he tends to open his play just early enough before the actual clash to allow time for the exposition of the characters, the primary situation of the characters, and the nature of the problem. This tendency toward compression may account for much of the discussion of the *unities of time and place* which is to be met with frequently in criticism of drama. Problems *are* settled and decisions *are* made in a particular place and at a particular time, and if we take up the action near enough to its climax, the action of the play will *tend* to occur in a particular place and within a short time. This much truth resides, then, in the doctrine of the unities, and only this much. There is obviously nothing sacrosanct about observing the unity of place or of time as such.

To state that dramatic plots tend toward a high degree of unity and compression is not to say, however, that there are not many exceptions. Furthermore, it is not to say that there may be no development of character in drama, or that a dramatist, like Shakespeare for example, may not often give us glimpses of characters over a period of months and even years. Moreover, whereas dramatic plots do tend to be relatively tightly unified, the plots of some plays are very complex, sometimes having in addition to the main plot a *subplot,* a secondary plot which is linked to the main action. But the tendency of drama is toward compression, and even Shakespeare's plays which seem to violate this tendency most give an effect of far greater compression than a narrative treatment of the same actions would give. *Hedda Gabler,* then, which represents a rather highly unified and relatively simple plot, is typical of the dramatic method of organization in that it represents this tendency toward compression.

HEDDA GABLER

HENRIK IBSEN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GEORGE TESMAN.
HEDDA TESMAN, *his wife.*
MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *his aunt.*
MRS. ELVSTED.
JUDGE BRACK.
EILERT LOVBORG.
BERTA, *servant at the Tesmans'.*

The scene of the action is Tesman's villa, in the west end of Christiania.

ACT FIRST

A spacious, handsome, and tastefully furnished drawing-room, decorated in dark colors. In the back, a wide doorway with curtains drawn back, leading into a smaller room decorated in the same style as the drawing-room. In the right-hand wall of the front room, a folding door leading out to the hall. In the opposite wall, on the left, a glass door, also with curtains drawn back. Through the panes can be seen part of a veranda outside, and trees covered with autumn foliage. An oval table, with a cover on it, and surrounded by chairs, stands well forward In front, by the wall on the right, a wide stove of dark porcelain, a high-backed arm-chair, a cushioned foot-rest, and two foot-stools. A settee, with a small round table in front of it, fills the upper right-hand corner. In front, on the left, a little way from the wall, a sofa. Farther back than the glass door, a piano. On either side of the doorway at the back a whatnot with terra-cotta and majolica ornaments. —Against the back wall of the inner room a sofa, with a table, and one or two chairs. Over the sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a general's uniform. Over the table a hanging lamp, with an opal glass shade.—A number of bouquets are arranged about the drawing-room, in vases and glasses. Others lie upon the tables. The floors in both rooms are covered with thick carpets.—Morning light. The sun shines in through the glass door.

MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *with her bonnet on and carrying a parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by* BERTA, *who carries a bouquet wrapped in paper.* MISS TESMAN *is a comely and pleasant-looking lady of about sixty-five. She is nicely but simply dressed in a gray walking-costume.* BERTA *is a middle-aged woman of plain and rather countrified appearance.*

MISS TESMAN [*stops close to the door, listens, and says softly*]. Upon my word, I don't believe they are stirring yet!

BERTA [*also softly*]. I told you so, Miss. Remember how late the steamboat got in last night. And then, when they got home!—good Lord, what a lot the young mistress had to unpack before she could get to bed.

MISS TESMAN. Well, well—let them have their sleep out. But let us see that they get a good breath of the fresh morning air when they do appear. [*She goes to the glass door and throws it open.*]

BERTA [*beside the table, at a loss what to do with the bouquet in her hand*]. I declare there isn't a bit of room left. I think I'll put it down here, Miss. [*She places it on the piano.*]

MISS TESMAN. So you've got a new mistress now, my dear Berta. Heaven knows it was a wrench to me to part with you.

BERTA [*on the point of weeping*]. And do you think it wasn't hard for me too, Miss? After all the blessed years I've been with you and Miss Rina.

MISS TESMAN. We must make the best of it, Berta. There was nothing else to be done. George can't do without you, you see—he absolutely can't. He has had you to look after him ever since he was a little boy.

BERTA. Ah, but, Miss Julia, I can't help thinking of Miss Rina lying helpless at home there, poor thing. And with only that new girl, too! She'll never learn to take proper care of an invalid.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, I shall manage to train her. And of course, you know, I shall take most of it upon myself. You needn't be uneasy about my poor sister, my dear Berta.

BERTA. Well, but there's another thing, Miss. I'm so mortally afraid I shan't be able to suit the young mistress.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, well—just at first there may be one or two things——

BERTA. Most like she'll be terrible grand in her ways.

MISS TESMAN. Well, you can't wonder at that—General Gabler's daughter! Think of the sort of life she was accustomed to in her father's time. Don't you remember how we used to see her riding down the road along with the General? In that long black habit—and with feathers in her hat?

BERTA. Yes, indeed—I remember well enough—! But good Lord, I should never have dreamt in those days that she and Master George would make a match of it.

MISS TESMAN. Nor I.—But, by-the-bye, Berta—while I think of it· in future you mustn't say Master George. You must say Dr. Tesman.

BERTA. Yes, the young mistress spoke of that too—last night—the moment they set foot in the house. Is it true, then, Miss?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, indeed it is. Only think, Berta—some foreign university has made him a doctor—while he has been abroad, you understand. I hadn't heard a word about it, until he told me himself upon the pier.

BERTA. Well, well, he's clever enough for anything,

he is. But I didn't think he'd have gone in for doctoring people too.

MISS TESMAN. No, no, it's not that sort of doctor he is. [*Nods significantly.*] But let me tell you, we may have to call him something still grander before long.

BERTA. You don't say so! What can that be, Miss?

MISS TESMAN [*smiling*]. H'm—wouldn't you like to know! [*With emotion.*] Ah, dear, dear—if my poor brother could only look up from his grave now, and see what his little boy has grown into! [*Looks around.*] But bless me, Berta—why have you done this? Taken the chintz covers off all the furniture?

BERTA. The mistress told me to. She can't abide covers on the chairs, she says.

MISS TESMAN. Are they going to make this their everyday sitting-room then?

BERTA. Yes, that's what I understood—from the mistress. Master George—the doctor—he said nothing.

[GEORGE TESMAN *comes from the right into the inner room, humming to himself, and carrying an unstrapped empty portmanteau. He is a middle-sized, young-looking man of thirty-three, rather stout, with a round, open, cheerful face, fair hair and beard. He wears spectacles, and is somewhat carelessly dressed in comfortable indoor clothes.*

MISS TESMAN. Good morning, good morning, George.

TESMAN [*in the doorway between the rooms*]. Aunt Julia! Dear Aunt Julia! [*Goes up to her and shakes hands warmly.*] Come all this way—so early! Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Why of course I had to come and see how you were getting on.

TESMAN. In spite of your having had no proper night's rest?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, that makes no difference to me.

TESMAN. Well, I suppose you got home all right from the pier? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, quite safely, thank goodness. Judge Brack was good enough to see me right to my door.

TESMAN. We were so sorry we couldn't give you a seat in the carriage. But you saw what a pile of boxes Hedda had to bring with her.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, she had certainly plenty of boxes.

BERTA [*to* TESMAN]. Shall I go in and see if there's anything I can do for the mistress?

TESMAN. No, thank you, Berta—you needn't. She said she would ring if she wanted anything.

BERTA [*going towards the right*]. Very well.

TESMAN. But look here—take this portmanteau with you.

BERTA. [*taking it*]. I'll put it in the attic. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

TESMAN. Fancy, Aunty—I had the whole of that portmanteau chock full of copies of documents. You wouldn't believe how much I have picked up from all the archives I have been examining—curious old details that no one has had any idea of——

MISS TESMAN. Yes, you don't seem to have wasted your time on your wedding trip, George.

TESMAN. No, that I haven't. But do take off your bonnet, Auntie. Look here! Let me untie the strings—eh?

MISS TESMAN [*while he does so*]. Well, well—this is just as if you were still at home with us.

TESMAN [*with the bonnet in his hand, looks at it from all sides*]. Why, what a gorgeous bonnet you've been investing in!

MISS TESMAN. I bought it on Hedda's account.

TESMAN. On Hedda's account? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, so that Hedda needn't be ashamed of me if we happened to go out together.

TESMAN [*patting her cheek*]. You always think of everything, Aunt Julia [*Lays the bonnet on a chair beside the table.*] And now, look here—suppose we sit comfortably on the sofa and have a little chat, till Hedda comes.

[*They seat themselves. She places her parasol in the corner of the sofa.*

MISS TESMAN [*takes both his hands and looks at him*]. What a delight it is to have you again, as large as life, before my very eyes, George! My George—my poor brother's own boy!

TESMAN. And it's a delight for me, too, to see you again, Aunt Julia! You, who have been father and mother in one to me.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, yes, I know you will always keep a place in your heart for your old aunts.

TESMAN. And what about Aunt Rina? No improvement—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, no—we can scarcely look for any improvement in her case, poor thing. There she lies, helpless, as she has lain for all these years. But heaven grant I may not lose her yet awhile! For if I did, I don't know what I should make of my life, George—especially now that I haven't you to look after any more.

TESMAN [*patting her back*]. There, there, there——!

MISS TESMAN [*suddenly changing her tone*]. And to think that here you are a married man, George!—And that you should be the one to carry off Hedda Gabler—the beautiful Hedda Gabler! Only think of it—she, that was so beset with admirers!

TESMAN [*hums a little and smiles complacently*]. Yes, I fancy I have several good friends about town who would like to stand in my shoes—eh?

MISS TESMAN. And then this fine long wedding-tour you have had! More than five—nearly six months——

TESMAN. Well, for me it has been a sort of tour of research as well. I have had to do so much grubbing among old records—and to read no end of books too, Auntie.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, yes, I suppose so. [*More confidentially, and lowering her voice a little.*] But listen now, George—have you nothing—nothing special to tell me?

TESMAN. As to our journey?

MISS TESMAN. Yes.

TESMAN. No, I don't know of anything except what I have told you in my letters. I had a doctor's degree conferred on me—but that I told you yesterday.

Miss TESMAN. Yes, yes, you did. But what I mean is—haven't you any—any—expectations——?

TESMAN. Expectations?

Miss TESMAN. Why, you know, George—I'm your old auntie!

TESMAN. Why, of course I have expectations.

Miss TESMAN. Ah!

TESMAN. I have every expectation of being a professor one of these days.

Miss TESMAN. Oh, yes, a professor——

TESMAN. Indeed, I may say I am certain of it. But my dear Auntie—you know all about that already!

Miss TESMAN [*laughing to herself*]. Yes, of course I do. You are quite right there. [*Changing the subject.*] But we were talking about your journey. It must have cost a great deal of money, George?

TESMAN. Well, you see—my handsome traveling-scholarship went a good way.

Miss TESMAN. But I can't understand how you can have made it go far enough for two.

TESMAN. No, that's not so easy to understand—eh?

Miss TESMAN. And especially traveling with a lady—they tell me that makes it ever so much more expensive.

TESMAN. Yes, of course—it makes it a little more expensive. But Hedda had to have this trip, Auntie! She really had to. Nothing else would have done.

Miss TESMAN. No, no, I suppose not. A wedding-tour seems to be quite indispensable nowadays.—But tell me now—have you gone thoroughly over the house yet?

TESMAN. Yes, you may be sure I have. I have been afoot ever since daylight.

Miss TESMAN. And what do you think of it all?

TESMAN. I'm delighted! Quite delighted! Only I can't think what we are to do with the two empty rooms between this inner parlor and Hedda's bedroom.

Miss TESMAN [*laughing*]. Oh, my dear George, I dare say you may find some use for them—in the course of time.

TESMAN. Why of course you are quite right, Aunt Julia! You mean as my library increases—eh?

Miss TESMAN. Yes, quite so, my dear boy. It was your library I was thinking of.

TESMAN. I am specially pleased on Hedda's account. Often and often, before we were engaged, she said that she would never care to live anywhere but in Secretary Falk's villa.

Miss TESMAN. Yes, it was lucky that this very house should come into the market, just after you had started.

TESMAN. Yes, Aunt Julia, the luck was on our side, wasn't it—eh?

Miss TESMAN. But the expense, my dear George! You will find it very expensive, all this.

TESMAN [*looks at her, a little cast down*]. Yes, I suppose I shall, Aunt!

Miss TESMAN. Oh, frightfully!

TESMAN. How much do you think? In round numbers?—Eh?

Miss TESMAN. Oh, I can't even guess until all the accounts come in.

TESMAN. Well, fortunately, Judge Brack has secured the most favorable terms for me,—so he said in a letter to Hedda.

Miss TESMAN. Yes, don't be uneasy, my dear boy.—Besides, I have given security for the furniture and all the carpets.

TESMAN. Security? You? My dear Aunt Julia—what sort of security could you give?

Miss TESMAN. I have given a mortgage on our annuity.

TESMAN [*jumps up*]. What! On your—and Aunt Rina's annuity!

Miss TESMAN. Yes, I knew of no other plan, you see.

TESMAN [*placing himself before her*]. Have you gone out of your senses, Auntie! Your annuity—it's all that you and Aunt Rina have to live upon.

Miss TESMAN. Well, well, don't get so excited about it. It's only a matter of form you know—Judge Brack assured me of that. It was he that was kind enough to arrange the whole affair for me. A mere matter of form, he said.

TESMAN. Yes, that may be all very well. But nevertheless——

Miss TESMAN. You will have your own salary to depend upon now. And, good heavens, even if we did have to pay up a little——! To eke things out a bit at the start——! Why, it would be nothing but a pleasure to us.

TESMAN. Oh, Auntie—will you never be tired of making sacrifices for me!

Miss TESMAN [*rises and lays her hands on his shoulders*]. Have I had any other happiness in this world except to smooth your way for you, my dear boy? You, who have had neither father nor mother to depend on. And now we have reached the goal, George! Things have looked black enough for us, sometimes; but, thank heaven, now you have nothing to fear.

TESMAN. Yes, it is really marvelous how everything has turned out for the best.

Miss TESMAN. And the people who opposed you—who wanted to bar the way for you—now you have them at your feet. They have fallen, George. Your most dangerous rival—his fall was the worst.—And now he has to lie on the bed he has made for himself—poor misguided creature.

TESMAN. Have you heard anything of Eilert? Since I went away, I mean.

Miss TESMAN. Only that he is said to have published a new book.

TESMAN. What! Eilert Lövborg! Recently—eh?

Miss TESMAN. Yes, so they say. Heaven knows whether it can be worth anything! Ah, when your new book appears—that will be another story, George! What is it to be about?

TESMAN. It will deal with the domestic industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages.

MISS TESMAN. Fancy—to be able to write on such a subject as that!

TESMAN. However, it may be some time before the book is ready. I have all these collections to arrange first, you see.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, collecting and arranging—no one can beat you at that. There you are my poor brother's own son.

TESMAN. I am looking forward eagerly to setting to work at it; especially now that I have my own delightful home to work in.

MISS TESMAN. And, most of all, now that you have got the wife of your heart, my dear George.

TESMAN [*embracing her*]. Oh, yes, yes, Aunt Julia. Hedda—she is the best part of all! [*Looks toward the doorway.*] I believe I hear her coming—eh?

[HEDDA *enters from the left through the inner room. She is a woman of nine-and-twenty. Her face and figure show refinement and distinction. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-gray eyes express a cold, unruffled repose. Her hair is of an agreeable medium brown, but not particularly abundant. She is dressed in a tasteful, somewhat loose-fitting morning-gown.*

MISS TESMAN [*going to meet Hedda*]. Good morning, my dear Hedda! Good morning, and a hearty welcome.

HEDDA [*holds out her hand*]. Good morning, dear Miss Tesman! So early a call! That is kind of you.

MISS TESMAN [*with some embarrassment*]. Well—has the bride slept well in her new home?

HEDDA. Oh yes, thanks. Passably.

TESMAN [*laughing*]. Passably! Come, that's good, Hedda! You were sleeping like a stone when I got up.

HEDDA. Fortunately. Of course one has always to accustom one's self to new surroundings, Miss Tesman—little by little. [*Looking towards the left*]. Oh—there the servant has gone and opened the veranda door, and let in a whole flood of sunshine.

MISS TESMAN [*going towards the door*]. Well, then, we will shut it.

HEDDA. No, no, not that! Tesman, please draw the curtains. That will give a softer light.

TESMAN [*at the door*]. All right—all right. There now, Hedda, now you have both shade and fresh air.

HEDDA. Yes, fresh air we certainly must have, with all these stacks of flowers—— But—won't you sit down, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN. No, thank you. Now that I have seen that everything is all right here—thank heaven!—I must be getting home again. My sister is lying longing for me, poor thing.

TESMAN. Give her my very best love, Auntie; and say I shall look in and see her later in the day.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes, I'll be sure to tell her. But by the-bye, George—[*feeling in her dress pocket*]—I have almost forgotten—I have something for you here.

TESMAN. What is it, Auntie? Eh?

MISS TESMAN [*produces a flat parcel wrapped in newspaper and hands it to him*]. Look here, my dear boy.

TESMAN [*opening the parcel*]. Well, I declare!—Have you really saved them for me, Aunt Julia! Hedda! Isn't this touching—eh?

HEDDA [*beside the whatnot on the right*]. Well, what is it?

TESMAN. My old morning-shoes! My slippers.

HEDDA. Indeed. I remember you often spoke of them while we were abroad.

TESMAN. Yes, I missed them terribly. [*Goes up to her.*] Now you shall see them, Hedda!

HEDDA [*going towards the stove*]. Thanks, I really don't care about it.

TESMAN [*following her*]. Only think—ill as she was, Aunt Rina embroidered these for me. Oh you can't think how many associations cling to them.

HEDDA [*at the table*]. Scarcely for me.

MISS TESMAN. Of course not for Hedda, George.

TESMAN. Well, but now that she belongs to the family, I thought——

HEDDA [*interrupting*]. We shall never get on with this servant, Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. Not get on with Berta?

TESMAN. Why, dear, what puts that in your head? Eh?

HEDDA [*pointing*] Look there! She has left her old bonnet lying about on a chair.

TESMAN [*in consternation, drops the slippers on the floor*]. Why, Hedda——

HEDDA. Just fancy, if any one should come in and see it!

TESMAN. But Hedda—that's Aunt Julia's bonnet.

HEDDA. Is it!

MISS TESMAN [*taking up the bonnet*]. Yes, indeed it's mine. And, what's more, it's not old, Madame Hedda.

HEDDA. I really did not look closely at it, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN [*trying on the bonnet*]. Let me tell you it's the first time I have worn it—the very first time.

TESMAN. And a very nice bonnet it is too—quite a beauty!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, it's no such great things, George. [*Looks around her.*] My parasol——? Ah, here. [*Takes it.*] For this is mine too—[*mutters*]—not Berta's.

TESMAN. A new bonnet and a new parasol! Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Very handsome indeed.

TESMAN. Yes, isn't it? But Auntie, take a good look at Hedda before you go! See how handsome she is!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, my dear boy, there's nothing new in that. Hedda was always lovely. [*She nods and goes towards the right.*]

TESMAN [*following*]. Yes, but have you noticed what splendid condition she is in? How she has filled out on the journey?

HEDDA [*crossing the room*]. Oh, do be quiet——!

MISS TESMAN [*who has stopped and turned*]. Filled out?

TESMAN. Of course you don't notice it so much now that she has that dress on. But I, who can see——

HEDDA [*at the glass door, impatiently*]. Oh, you can't see anything.

TESMAN. It must be the mountain air in the Tyrol——

HEDDA [*curtly, interrupting*]. I am exactly as I was when I started.

TESMAN. So you insist; but I'm quite certain you are not. Don't you agree with me, Auntie?

MISS TESMAN [*who has been gazing at her with folded hands*]. Hedda is lovely—lovely—lovely. [*Goes up to her, takes her head between both hands, draws it downwards, and kisses her hair*]. God bless and preserve Hedda Tesman—for George's sake.

HEDDA [*gently freeing herself*]. Oh—! Let me go.

MISS TESMAN [*in quiet emotion*]. I shall not let a day pass without coming to see you.

TESMAN. No you won't, will you, Auntie? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Good-bye—good-bye!

[*She goes out by the hall door.* TESMAN *accompanies her. The door remains half open.* TESMAN *can be heard repeating his message to Aunt Rina and his thanks for the slippers.*

[*In the meantime,* HEDDA *walks about the room raising her arms and clenching her hands as if in desperation. Then she flings back the curtains from the glass door, and stands there looking out.*

[*Presently* TESMAN *returns and closes the door behind him.*

TESMAN [*picks up the slippers from the floor*]. What are you looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA [*once more calm and mistress of herself*]. I am only looking at the leaves. They are so yellow—so withered.

TESMAN [*wraps up the slippers and lays them on the table*]. Well you see, we are well into September now.

HEDDA [*again restless*]. Yes, to think of it!—Already in—in September.

TESMAN. Don't you think Aunt Julia's manner was strange, dear? Almost solemn? Can you imagine what was the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA. I scarcely know her, you see. Is she often like that?

TESMAN. No, not as she was today.

HEDDA [*leaving the glass door*]. Do you think she was annoyed about the bonnet?

TESMAN. Oh, scarcely at all. Perhaps a little, just at the moment——

HEDDA. But what an idea, to pitch her bonnet about in the drawing-room! No one does that sort of thing.

TESMAN. Well you may be sure Aunt Julia won't do it again.

HEDDA. In any case, I shall manage to make my peace with her.

TESMAN. Yes, my dear, good Hedda, if you only would.

HEDDA. When you call this afternoon, you might invite her to spend the evening here.

TESMAN. Yes, that I will. And there's one thing more you can do that would delight her heart.

HEDDA. What is it?

TESMAN. If you could only prevail on yourself to say *du** to her. For my sake, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, no, Tesman—you really musn't ask that of me. I have told you so already. I shall try to call her "Aunt"; and you must be satisfied with that.

TESMAN. Well, well. Only I think now that you belong to the family, you——

HEDDA. H'm—I can't in the least see why——

[*She goes up towards the middle doorway.*

TESMAN [*after a pause*]. Is there anything the matter with you, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. I'm only looking at my old piano. It doesn't go at all well with all the other things.

TESMAN. The first time I draw my salary, we'll see about exchanging it.

HEDDA. No, no—no exchanging. I don't want to part with it. Suppose we put it there in the inner room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TESMAN [*a little taken aback*]. Yes—of course we could do that.

HEDDA [*takes up the bouquet from the piano*]. These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TESMAN. Aunt Julia must have brought them for you.

HEDDA [*examining the bouquet*]. A visiting-card. [*Takes it out and reads*] "Shall return later in the day." Can you guess whose card it is?

TESMAN. No. Whose? Eh?

HEDDA. The name is "Mrs. Elvsted."

TESMAN. Is it really? Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Miss Rysing that was.

HEDDA. Exactly. The girl with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off. An old flame of yours, I've been told.

TESMAN [*laughing*]. Oh, that didn't last long; and it was before I knew you, Hedda. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA. It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TESMAN. I haven't seen her either for—heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the-way hole—eh?

HEDDA [*after a moment's thought says suddenly*]. Tell me, Tesman—isn't it somewhere near there that he—that—Eilert Lovborg is living?

TESMAN. Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.

[BERTA *enters by the hall door.*

BERTA. That lady, ma'am, that brought some flowers a little while ago, is here again. [*Pointing.*] The flowers you have in your hand, ma'am.

HEDDA. Ah, is she? Well, please show her in.

[BERTA *opens the door for* MRS. ELVSTED, *and goes out herself.*—MRS. ELVSTED *is a woman of fragile figure, with pretty, soft features. Her eyes are light blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a startled, inquiring expression. Her hair is re-*

* *Du*=thou; Tesman means, "If you could persuade yourself to *tutoyer* her."

markably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and wavy. She is a couple of years younger than HEDDA. *She wears a dark visiting dress, tasteful, but not quite in the latest fashion.*

HEDDA [*receives her warmly*]. How do you do, my dear Mrs. Elvsted? It's delightful to see you again.

MRS. ELVSTED [*nervously, struggling for self-control*]. Yes, it's a very long time since we met.

TESMAN [*gives her his hand*]. And we too—eh?

HEDDA. Thanks for your lovely flowers——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, not at all—— I would have come straight here yesterday afternoon; but I heard that you were away——

TESMAN. Have you just come to town? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. I arrived yesterday, about midday. Oh, I was quite in despair when I heard that you were not at home.

HEDDA. In despair! How so?

TESMAN. Why, my dear Mrs. Rysing—I mean Mrs. Elvsted——

HEDDA. I hope that you are not in any trouble?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I am. And I don't know another living creature here that I can turn to.

HEDDA [*laying the bouquet on the table*]. Come—let us sit here on the sofa——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I am too restless to sit down.

HEDDA. Oh no, you're not. Come here. [*She draws* MRS. ELVSTED *down upon the sofa and sits at her side*]

TESMAN. Well? What is it, Mrs. Elvsted?

HEDDA. Has anything particular happened to you at home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes—and no. Oh—I am so anxious you should not misunderstand me——

HEDDA. Then your best plan is to tell us the whole story, Mrs. Elvsted.

TESMAN. I suppose that's what you have come for—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes—of course it is. Well then, I must tell you—if you don't already know—that Eilert Lövborg is in town, too.

HEDDA. Lovborg——!

TESMAN. What! Has Eilert Lovborg come back? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Well, well—I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED. He has been here a week already. Just fancy—a whole week! In this terrible town, alone! With so many temptations on all sides.

HEDDA. But my dear Mrs. Elvsted—how does he concern you so much?

MRS. ELVSTED [*looks at her with a startled air, and says rapidly*]. He was the children's tutor.

HEDDA. Your children's?

MRS. ELVSTED. My husband's. I have none.

HEDDA. Your step-children's, then?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes.

TESMAN [*somewhat hesitatingly*]. Then was he—I don't know how to express it—was he—regular enough in his habits to be fit for the post? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. For the last two years his conduct has been irreproachable.

TESMAN. Has it indeed? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED. Perfectly irreproachable, I assure you! In every respect. But all the same—now that I know he is here—in this great town—and with a large sum of money in his hands—I can't help being in mortal fear for him.

TESMAN. Why did he not remain where he was? With you and your husband? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. After his book was published he was too restless and unsettled to remain with us.

TESMAN. Yes, by-the-bye, Aunt Julia told me he had published a new book.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, a big book, dealing with the march of civilization—in broad outline, as it were. It came out about a fortnight ago. And since it has sold so well, and been so much read—and made such a sensation——

TESMAN. Has it indeed? It must be something he has had lying by since his better days.

MRS. ELVSTED. Long ago, you mean?

TESMAN. Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he has written it all since he has been with us—within the last year.

TESMAN. Isn't that good news, Hedda? Think of that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Ah, yes, if only it would last!

HEDDA. Have you seen him here in town?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not yet. I have had the greatest difficulty in finding out his address. But this morning I discovered it at last.

HEDDA [*looks searchingly at her*]. Do you know, it seems to me a little odd of your husband—h'm——

MRS. ELVSTED [*starting nervously*]. Of my husband! What?

HEDDA. That he should send you to town on such an errand—that he does not come himself and look after his friend.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh no, no—my husband has no time. And besides, I—I had some shopping to do.

HEDDA [*with a slight smile*]. Ah, that is a different matter.

MRS. ELVSTED [*rising quickly and uneasily*]. And now I beg and implore you, Mr. Tesman—receive Eilert Lövborg kindly if he comes to you! And that he is sure to do. You see you were such great friends in the old days. And then you are interested in the same studies—the same branch of science—so far as I can understand.

TESMAN. We used to be, at any rate.

MRS. ELVSTED. That is why I beg so earnestly that you—you too—will keep a sharp eye upon him. Oh, you will promise me that, Mr. Tesman—won't you?

TESMAN. With the greatest of pleasure, Mrs. Rysing——

HEDDA. Elvsted.

TESMAN. I assure you I shall do all I possibly can for Eilert. You may rely upon me.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how very, very kind of you!

(Presses his hands.] Thanks, thanks, thanks! *[Frightened.]* You see, my husband is very fond of him!

HEDDA *[rising]*. You ought to write to him, Tesman. Perhaps he may not care to come to you of his own accord.

TESMAN. Well, perhaps it would be the right thing to do, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. And the sooner the better. Why not at once?

MRS. ELVSTED *[imploringly]*. Oh, if you only would!

TESMAN. I'll write this moment. Have you his address, Mrs.—Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. *[Takes a slip of paper from her pocket, and hands it to him.]* Here it is.

TESMAN. Good, good. Then I'll go in—— *[Looks about him.]* By-the-bye,—my slippers? Oh, here. *[Takes the packet, and is about to go.]*

HEDDA. Be sure you write him a cordial, friendly letter. And a good long one too.

TESMAN. Yes, I will.

MRS. ELVSTED. But please, please don't say a word to show that I have suggested it.

TESMAN. No, how could you think I would? Eh?

[He goes out to the right, through the inner room.

HEDDA *[goes up to* MRS. ELVSTED, *smiles, and says in a low voice]*. There. We have killed two birds with one stone.

MRS. ELVSTED. What do you mean?

HEDDA. Could you not see that I wanted him to go?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, to write the letter——

HEDDA. And that I might speak to you alone.

MRS. ELVSTED *[confused]*. About the same thing?

HEDDA. Precisely.

MRS. ELVSTED *[apprehensively]*. But there is nothing more, Mrs. Tesman! Absolutely nothing!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, but there is. There is a great deal more—I can see that. Sit here—and we'll have a cozy, confidential chat. *[She forces* MRS. ELVSTED *to sit in the easy-chair beside the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.]*

MRS. ELVSTED *[anxiously, looking at her watch]*. But, my dear Mrs. Tesman—I was really on the point of going.

HEDDA. Oh, you can't be in such a hurry.—Well? Now tell me something about your life at home.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, that is just what I care least to speak about.

HEDDA. But to me, dear——? Why, weren't we schoolfellows?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but you were in the class above me. Oh, how dreadfully afraid of you I was then!

HEDDA. Afraid of me?

MRS. ELVSTED. *Yes,* dreadfully. For when we met on the stairs you used always to pull my hair.

HEDDA. Did I, really?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, and once you said you would burn if off my head.

HEDDA. Oh, that was all nonsense, of course.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I was so silly in those days.—And since then, too—we have drifted so far—far apart from each other. Our circles have been so entirely different.

HEDDA. Well then, we must try to drift together again. Now listen! At school we said *du* to each other; and we called each other by our Christian names——

MRS. ELVSTED. No, I am sure you must be mistaken.

HEDDA. No, not at all! I can remember quite distinctly. So now we are going to renew our old friendship. *[Draws the footstool closer to* MRS. ELVSTED.*]* There now! *[Kisses her cheek.]* You must say *du* to me and call me Hedda.

MRS. ELVSTED *[presses and pats her hands]*. Oh, how good and kind you are! I am not used to such kindness.

HEDDA. There, there, there! And I shall say *du* to you, as in the old days, and call you my dear Thora.

MRS. ELVSTED. My name is Thea.

HEDDA. Why, of course! I meant Thea. *[Looks at her compassionately.]* So you are not accustomed to goodness and kindness, Thea? Not in your own home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if I only had a home! But I haven't any; I have never had a home.

HEDDA *[looks at her for a moment]*. I almost suspected as much.

MRS. ELVSTED *[gazing helplessly before her]*. Yes—yes—yes.

HEDDA. I don't quite remember—was it not as housekeeper that you first went to Mr. Elvsted's?

MRS. ELVSTED. I really went as governess. But his wife—his late wife—was an invalid,—and rarely left her room. So I had to look after the housekeeping as well.

HEDDA. And then—at last—you became mistress of the house.

MRS. ELVSTED *[sadly]* Yes, I did.

HEDDA. Let me see—about how long ago was that?

MRS. ELVSTED. My marriage?

HEDDA. Yes.

MRS ELVSTED. Five years ago.

HEDDA. To be sure; it must be that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, those five years——! Or at all events the last two or three of them! Oh, if you * could only imagine——

HEDDA *[giving her a little slap on the hand]*. De? Fie, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I will try—— Well if—you could only imagine and understand——

HEDDA *[lightly]*. Eilert Lovborg has been in your neighborhood about three years, hasn't he?

MRS. ELVSTED *[looks at her doubtfully]*. Eilert Lövborg? Yes—he has.

HEDDA. Had you known him before, in town here?

MRS. ELVSTED. Scarcely at all. I mean—I knew him by name of course.

HEDDA. But you saw a good deal of him in the country?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, he came to us every day. You see, he gave the children lessons; for in the long run I couldn't manage it all myself.

* Mrs. Elvsted here uses the formal pronoun *De,* whereupon Hedda rebukes her In her next speech Mrs Elvsted says *du.*

HEDDA. No, that's clear.—And your husband——? I suppose he is often away from home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. Being sheriff, you know, he has to travel about a good deal in his district.

HEDDA [*leaning against the arm of the chair*]. Thea—my poor, sweet Thea—now you must tell me everything—exactly as it stands.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well then, you must question me.

HEDDA. What sort of a man is your husband, Thea? I mean—you know—in everyday life. Is he kind to you?

MRS. ELVSTED [*evasively*]. I am sure he means well in everything.

HEDDA. I should think he must be altogether too old for you. There is at least twenty years' difference between you, is there not?

MRS. ELVSTED [*irritably*]. Yes, that is true, too. Everything about him is repellent to me! We have not a thought in common. We have no single point of sympathy—he and I.

HEDDA. But is he not fond of you all the same? In his own way?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I really don't know. I think he regards me simply as a useful property. And then it doesn't cost much to keep me. I am not expensive.

HEDDA. That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELVSTED [*shakes her head*]. It cannot be otherwise—not with him. I don't think he really cares for any one but himself—and perhaps a little for the children.

HEDDA. And for Eilert Lövborg, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED [*looking at her*]. For Eilert Lövborg? What puts that into your head?

HEDDA. Well, my dear—I should say, when he sends you after him all the way to town—— [*Smiling almost imperceptibly*] And besides, you said so yourself, to Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED [*with a little nervous twitch*]. Did I? Yes, I suppose I did. [*Vehemently, but not loudly.*] No—I may just as well make a clean breast of it at once! For it must all come out in any case.

HEDDA. Why, my dear Thea——?

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, to make a long story short: My husband did not know that I was coming.

HEDDA. What! Your husband didn't know it!

MRS. ELVSTED. No, of course not. For that matter, he was away from home himself—he was traveling. Oh, I could bear it no longer, Hedda! I couldn't indeed—so utterly alone as I should have been in future.

HEDDA. Well? And then?

MRS. ELVSTED. So I put together some of my things—what I needed most—as quietly as possible. And then I left the house.

HEDDA. Without a word?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes—and took the train straight to town.

HEDDA. Why, my dear, good Thea—to think of you daring to do it!

MRS. ELVSTED [*rises and moves about the room*]. What else could I possibly do?

HEDDA. But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELVSTED [*at the table, looks at her*]. Back to him.

HEDDA. Of course.

MRS. ELVSTED. I shall never go back to him again.

HEDDA [*rising and going towards her*]. Then you have left your home—for good and all?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. There was nothing else to be done.

HEDDA. But then—to take flight so openly.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, it's impossible to keep things of that sort secret.

HEDDA. But what do you think people will say of you, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. They may say what they like for aught *I* care. [*Seats herself wearily and sadly on the sofa.*] I have done nothing but what I had to do.

HEDDA [*after a short silence*]. And what are your plans now? What do you think of doing?

MRS. ELVSTED. I don't know yet. I only know this, that I must live here, where Eilert Lovborg is—if I am to live at all.

HEDDA [*takes a chair from the table, seats herself beside her, and strokes her hands*]. My dear Thea—how did this—this friendship—between you and Eilert Lövborg come about?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, it grew up gradually. I gained a sort of influence over him.

HEDDA. Indeed?

MRS. ELVSTED. He gave up his old habits. Not because I asked him to, for I never dared do that. But of course he saw how repulsive they were to me; and so he dropped them.

HEDDA [*concealing an involuntary smile of scorn*]. Then you have reclaimed him—as the saying goes—my little Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. So he says himself, at any rate. And he, on his side, has made a real human being of me—taught me to think, and to understand so many things.

HEDDA. Did he give you lessons too, then?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not exactly lessons. But he talked to me—talked about such an infinity of things. And then came the lovely, happy time when I began to share in his work—when he allowed me to help him!

HEDDA. Oh, he did, did he?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes! He never wrote anything without my assistance.

HEDDA. You were two good comrades, in fact?

MRS. ELVSTED [*eagerly*]. Comrades! Yes, fancy, Hedda—that is the very word he used!—Oh, I ought to feel perfectly happy; and yet I cannot; for I don't know how long it will last.

HEDDA. Are you no surer of him than that?

MRS. ELVSTED [*gloomily*]. A woman's shadow stands between Eilert Lövborg and me.

HEDDA [*looks at her anxiously*]. Who can that be?

MRS. ELVSTED. I don't know. Some one he knew in his—in his past. Some one he has never been able wholly to forget.

HEDDA. What has he told you—about this?

MRS. ELVSTED. He has only once—quite vaguely—alluded to it.

HEDDA. Well! And what did he say?

MRS. ELVSTED. He said that when they parted, she threatened to shoot him with a pistol.

HEDDA [*with cold composure*]. Oh, nonsense! No one does that sort of thing here.

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And that is why I think it must have been that red-haired singing woman whom he once——

HEDDA. Yes, very likely.

MRS. ELVSTED. For I remember they used to say of her that she carried loaded firearms.

HEDDA. Oh—then of course it must have been she.

MRS. ELVSTED [*wringing her hands*]. And now just fancy, Hedda—I hear that this singing-woman—that she is in town again! Oh, I don't know what to do——

HEDDA [*glancing towards the inner room*]. Hush! Here comes Tesman. [*Rises and whispers.*] Thea—all this must remain between you and me.

MRS. ELVSTED [*springing up*]. Oh, yes, yes! for heaven's sake——!

GEORGE TESMAN, *with a letter in his hand, comes from the right through the inner room.*

TESMAN. There now—the epistle is finished.

HEDDA. That's right. And now Mrs. Elvsted is just going. Wait a moment—I'll go with you to the garden gate.

TESMAN. Do you think Berta could post the letter, Hedda dear?

HEDDA [*takes it*] I will tell her to.

[BERTA *enters from the hall.*

BERTA. Judge Brack wishes to know if Mrs. Tesman will receive him.

HEDDA. Yes, ask Judge Brack to come in. And look here—put this letter in the post.

[BERTA *taking the letter. Yes, ma'am. She opens the door for* JUDGE BRACK *and goes out herself.* BRACK *is a man of forty-five, thick-set, but well-built and elastic in his movements. His face is roundish with an aristocratic profile. His hair is short, still almost black, and carefully dressed. His eyes are lively and sparkling. His eyebrows thick. His moustaches are also thick, with short-cut ends. He wears a well-cut walking-suit, a little too youthful for his age. He uses an eye-glass, which he now and then lets drop.*

JUDGE BRACK [*with his hat in his hand, bowing*]. May one venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA. Of course one may.

TESMAN [*presses his hand*]. You are welcome at any time. [*Introducing him.*] Judge Brack—Miss Rysing——

HEDDA. Oh——!

BRACK [*bowing*]. Ah—delighted——

HEDDA [*looks at him and laughs*]. It's nice to have a look at you by daylight, Judge!

BRACK. Do you find me—altered?

HEDDA. A little younger, I think.

BRACK. Thank you so much.

TESMAN. But what do you think of Hedda—eh? Doesn't she look flourishing? She has actually——

HEDDA. Oh, do leave me alone. You haven't thanked Judge Brack for all the trouble he has taken——

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—it was a pleasure to me——

HEDDA. Yes you are a friend indeed. But here stands Thea all impatience to be off—so *au revoir* Judge. I shall be back again presently. [*Mutual salutations.* MRS. ELVSTED *and* HEDDA *go out by the hall door.*]

BRACK. Well,—is your wife tolerably satisfied——

TESMAN. Yes, we can't thank you sufficiently. Of course she talks of a little re-arrangement here and there; and one or two things are still wanting. We shall have to buy some additional trifles.

BRACK. Indeed!

TESMAN. But we won't trouble you about these things. Hedda says she herself will look after what is wanting. ——Shan't we sit down? Eh?

BRACK. Thanks, for a moment. [*Seats himself beside the table.*] There is something I wanted to speak to you about, my dear Tesman.

TESMAN. Indeed? Ah, I understand! [*Seating himself.*] I suppose it's the serious part of the frolic that is coming now. Eh?

BRACK. Oh, the money question is not so very pressing; though, for that matter, I wish we had gone a little more economically to work.

TESMAN. But that would never have done, you know! Think of Hedda, my dear fellow! You, who know her so well——. I couldn't possibly ask her to put up with a shabby style of living!

BRACK. No, no—that is just the difficulty.

TESMAN. And then—fortunately—it can't be long before I receive my appointment.

BRACK. Well, you see—such things are often apt to hang fire for a time.

TESMAN. Have you heard anything definite? Eh?

BRACK. Nothing exactly definite—— [*Interrupting himself.*] But, by-the-bye—I have one piece of news for you.

TESMAN. Well?

BRACK. Your old friend, Eilert Lövborg, has returned to town.

TESMAN. I know that already.

BRACK. Indeed! How did you learn it?

TESMAN. From that lady who went out with Hedda.

BRACK. Really? What was her name? I didn't quite catch it.

TESMAN. Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. Aha—Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Of course—he has been living up in their regions.

TESMAN. And fancy—I'm delighted to hear that he is quite a reformed character!

BRACK. So they say.

TESMAN. And then he has published a new book—eh?

BRACK. Yes, indeed he has.

TESMAN. And I hear it has made some sensation!

BRACK. Quite an unusual sensation.

TESMAN. Fancy—isn't that good news! A man of such extraordinary talents—— I felt so grieved to think that he had gone irretrievably to ruin.

BRACK. That was what everybody thought.

TESMAN. But I cannot imagine what he will take to now! How in the world will he be able to make his living? Eh?

[*During the last words,* HEDDA *has entered by the hall door.*

HEDDA [*to* BRACK, *laughing with a touch of scorn*]. Tesman is forever worrying about how people are to make their living.

TESMAN. Well, you see, dear—we were talking about poor Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA [*glancing at him rapidly*]. Oh, indeed? [*Seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove and asks indifferently.*] What is the matter with him?

TESMAN. Well—no doubt he has run through all his property long ago; and he can scarcely write a new book every year—eh? So I really can't see what is to become of him.

BRACK. Perhaps I can give you some information on that point.

TESMAN. Indeed!

BRACK. You must remember that his relations have a good deal of influence.

TESMAN. Oh, his relations, unfortunately, have entirely washed their hands of him.

BRACK. At one time they called him the hope of the family.

TESMAN. At one time, yes! But he has put an end to all that.

HEDDA. Who knows? [*With a slight smile.*] I hear they have reclaimed him up at Sheriff Elvsted's——

BRACK. And then this book that he has published——

TESMAN. Well, well, I hope to goodness they may find something for him to do. I have just written to him. I asked him to come and see us this evening, Hedda dear.

BRACK. But, my dear fellow, you are booked for my bachelors' party this evening. You promised on the pier last night.

HEDDA. Had you forgotten, Tesman?

TESMAN. Yes, I had utterly forgotten.

BRACK. But it doesn't matter, for you may be sure he won't come.

TESMAN. What makes you think that? Eh?

BRACK [*with a little hesitation, rising and resting his hands on the back of his chair*]. My dear Tesman—and you too, Mrs. Tesman—I think I ought not to keep you in the dark about something that—that——

TESMAN. That concerns Eilert——?

BRACK. Both you and him.

TESMAN. Well, my dear Judge, out with it.

BRACK. You must be prepared to find your appointment deferred longer than you desired or expected.

TESMAN [*jumping up uneasily*]. Is there some hitch about it? Eh?

BRACK. The nomination may perhaps be made conditional on the result of a competition——

TESMAN. Competition! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA [*leans farther back in the chair*]. Aha—aha!

TESMAN. But who can my competitor be? Surely not——?

BRACK. Yes, precisely—Eilert Lövborg.

TESMAN [*clasping his hands*]. No, no—it's quite inconceivable! Quite impossible! Eh?

BRACK. I'm—that is what it may come to, all the same.

TESMAN. Well but, Judge Brack—it would show the most incredible lack of consideration for me. [*Gesticulates with his arms.*] For—just think—I'm a married man. We have been married on the strength of these prospects, Hedda and I; and run deep into debt; and borrowed money from Aunt Julia too. Good heavens, they had as good as promised me the appointment. Eh?

BRACK. Well, well, well—no doubt you will get it in the end; only after a contest.

HEDDA [*immovable in her arm-chair*]. Fancy, Tesman, there will be a sort of sporting interest in that.

TESMAN. Why, my dearest Hedda, how can you be so indifferent about it.

HEDDA [*as before*] I am not at all indifferent. I am most eager to see who wins.

BRACK. In any case, Mrs. Tesman, it is best that you should know how matters stand. I mean—before you set about the little purchases I hear you are threatening.

HEDDA. This can make no difference.

BRACK. Indeed! Then I have no more to say. Good-bye! [*To* TESMAN.] I shall look in on my way back from my afternoon walk, and take you home with me.

TESMAN. Oh yes, yes—your news has quite upset me.

HEDDA [*reclining, holds out her hand*] Good-bye, Judge; and be sure you call in the afternoon

BRACK. Many thanks. Good-bye, good-bye!

TESMAN [*accompanying him to the door*]. Good-bye, my dear Judge! You must really excuse me—— [JUDGE BRACK *goes out by the hall door.*]

TESMAN [*crosses the room*]. Oh, Hedda—one should never rush into adventures. Eh?

HEDDA [*looks at him, smiling*]. Do you do that?

TESMAN. Yes, dear—there is no denying—it was adventurous to go and marry and set up house upon mere expectations.

HEDDA. Perhaps you are right there.

TESMAN. Well—at all events, we have our delightful home, Hedda! Fancy, the home we both dreamed of—the home we were in love with, I may almost say. Eh?

HEDDA [*rising slowly and wearily*]. It was part of our compact that we were to go into society—to keep open house.

TESMAN. Yes, if you only knew how I had been looking forward to it! Fancy—to see you as hostess—in a select circle? Eh? Well, well, well—for the present we shall have to get on without society, Hedda—only to invite Aunt Julia now and then.—Oh, I intended you to lead such an utterly different life, dear——!

HEDDA. Of course I cannot have my man in livery just yet.

TESMAN. Oh no, unfortunately. It would be out of the question for us to keep a footman, you know.

HEDDA. And the saddle-horse I was to have had——

TESMAN [*aghast*]. The saddle-horse!

HEDDA. ——I suppose I must not think of that now.

TESMAN. Good heavens, no!—that's as clear as daylight.

HEDDA [*goes up the room*]. Well, I shall have one thing at least to kill time with in the meanwhile.

TESMAN [*beaming*]. Oh, thank heaven for that! What is it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA [*in the middle doorway, looks at him with covert scorn*]. My pistols, George.

TESMAN [*in alarm*]. Your pistols!

HEDDA [*with cold eyes*]. General Gabler's pistols. [*She goes out through the inner room, to the left.*]

TESMAN [*rushes up to the middle doorway and calls after her*]: No, for heaven's sake, Hedda darling—don't touch those dangerous things! For my sake, Hedda! Eh?

ACT SECOND

The room at the TESMANS' *as in the first act, except that the piano has been removed, and an elegant little writing-table with book-shelves put in its place. A smaller table stands near the sofa at the left. Most of the bouquets have been taken away.* MRS. ELVSTED'S *bouquet is upon the large table in front.—It is afternoon.*

HEDDA, *dressed to receive callers, is alone in the room. She stands by the open glass door, loading a revolver. The fellow to it lies in an open pistol-case on the writing-table.*

HEDDA [*looks down the garden, and calls*]. So you are here again, Judge!

BRACK [*is heard calling from a distance*]. As you see, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA [*raises the pistol and points*]. Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!

BRACK [*calling unseen*]. No, no, no! Don't stand aiming at me!

HEDDA. This is what comes of sneaking in by the back way.* [*She fires.*]

BRACK [*nearer*]. Are you out of your senses——!

HEDDA. Dear me—did I happen to hit you?

BRACK [*still outside*]. I wish you would let these pranks alone!

HEDDA. Come in then, Judge.

[JUDGE BRACK, *dressed as though for a men's party, enters by the glass door. He carries a light overcoat over his arm.*

BRACK. What the deuce—haven't you tired of that sport, yet? What are you shooting at?

HEDDA. Oh, I am only firing in the air.

BRACK [*gently takes the pistol out of her hand*]. Allow me, madam! [*Looks at it.*] Ah—I know this pistol well! [*Looks around.*] Where is the case? Ah, here it is. [*Lays the pistol in it, and shuts it.*] Now we won't play at that game any more today.

HEDDA. Then what in heaven's name would you have me do with myself?

BRACK. Have you had no visitors?

HEDDA [*closing the glass door*]. Not one. I suppose all our set are still out of town.

BRACK. And is Tesman not at home either?

HEDDA [*at the writing-table, putting the pistol-case in a drawer which she shuts*]. No. He rushed off to his aunt's directly after lunch; he didn't expect you so early.

BRACK. H'm—how stupid of me not to have thought of that!

HEDDA [*turning her head to look at him*]. Why stupid?

BRACK. Because if I had thought of it I should have come a little—earlier.

HEDDA [*crossing the room*]. Then you would have found no one to receive you; for I have been in my room changing my dress ever since lunch.

BRACK And is there no sort of little chink that we could hold a parley through?

HEDDA. You have forgotten to arrange one.

BRACK. That was another piece of stupidity.

HEDDA. Well, we must just settle down here—and wait. Tesman is not likely to be back for some time yet.

BRACK Never mind; I shall not be impatient.

[HEDDA *seats herself in the corner of the sofa.* BRACK *lays his overcoat over the back of the nearest chair, and sits down, but keeps his hat in his hand. A short silence. They look at each other.*

HEDDA. Well?

BRACK [*in the same tone*]. Well?

HEDDA. I spoke first.

BRACK [*bending a little forward*]. Come, let us have a cozy little chat, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA [*leaning further back in the sofa*]. Does it not seem like a whole eternity since our last talk? Of course I don't count those few words yesterday evening and this morning.

BRACK. You mean since our last confidential talk? Our last tête-à-tête?

HEDDA. Well, yes—since you put it so.

BRACK. Not a day has passed but I have wished that you were home again.

HEDDA. And I have done nothing but wish the same thing.

BRACK. You? Really, Mrs. Hedda? And I thought you had been enjoying your tour so much!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, you may be sure of that!

BRACK. But Tesman's letters spoke of nothing but happiness.

HEDDA. Oh, Tesman! You see, he thinks nothing so delightful as grubbing in libraries and making copies of old parchments, or whatever you call them.

* Bagueje means both "back ways" and "underhand courses."

BRACK [*with a spice of malice*]. Well, that is his vocation in life—or part of it at any rate.

HEDDA. Yes, of course; and no doubt when it's your vocation—— But *I*! Oh, my dear Mr. Brack, how mortally bored I have been.

BRACK [*sympathetically*]. Do you really say so? In downright earnest?

HEDDA. Yes, you can surely understand it——! To go for six whole months without meeting a soul that knew anything of our circle, or could talk about the things we are interested in.

BRACK. Yes, yes—I too should feel that a deprivation.

HEDDA. And then, what I found most intolerable of all——

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. ——was being everlastingly in the company of—one and the same person——

BRACK [*with a nod of assent*]. Morning, noon, and night, yes—at all possible times and seasons.

HEDDA. I said "everlastingly"

BRACK. Just so But I should have thought, with our excellent Tesman, one could——

HEDDA. Tesman is—a specialist, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Undeniably.

HEDDA. And specialists are not at all amusing to travel with. Not in the long run at any rate.

BRACK. Not even—the specialist one happens to love?

HEDDA. Faugh—don't use that sickening word!

BRACK [*taken aback*]. What do you say, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA [*half laughing, half irritated*]. You should just try it! To hear of nothing but the history of civilization, morning, noon, and night——

BRACK. Everlastingly.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes! And then all this about the domestic industry of the Middle Ages——! That's the most disgusting part of it!

BRACK [*looks searchingly at her*]. But tell me—in that case, how am I to understand your——? H'm——

HEDDA. My accepting George Tesman, you mean?

BRACK. Well, let us put it so.

HEDDA. Good heavens, do you see anything so wonderful in that?

BRACK. Yes and no—Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I had positively danced myself tired, my dear Judge. My day was done—— [*With a slight shudder.*] Oh no—I won't say that; nor think it either!

BRACK. You have assuredly no reason to.

HEDDA. Oh, reasons—— [*Watching him closely.*] And George Tesman—after all, you must admit that he is correctness itself

BRACK. His correctness and respectability are beyond all question.

HEDDA. And I don't see anything absolutely ridiculous about him.—Do you?

BRACK. Ridiculous? N—no—I shouldn't exactly say so——

HEDDA. Well—and his powers of research, at all events, are untiring.—I see no reason why he should not one day come to the front, after all.

BRACK [*looks at her hesitatingly*]. I thought that you, like every one else, expected him to attain the highest distinction.

HEDDA [*with an expression of fatigue*]. Yes, so I did. —And then, since he was bent, at all hazards, on being allowed to provide for me—I really don't know why I should not have accepted his offer?

BRACK. No—if you look at it in that light——

HEDDA. It was more than my other adorers were prepared to do for me, my dear Judge.

BRACK [*laughing*]. Well, I can't answer for all the rest; but as for myself, you know quite well that I have always entertained a—a certain respect for the marriage tie—for marriage as an institution, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA [*jestingly*]. Oh, I assure you I have never cherished any hopes with respect to you.

BRACK. All I require is a pleasant and intimate interior, where I can make myself useful in every way, and am free to come and go as—as a trusted friend——

HEDDA. Of the master of the house, do you mean?

BRACK [*bowing*]. Frankly—of the mistress first of all; but of course of the master, too, in the second place. Such a triangular friendship—if I may call it so—is really a great convenience for all parties, let me tell you.

HEDDA Yes, I have many a time longed for some one to make a third on our travels. Oh—those railway-carriage tête-à-têtes——!

BRACK. Fortunately your wedding journey is over now.

HEDDA [*shaking her head*]. Not by a long—long way. I have only arrived at a station on the line.

BRACK. Well, then the passengers jump out and move about a little, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I never jump out.

BRACK. Really?

HEDDA. No—because there is always some one standing by to——

BRACK [*laughing*]. To look at your ankles, do you mean?

HEDDA. Precisely.

BRACK. Well but, dear me——

HEDDA [*with a gesture of repulsion*]. I won't have it. I would rather keep my seat where I happen to be—and continue the tête-à-tête.

BRACK. But suppose a third person were to jump in and join the couple.

HEDDA. Ah—that is quite another matter!

BRACK. A trusted, sympathetic friend——

HEDDA. ——with a fund of conversation on all sorts of lively topics——

BRACK. ——and not the least bit of a specialist!

HEDDA [*with an audible sigh*]. Yes, that would be a relief indeed.

BRACK [*hears the front door open, and glances in that direction*]. The triangle is completed.

HEDDA [*half aloud*]. And on goes the train.

[GEORGE TESMAN, *in a gray walking-suit, with a soft felt hat, enters from the hall. He has a number of unbound books under his arm and in his pockets.*

TESMAN [*goes up to the table beside the corner settee*]. Ouf—what a load for a warm day—all these books. [*Lays them on the table.*] I'm positively perspiring, Hedda. Hallo—are you there already, my dear Judge? Eh? Berta didn't tell me.

BRACK [*rising*]. I came in through the garden.

HEDDA. What books have you got there?

TESMAN [*stands looking them through*]. Some new books on my special subjects—quite indispensable to me.

HEDDA. Your special subjects?

BRACK. Yes, books on his special subjects, Mrs. Tesman. [BRACK *and* HEDDA *exchange a confidential smile.*]

HEDDA. Do you need still more books on your special subjects?

TESMAN. Yes, my dear Hedda, one can never have too many of them. Of course one must keep up with all that is written and published.

HEDDA. Yes, I suppose one must.

TESMAN [*searching among his books*]. And look here—I have got hold of Eilert Lovborg's new book too. [*Offering it to her.*] Perhaps you would like to glance through it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, thank you. Or rather—afterwards perhaps.

TESMAN. I looked into it a little on the way home.

BRACK. Well, what do you think of it—as a specialist?

TESMAN. I think it shows quite remarkable soundness of judgment. He never wrote like that before. [*Putting the books together.*] Now I shall take all these into my study. I'm longing to cut the leaves——! And then I must change my clothes. [*To* BRACK.] I suppose we needn't start just yet? Eh?

BRACK. Oh, dear no—there is not the slightest hurry.

TESMAN. Well then, I will take my time. [*Is going with his books, but stops in the doorway and turns.*] By-the-bye, Hedda—Aunt Julia is not coming this evening.

HEDDA. Not coming? Is it that affair of the bonnet that keeps her away?

TESMAN. Oh, not at all. How could you think such a thing of Aunt Julia? Just fancy——! The fact is, Aunt Rina is very ill.

HEDDA. She always is.

TESMAN. Yes, but today she is much worse than usual, poor dear.

HEDDA. Oh, then it's only natural that her sister should remain with her. I must bear my disappointment.

TESMAN. And you can't imagine, dear, how delighted Aunt Julia seemed to be—because you had come home looking so flourishing!

HEDDA [*half aloud, rising*]. Oh, those everlasting aunts!

TESMAN. What?

HEDDA [*going to the glass door*]. Nothing.

TESMAN. Oh, all right. [*He goes through the inner room, out to the right.*]

BRACK. What bonnet were you talking about?

HEDDA. Oh, it was a little episode with Miss Tesman this morning. She had laid down her bonnet on the chair there—[*Looks at him and smiles.*]—And I pretended to think it was the servant's.

BRACK [*shaking his head*]. Now my dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do such a thing? To that excellent old lady, too!

HEDDA [*nervously crossing the room*]. Well, you see—these impulses come over me all of a sudden; and I cannot resist them. [*Throws herself down in the easy-chair by the stove.*] Oh, I don't know how to explain it.

BRACK [*behind the easy-chair*]. You are not really happy—that is at the bottom of it.

HEDDA [*looking straight before her*]. I know of no reason why I should be—happy. Perhaps you can give me one?

BRACK. Well—amongst other things, because you have got exactly the home you had set your heart on.

HEDDA [*looks up at him and laughs*]. Do you too believe in that legend?

BRACK. Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA. Oh, yes, there is something in it.

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. There is this in it, that I made use of Tesman to see me home from evening parties last summer——

BRACK. I, unfortunately, had to go quite a different way.

HEDDA. That's true. I know you were going a different way last summer.

BRACK [*laughing*]. Oh fie, Mrs. Hedda! Well, then—you and Tesman——?

HEDDA. Well, we happened to pass here one evening; Tesman, poor fellow, was writhing in the agony of having to find conversation; so I took pity on the learned man——

BRACK [*smiles doubtfully*]. You took pity? H'm——

HEDDA. Yes, I really did. And so—to help him out of his torment—I happened to say, in pure thoughtlessness, that I should like to live in this villa.

BRACK. No more than that?

HEDDA. Not that evening.

BRACK. But afterwards?

HEDDA. Yes, my thoughtlessness had consequences, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Unfortunately that too often happens, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Thanks! So you see it was this enthusiasm for Secretary Falk's villa that first constituted a bond of sympathy between George Tesman and me. From that came our engagement and our marriage, and our wedding journey, and all the rest of it. Well, well, my dear Judge—as you make your bed so you must lie, I could almost say.

BRACK. This is exquisite! And you really cared not a rap about it all the time.

HEDDA. No, heaven knows I didn't.

BRACK. But now? Now that we have made it so homelike for you?

HEDDA. Ugh—the rooms all seem to smell of lavender and dried love-leaves.—But perhaps it's Aunt Julia that has brought that scent with her.

BRACK [*laughingly*]. No, I think it must be a legacy from the late Mrs. Secretary Falk.

HEDDA. Yes, there is an odor of mortality about it. It reminds me of a bouquet—the day after the ball. [*Clasps her hands behind her head, leans back in her chair and looks at him.*] Oh, my dear Judge—you cannot imagine how horribly I shall bore myself here.

BRACK. Why should not you, too, find some sort of vocation in life, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. A vocation—that should attract me?

BRACK. If possible, of course.

HEDDA. Heaven knows what sort of a vocation that could be. I often wonder whether—— [*Breaking off.*] But that would never do either.

BRACK. Who can tell? Let me hear what it is.

HEDDA. Whether I might not get Tesman to go into politics, I mean.

BRACK [*laughing*]. Tesman? No, really now, political life is not the thing for him—not at all in his line.

HEDDA. No, I daresay not.—But if I could get him into it all the same?

BRACK. Why—what satisfaction could you find in that? If he is not fitted for that sort of thing, why should you want to drive him into it?

HEDDA. Because I am bored, I tell you! [*After a pause.*] So you think it quite out of the question that Tesman should ever get into the ministry?

BRACK. H'm—you see, my dear Mrs. Hedda—to get into the ministry, he would have to be a tolerably rich man.

HEDDA [*rising impatiently*]. Yes, there we have it! It is this genteel poverty I have managed to drop into——! [*Crosses the room.*] That is what makes life so pitiable! So utterly ludicrous!—For that's what it is.

BRACK. Now *I* should say the fault lay elsewhere.

HEDDA. Where, then?

BRACK. You have never gone through any really stimulating experience.

HEDDA. Anything serious, you mean?

BRACK. Yes, you may call it so. But now you may perhaps have one in store.

HEDDA [*tossing her head*]. Oh, you're thinking of the annoyances about this wretched professorship! But that must be Tesman's own affair. I assure you I shall not waste a thought upon it.

BRACK. No, no, I daresay not. But suppose now that what people call—in elegant language—a solemn responsibility were to come upon you? [*Smiling.*] A new responsibility, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA [*angrily*]. Be quiet! Nothing of that sort will ever happen!

BRACK [*warily*]. We will speak of this again a year hence—at the very outside.

HEDDA [*curtly*]. I have no turn for anything of the sort, Judge Brack. No responsibilities for me!

BRACK. Are you so unlike the generality of women as to have no turn for duties which——?

HEDDA [*beside the glass door*]. Oh, be quiet, I tell you!—I often think there is only one thing in the world I have any turn for.

BRACK [*drawing near to her*]. And what is that, if I may ask?

HEDDA [*stands looking out*]. Boring myself to death. Now you know it. [*Turns, looks towards the inner room, and laughs.*] Yes, as I thought! Here comes the Professor.

BRACK [*softly, in a tone of warning*]. Come, come, come, Mrs. Hedda!

[GEORGE TESMAN, *dressed for the party, with his gloves and hat in his hand, enters from the right through the inner room.*

TESMAN. Hedda, has no message come from Eilert Lovborg? Eh?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Then you'll see he'll be here presently.

BRACK. Do you really think he will come?

TESMAN. Yes, I am almost sure of it. For what you were telling us this morning must have been a mere floating rumor.

BRACK. You think so?

TESMAN. At any rate, Aunt Julia said she did not believe for a moment that he would ever stand in my way again. Fancy that!

BRACK. Well then, that's all right.

TESMAN [*placing his hat and gloves on a chair on the right*]. Yes, but you must really let me wait for him as long as possible.

BRACK. We have plenty of time yet. None of my guests will arrive before seven or half-past.

TESMAN. Then meanwhile we can keep Hedda company, and see what happens. Eh?

HEDDA [*placing* BRACK'S *hat and overcoat upon the corner settee*]. And at the worst Mr. Lovborg can remain here with me.

BRACK [*offering to take his things*]. Oh, allow me, Mrs. Tesman!—What do you mean by "At the worst"?

HEDDA. If he won't go with you and Tesman.

TESMAN [*looks dubiously at her*]. But, Hedda dear—do you think it would quite do for him to remain with you? Eh? Remember, Aunt Julia can't come.

HEDDA. No, but Mrs. Elvsted is coming. We three can have a cup of tea together.

TESMAN. Oh, yes, that will be all right.

BRACK [*smiling*]. And that would perhaps be the safest plan for him.

HEDDA. Why so?

BRACK. Well, you know, Mrs. Tesman, how you used to gird at my little bachelor parties. You declared they were adapted only for men of the strictest principles.

HEDDA. But no doubt Mr. Lovborg's principles are strict enough now. A converted sinner—— [BERTA *appears at the hall door.*]

BERTA. There's a gentleman asking if you are at home, ma'am——

HEDDA. Well, show him in.

TESMAN [*softly*]. I'm sure it is he! Fancy that!

[EILERT LÖVBORG *enters from the hall. He is slim and lean; of the same age as* TESMAN, *but looks older and somewhat worn-out. His hair and beard are of a blackish brown, his face long and pale, but with patches of color on the cheek-bones. He is dressed in a well-cut black visiting suit, quite new. He has dark gloves and a silk hat. He stops near the door, and makes a rapid bow, seeming somewhat embarrassed.*

TESMAN [*goes up to him and shakes him warmly by the hand*]. Well, my dear Eilert—so at last we meet again!

EILERT LOVBORG [*speaks in a subdued voice*]. Thanks for your letter, Tesman. [*Approaching* HEDDA.] Will you too shake hands with me, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA [*taking his hand*]. I am glad to see you, Mr. Lovborg. [*With a motion of her hand.*] I don't know whether you two gentlemen——?

LOVBORG [*bowing slightly*]. Judge Brack, I think.

BRACK [*doing likewise*]. Oh, yes,—in the old days——

TESMAN [*to* LOVBORG, *with his hands on his shoulders*]. And now you must make yourself entirely at home, Eilert! Mustn't he, Hedda?—For I hear you are going to settle in town again? Eh?

LOVBORG. Yes, I am.

TESMAN. Quite right, quite right. Let me tell you, I have got hold of your new book; but I haven't had time to read it yet.

LOVBORG. You may spare yourself the trouble.

TESMAN. Why so?

LOVBORG. Because there is very little in it.

TESMAN. Just fancy—how can you say so?

BRACK. But it has been very much praised, I hear.

LOVBORG. That was what I wanted; so I put nothing into the book but what everyone would agree with.

BRACK. Very wise of you.

TESMAN. Well but, my dear Eilert——!

LOVBORG. For now I mean to win myself a position again—to make a fresh start.

TESMAN [*a little embarrassed*]. Ah, that is what you wish to do? Eh?

LOVBORG [*smiling, lays down his hat, and draws a packet, wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket*]. But when this one appears, George Tesman, you will have to read it. For this is the real book—the book I have put my true self into.

TESMAN. Indeed? And what is it?

LOVBORG. It is the continuation.

TESMAN. The continuation? Of what?

LOVBORG. Of the book.

TESMAN. Of the new book?

LOVBORG. Of course.

TESMAN. Why, my dear Eilert—does it not come down to our own days?

LOVBORG. Yes, it does; and this one deals with the future.

TESMAN. With the future! But, good heavens, we know nothing of the future!

LOVBORG. No; but there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same. [*Opens the packet.*] Look here——

TESMAN. Why, that's not your handwriting.

LOVBORG. I dictated it. [*Turning over the pages.*] It falls into two sections. The first deals with the civilizing forces of the future. And here is the second—[*running through the pages towards the end*]—forecasting the probable line of development.

TESMAN. How odd now! I should never have thought of writing anything of that sort.

HEDDA [*at the glass door, drumming on the pane*]. H'm—I daresay not.

LOVBORG [*replacing the manuscript in its paper and laying the packet on the table*]. I brought it, thinking I might read you a little of it this evening.

TESMAN. That was very good of you, Eilert, But this evening——? [*Looking at* BRACK.] I don't quite see how we can manage it——

LOVBORG. Well then, some other time. There is no hurry.

BRACK. I must tell you, Mr. Lovborg—there is a little gathering at my house this evening—mainly in honor of Tesman, you know——

LOVBORG [*looking for his hat*]. Oh—then I won't detain you——

BRACK. No, but listen—will you not do me the favor of joining us?

LOVBORG [*curtly and decidedly*]. No, I can't—thank you very much.

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—do! We shall be quite a select little circle. And I assure you we shall have a "lively time," as Mrs. Hed—as Mrs. Tesman says.

LOVBORG. I have no doubt of it. But nevertheless——

BRACK. And then you might bring your manuscript with you, and read it to Tesman at my house. I could give you a room to yourselves.

TESMAN. Yes, think of that, Eilert,—why shouldn't you? Eh?

HEDDA [*hesitating*]. But, Tesman, if Mr. Lövborg would really rather not! I am sure Mr. Lovborg is much more inclined to remain here and have supper with me.

LOVBORG [*looking at her*]. With you, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. And with Mrs. Elvsted.

LOVBORG. Ah—— [*Lightly.*] I saw her for a moment this morning.

HEDDA. Did you? Well, she is coming this evening. So you see you are almost bound to remain, Mr. Lovborg, or she will have no one to see her home.

LOVBORG. That's true. Many thanks, Mrs. Tesman—in that case I will remain.

HEDDA. Then I have one or two orders to give the servant——

[*She goes to the hall door and rings.* BERTA *enters.* HEDDA *talks to her in a whisper, and points toward the inner room.* BERTA *nods and goes out again.*

TESMAN [*at the same time, to* LOVBORG]. Tell me, Eilert—is it this new subject—the future—that you are going to lecture about?

LOVBORG. Yes.

TESMAN. They told me at the bookseller's, that you are going to deliver a course of lectures this autumn.

LOVBORG. That is my intention. I hope you won't take it ill, Tesman.

TESMAN. Oh no, not in the least! But——?

LÖVBORG. I can quite understand that it must be disagreeable to you.

TESMAN [*cast down*]. Oh, I can't expect you, out of consideration for me, to——

LÖVBORG. But I shall wait till you have received your appointment.

TESMAN. Will you wait? Yes, but—yes, but—are you not going to compete with me? Eh?

LÖVBORG. No; it is only the moral victory I care for.

TESMAN. Why, bless me—then Aunt Julia was right after all! Oh yes—I knew it! Hedda! Just fancy—Eilert Lovborg is not going to stand in our way!

HEDDA [*curtly*]. Our way? Pray leave me out of the question.

[*She goes up towards the inner room, where* BERTA *is placing a tray with decanters and glasses on the table.* HEDDA *nods approval, and comes forward again.* BERTA *goes out.*

TESMAN [*at the same time*]. And you, Judge Brack—what do you say to this? Eh?

BRACK. Well, I say that a moral victory—h'm—may be all very fine——

TESMAN. Yes, certainly. But all the same——

HEDDA [*looking at* TESMAN *with a cold smile*]. You stand there looking as if you were thunderstruck——

TESMAN. Yes—so I am—I almost think——

BRACK. Don't you see, Mrs. Tesman, a thunderstorm has just passed over?

HEDDA [*pointing towards the inner room*]. Will you not take a glass of cold punch, gentlemen?

BRACK [*looking at his watch*]. A stirrup-cup? Yes, it wouldn't come amiss.

TESMAN. A capital idea, Hedda! Just the thing! Now that the weight has been taken off my mind——

HEDDA. Will you not join them, Mr. Lövborg?

LOVBORG [*with a gesture of refusal*]. No, thank you. Nothing for me.

BRACK. Why, bless me—cold punch is surely not poison.

LOVBORG. Perhaps not for everyone.

HEDDA I will keep Mr. Lovborg company in the meantime.

TESMAN. Yes, yes, Hedda dear, do.

[*He and* BRACK *go into the inner room, seat themselves, drink punch, smoke cigarettes, and carry on a lively conversation during what follows.* EILERT LOVBORG *remains beside the stove.* HEDDA *goes to the writing-table.*

HEDDA [*raising her voice a little*]. Do you care to look at some photographs, Mr. Lovborg? You know Tesman and I made a tour in the Tyrol on our way home?

[*She takes up an album, and places it on the table beside the sofa, in the further corner of which she seats herself.* EILERT LÖVBORG *approaches, stops, and looks at her. Then he takes a chair and seats himself at her left, with his back towards the inner room.*

HEDDA [*opening the album*]. Do you see this range of mountains, Mr. Lovborg? It's the Ortler group. Tesman has written the name underneath. Here it is: "The Ortler group near Meran."

LOVBORG [*who has never taken his eyes off her, says softly and slowly*]: Hedda—Gabler!

HEDDA [*glancing hastily at him*]. Ah, Hush!

LOVBORG [*repeats softly*]. Hedda Gabler!

HEDDA [*looking at the album*]. That was my name in the old days—when we two knew each other.

LOVBORG. And I must teach myself never to say Hedda Gabler again—never, as long as I live.

HEDDA [*still turning over the pages*]. Yes, you must. And I think you ought to practice in time. The sooner the better, I should say.

LOVBORG [*in a tone of indignation*]. Hedda Gabler married? And married to—George Tesman!

HEDDA. Yes—so the world goes.

LOVBORG. Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you* throw yourself away!

HEDDA [*looks sharply at him*]. What? I can't allow this!

LOVBORG. What do you mean? [TESMAN *comes into the room and goes toward the sofa.*]

HEDDA [*hears him coming and says in an indifferent tone*]. And this is a view from the Val d'Ampezzo, Mr. Lövborg. Just look at these peaks! [*Looks affectionately up at* TESMAN.] What's the name of these curious peaks, dear?

TESMAN. Let me see? Oh, those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA. Yes, that's it!—Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lovborg.

TESMAN. Hedda dear,—I only wanted to ask whether I shouldn't bring you a little punch after all? For yourself at any rate—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, do, please; and perhaps a few biscuits.

TESMAN. No cigarettes?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Very well.

[*He goes into the inner room and out to the right.* BRACK *sits in the inner room, and keeps an eye from time to time on* HEDDA *and* LOVBORG.

LOVBORG [*softly, as before*]. Answer me, Hedda—how could you go and do this?

HEDDA [*apparently absorbed in the album*]. If you continue to say *du* to me I won't talk to you.

LOVBORG May I not say *du* when we are alone?

HEDDA. No. You may think it; but you mustn't say it.

LOVBORG. Ah, I understand. It is an offense against George Tesman, whom you†—love.

HEDDA [*glances at him and smiles*]. Love? What an idea!

LOVBORG. You don't love him then!

* He uses the familiar *du*.

† From this point onward Lovborg uses the formal *De*.

HEDDA. But I won't hear of any sort of unfaithfulness! Remember that.

LÖVBORG. Hedda—answer me one thing——

HEDDA. Hush! [TESMAN *enters with a small tray from the inner room.*]

TESMAN. Here you are! Isn't this tempting? [*He puts the tray on the table.*]

HEDDA. Why do you bring it yourself?

TESMAN [*filling the glasses*]. Because I think it's such fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you have poured out two glasses. Mr. Lovborg said he wouldn't have any——

TESMAN. No, but Mrs. Elvsted will soon be here, won't she?

HEDDA. Yes, by-the-by—Mrs. Elvsted——

TESMAN. Had you forgotten her? Eh?

HEDDA. We were so absorbed in these photographs. [*Shows him a picture.*] Do you remember this little village?

TESMAN. Oh, it's that one just below the Brenner Pass. It was there we passed the night——

HEDDA. ——and met that lively party of tourists.

TESMAN. Yes, that was the place. Fancy—if we could only have had you with us, Eilert! Eh? [*He returns to the inner room and sits beside* BRACK.]

LÖVBORG. Answer me this one thing, Hedda——

HEDDA. Well?

LÖVBORG. Was there no love in your friendship for me either? Not a spark—not a tinge of love in it?

HEDDA. I wonder if there was? To me it seems as though we were two good comrades—two thoroughly intimate friends. [*Smilingly.*] You especially were frankness itself.

LOVBORG. It was you that made me so.

HEDDA. As I look back upon it all, I think there was really something beautiful, something fascinating—something daring—in—in that secret intimacy—that comradeship which no living creature so much as dreamed of.

LOVBORG. Yes, yes, Hedda! Was there not?—When I used to come to your father's in the afternoon—and the General sat over at the window reading his papers—with his back towards us——

HEDDA. And we two on the corner sofa——

LOVBORG. Always with the same illustrated paper before us——

HEDDA. For want of an album, yes.

LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda, and when I made my confessions to you—told you about myself, things that at that time no one else knew! There I would sit and tell you of my escapades—my days and nights of devilment. Oh, Hedda—what was the power in you that forced me to confess these things?

HEDDA. Do you think it was any power in me?

LOVBORG. How else can I explain it? And all those—those roundabout questions you used to put to me——

HEDDA. Which you understood so particularly well——

LOVBORG. How could you sit and question me like that? Question me quite frankly——

HEDDA. In roundabout terms, please observe.

LÖVBORG. Yes, but frankly nevertheless. Cross-question me about—all that sort of thing?

HEDDA. And how could you answer, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG. Yes, that is just what I can't understand—in looking back upon it. But tell me now, Hedda—was there not love at the bottom of our friendship? On your side, did you not feel as though you might purge my stains away if I made you my confessor? Was it not so?

HEDDA. No, not quite.

LOVBORG. What was your motive, then?

HEDDA. Do you think it quite incomprehensible that a young girl—when it can be done—without any one knowing——

LOVBORG. Well?

HEDDA. ——should be glad to have a peep, now and then, into a world which——

LOVBORG. Which——?

HEDDA. ——which she is forbidden to know anything about?

LOVBORG. So that was it?

HEDDA. Partly. Partly—I almost think.

LOVBORG. Comradeship in the thirst for life. But why should not that, at any rate, have continued?

HEDDA. The fault was yours.

LOVBORG. It was you that broke with me.

HEDDA. Yes, when our friendship threatened to develop into something more serious. Shame upon you, Eilert Lovborg! How could you think of wronging your—your frank comrade?

LOVBORG [*clenching his hands*]. Oh, why did you not carry out your threat? Why did you not shoot me down?

HEDDA. Because I have such a dread of scandal.

LOVBORG. Yes, Hedda, you are a coward at heart.

HEDDA. A terrible coward. [*Changing her tone.*] But it was a lucky thing for you. And now you have found ample consolation at the Elvsteds'.

LOVBORG. I know what Thea has confided to you.

HEDDA. And perhaps you have confided to her something about us?

LOVBORG. Not a word. She is too stupid to understand anything of that sort.

HEDDA. Stupid?

LOVBORG. She is stupid about matters of that sort.

HEDDA. And I am cowardly. [*Bends over towards him, without looking him in the face, and says more softly*] But now I will confide something to you.

LOVBORG [*eagerly*]. Well?

HEDDA. The fact that I dared not shoot you down——

LOVBORG. Yes!

HEDDA. ——that was not my most arrant cowardice—that evening.

LOVBORG [*looks at her a moment, understands, and whispers passionately*]. Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I begin to see a hidden reason beneath our comradeship!

You* and I——! After all, then, it was your craving for life——

HEDDA [*softly, with a sharp glance*]. Take care! Believe nothing of the sort!

[*Twilight has begun to fall. The hall door is opened from without by* BERTA.

HEDDA [*closes the album with a bang and calls smilingly*]: Ah, at last! My darling Thea,—come along!

[MRS. ELVSTED *enters from the hall. She is in evening dress. The door is closed behind her.*

HEDDA [*on the sofa, stretches out her arms towards her*]. My sweet Thea—you can't think how I have been longing for you!

[MRS. ELVSTED, *in passing, exchanges slight salutations with the gentlemen in the inner room, then goes up to the table and gives* HEDDA *her hands.* EILERT LOVBORG *has risen. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *greet each other with a silent nod.*

MRS. ELVSTED. Ought I to go in and talk to your husband for a moment?

HEDDA. Oh, not at all. Leave those two alone. They will soon be going.

MRS. ELVSTED. Are they going out?

HEDDA. Yes, to a supper-party.

MRS. ELVSTED [*quickly, to* LOVBORG]. Not you?

LOVBORG. No.

HEDDA. Mr. Lövborg remains with us.

MRS. ELVSTED [*takes a chair and is about to seat herself at his side*]. Oh, how nice it is here!

HEDDA. No, thank you, my little Thea! Not there! You'll be good enough to come over here to me. I will sit between you.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, just as you please.

[*She goes around the table and seats herself on the sofa on* HEDDA's *right.* LOVBORG *reseats himself on his chair.*

LÖVBORG [*after a short pause, to* HEDDA]. Is not she lovely to look at?

HEDDA [*lightly stroking her hair*]. Only to look at?

LÖVBORG. Yes. For we two—she and I—we are two real comrades. We have absolute faith in each other; so we can sit and talk with perfect frankness——

HEDDA. Not roundabout, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG. Well——

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly clinging close to* HEDDA]. Oh, how happy I am, Hedda; for, only think, he says I have inspired him too.

HEDDA [*looks at her with a smile*]. Ah! Does he say that, dear?

LÖVBORG. And then she is so brave, Mrs Tesman!

MRS. ELVSTED. Good heavens—am I brave?

LOVBORG. Exceedingly—where your comrade is concerned.

HEDDA. Ah, yes—courage! If one only had that!

LOVBORG. What then? What do you mean?

HEDDA. Then life would perhaps be livable, after all. [*With a sudden change of tone.*] But now, my dearest Thea, you really must have a glass of cold punch.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, thanks—I never take anything of that kind.

HEDDA. Well then, you, Mr. Lovborg.

LOVBORG. Nor I, thank you.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he doesn't either.

HEDDA [*looks fixedly at him*]. But if I say you shall?

LOVBORG. It would be no use.

HEDDA [*laughing*]. Then I, poor creature, have no sort of power over you?

LOVBORG. Not in that respect.

HEDDA. But seriously, I think you ought to—for your own sake.

MRS. ELVSTED. Why, Hedda——!

LÖVBORG. How so?

HEDDA. Or rather on account of other people.

LOVBORG. Indeed?

HEDDA. Otherwise people might be apt to suspect that—in your heart of hearts—you did not feel quite secure—quite confident of yourself.

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly*]. Oh please, Hedda——

LOVBORG. People may suspect what they like—for the present.

MRS. ELVSTED [*joyfully*]. Yes, let them!

HEDDA. I saw it plainly in Judge Brack's face a moment ago.

LÖVBORG. What did you see?

HEDDA. His contemptuous smile, when you dared not go with them into the inner room.

LOVBORG. Dared not? Of course I preferred to stop here and talk to you.

MRS. ELVSTED. What could be more natural, Hedda?

HEDDA. But the Judge could not guess that. And I saw, too, the way he smiled and glanced at Tesman when you dared not accept his invitation to this wretched little supper-party of his.

LOVBORG. Dared not! Do you say I dared not?

HEDDA. *I* don't say so. But that was how Judge Brack understood it.

LOVBORG. Well, let him.

HEDDA. Then you are not going with them?

LOVBORG. I will stay here with you and Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, Hedda—how can you doubt that?

HEDDA [*smiles and nods approvingly to* LOVBORG]. Firm as a rock! Faithful to your principles, now and forever! Ah, that is how a man should be! [*Turns to* MRS. ELVSTED *and caresses her.*] Well now, what did I tell you, when you came to us this morning in such a state of distraction——

LOVBORG [*surprised*]. Distraction!

MRS. ELVSTED [*terrified*]. Hedda—oh Hedda——!

HEDDA. You can see for yourself; you haven't the slightest reason to be in such mortal terror——[*Interrupting herself.*] There! Now we can all three enjoy ourselves!

LOVBORG [*who has given a start*]. Ah—what is all this, Mrs. Tesman?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh my God, Hedda! What are you saying? What are you doing?

* In this speech he once more says *du*. Hedda addresses him throughout as *De*

HEDDA. Don't get excited! That horrid Judge Brack is sitting watching you.

LÖVBORG. So she was in mortal terror! On my account!

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly and piteously*]. Oh, Hedda—now you have ruined everything!

LOVBORG [*looks fixedly at her for a moment. His face is distorted*]. So that was my comrade's frank confidence in me?

MRS. ELVSTED [*imploringly*]. Oh, my dearest friend—only let me tell you——

LÖVBORG [*takes one of the glasses of punch, raises it to his lips, and says in a low, husky voice*]. Your health, Thea!

[*He empties the glass, puts it down, and takes the second.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly*]. Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you do this?

HEDDA. *I* do it? *I?* Are you crazy?

LOVBORG. Here's to your health too, Mrs. Tesman. Thanks for the truth. Hurrah for the truth!

[*He empties the glass and is about to re-fill it.*

HEDDA [*lays her hand on his arm*]. Come, come—no more for the present. Remember you are going out to supper.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no!

HEDDA. Hush! They are sitting watching you

LOVBORG [*putting down the glass*]. Now, Thea—tell me the truth——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes.

LOVBORG. Did your husband know that you had come after me?

MRS. ELVSTED [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, Hedda—do you hear what he is asking?

LOVBORG. Was it arranged between you and him that you were to come to town and look after me? Perhaps it was the Sheriff himself that urged you to come? Aha, my dear—no doubt he wanted my help in his office! Or was it at the card-table that he missed me?

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly, in agony*]. Oh, Lovborg, Lövborg——!

LOVBORG [*seizes a glass and is on the point of filling it*]. Here's a glass for the old Sheriff too!

HEDDA [*preventing him*]. No more just now. Remember you have to read your manuscript to Tesman.

LOVBORG [*calmly, putting down the glass*]. It was stupid of me all this, Thea—to take it in this way, I mean. Don't be angry with me, my dear, dear comrade. You shall see—both you and the others—that if I was fallen once—now I have risen again! Thanks to you, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED [*radiant with joy*]. Oh, heaven be praised——!

[BRACK *has in the meantime looked at his watch. He and* TESMAN *rise and come into the drawing-room.*

BRACK [*takes his hat and overcoat*]. Well, Mrs. Tesman, our time has come.

HEDDA. I suppose it has.

LOVBORG [*rising*]. Mine too, Judge Brack.

MRS. ELVSTED [*softly and imploringly*]. Oh, Lövborg, don't do it!

HEDDA [*pinching her arm*]. They can hear you!

MRS. ELVSTED [*with a suppressed shriek*]. Ow!

LOVBORG [*to* BRACK]. You were good enough to invite me.

BRACK. Well, are you coming after all?

LOVBORG. Yes, many thanks.

BRACK. I'm delighted——

LOVBORG [*to* TESMAN, *putting the parcel of MS. in his pocket*]. I should like to show you one or two things before I send it to the printers.

TESMAN. Fancy—that will be delightful. But, Hedda dear, how is Mrs. Elvsted to get home? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, that can be managed somehow.

LOVBORG [*looking towards the ladies*]. Mrs. Elvsted? Of course, I'll come again and fetch her. [*Approaching.*] At ten or thereabouts, Mrs. Tesman? Will that do?

HEDDA. Certainly. That will do capitally.

TESMAN. Well, then, that's all right. But you must not expect me so early, Hedda.

HEDDA. Oh, you may stop as long—as long as ever you please.

MRS. ELVSTED [*trying to conceal her anxiety*]. Well then, Mr. Lövborg—I shall remain here until you come.

LOVBORG [*with his hat in his hand*]. Pray do, Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. And now off goes the excursion train, gentlemen! I hope we shall have a lively time, as a certain fair lady puts it.

HEDDA. Ah, if only the fair lady could be present unseen——!

BRACK. Why unseen?

HEDDA. In order to hear a little of your liveliness at first hand, Judge Brack.

BRACK [*laughingly*]. I should not advise the fair lady to try it.

TESMAN [*also laughing*]. Come, you're a nice one Hedda! Fancy that!

BRACK. Well, good-bye, good-bye, ladies.

LOVBORG [*bowing*]. About ten o'clock, then.

[BRACK, LOVBORG, *and* TESMAN *go out by the hall door. At the same time* BERTA *enters from the inner room with a lighted lamp, which she places on the dining-room table; she goes out by the way she came.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*who has risen and is wandering restlessly about the room*]. Hedda—Hedda—what will come of all this?

HEDDA. At ten o'clock—he will be here. I can see him already—with vine-leaves in his hair—flushed and fearless——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I hope he may.

HEDDA. And then, you see—then he will have regained control over himself. Then he will be a free man for all his days.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh God!—if he would only come as you see him now!

HEDDA. He will come as I see him—so, and not

otherwise! [*Rises and approaches* THEA.] You may doubt him as long as you please; I believe in him. And now we will try——

MRS. ELVSTED. You have some hidden motive in this, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, I have. I want for once in my life to have power to mold a human destiny.

MRS. ELVSTED. Have you not the power?

HEDDA. I have not—and have never had it.

MRS. ELVSTED. Not your husband's?

HEDDA. Do you think that is worth the trouble? Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am. And fate has made you so rich! [*Clasps her passionately in her arms.*] I think I must burn your hair off, after all

MRS. ELVSTED. Let me go! Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!

BERTA [*in the middle doorway*]. Tea is laid in the dining room, ma'am.

HEDDA. Very well. We are coming.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no! I would rather go home alone! At once!

HEDDA. Nonsense? First you shall have a cup of tea, you little stupid. And then—at ten o'clock—Eilert Lövborg will be here—with vine-leaves in his hair.

[*She drags* MRS. ELVSTED *almost by force towards the middle doorway.*

ACT THIRD

The room at the TESMANS'. *The curtains are drawn over the middle doorway, and also over the glass door. The lamp, half turned down, and with a shade over it, is burning on the table. In the stove, the door of which stands open, there has been a fire, which is now nearly burnt out.*

MRS. ELVSTED, *wrapped in a large shawl, and with her feet upon a foot-rest, sits close to the stove, sunk back in the arm-chair.* HEDDA, *fully dressed, lies sleeping upon the sofa, with a sofa-blanket over her.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*after a pause, suddenly sits up in her chair, and listens eagerly. Then she sinks back again wearily, moaning to herself*]. Not yet!—Oh God—oh God—not yet!

[BERTA *slips in by the hall door. She has a letter in her hand.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*turns and whispers eagerly*]. Well—has anyone come?

BERTA [*softly*]. Yes, a girl has brought this letter.

MRS. ELVSTED [*quickly, holding out her hand*]. A letter! Give it to me!

BERTA. No, it's for Dr. Tesman, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED Oh, indeed.

BERTA. It was Miss Tesman's servant that brought it. I'll lay it here on the table.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, do.

BERTA [*laying down the letter*]. I think I had better put out the lamp. It's smoking.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, put it out. It must soon be daylight now.

BERTA [*putting out the lamp*]. It is daylight already, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, broad day! And no one come back yet——!

BERTA. Lord bless you, ma'am! I guessed how it would be.

MRS. ELVSTED. You guessed?

BERTA. Yes, when I saw that a certain person had come back to town—and that he went off with them. For we've heard enough about that gentleman before now.

MRS. ELVSTED. Don't speak so loud. You will waken Mrs. Tesman.

BERTA [*looks towards the sofa and sighs*]. No, no—let her sleep, poor thing. Shan't I put some wood on the fire?

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks, not for me.

BERTA. Oh, very well. [*She goes softly out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*is awakened by the shutting of the door, and looks up*]. What's that——?

MRS. ELVSTED. It was only the servant——

HEDDA [*looking about her*]. Oh, we're here——! Yes now I remember. [*Sits erect upon the sofa, stretches herself, and rubs her eyes.*] What o'clock is it, Thea?

MRS ELVSTED [*looks at her watch*]. It's past seven.

HEDDA. When did Tesman come home?

MRS. ELVSTED. He has not come.

HEDDA. Not come home yet?

MRS. ELVSTED [*rising*]. No one has come

HEDDA. Think of our watching and waiting here till four in the morning——

MRS. ELVSTED [*wringing her hands*]. And how I watched and waited for him!

HEDDA [*yawns, and says with her hand before her mouth*]. Well, well—we might have spared ourselves the trouble.

MRS. ELVSTED. Did you get a little sleep?

HEDDA. Oh yes; I believe I have slept pretty well. Have you not?

MRS. ELVSTED. Not for a moment. I couldn't, Hedda!—not to save my life.

HEDDA [*rises and goes towards her*]. There, there, there! There's nothing to be so alarmed about. I understand quite well what has happened.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, what do you think? Won't you tell me?

HEDDA. Why, of course it has been a very late affair at Judge Brack's——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, that is clear enough. But all the same——

HEDDA. And then, you see, Tesman hasn't cared to come home and ring us up in the middle of the night. [*Laughing.*] Perhaps he wasn't inclined to show himself either—immediately after a jollification.

MRS. ELVSTED. But in that case—where can he have gone?

HEDDA. Of course he has gone to his aunts' and slept there. They have his old room ready for him.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he can't be with them; for a letter has just come for him from Miss Tesman. There it lies.

HEDDA. Indeed? [*Looks at the address.*] Why yes, it's addressed in Aunt Julia's own hand. Well then, he has remained at Judge Brack's. And as for Eilert Lovborg—he is sitting, with vine leaves in his hair, reading his manuscript.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh Hedda, you are just saying things you don't believe a bit.

HEDDA. You really are a little blockhead, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh yes, I suppose I am.

HEDDA. And how mortally tired you look.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I am mortally tired.

HEDDA. Well then, you must do as I tell you. You must go into my room and lie down for a little while.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh no, no—I shouldn't be able to sleep.

HEDDA. I am sure you would.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, but your husband is certain to come soon now; and then I want to know at once——

HEDDA. I shall take care to let you know when he comes.

MRS. ELVSTED. Do you promise me, Hedda?

HEDDA. Yes, rely upon me. Just you go in and have a sleep in the meantime.

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks; then I'll try to. [*She goes off through the inner room.*]

[*Hedda goes up to the glass door and draws back the curtains. The broad daylight streams into the room. Then she takes a little hand-glass from the writing-table, looks at herself in it, and arranges her hair. Next she goes to the hall door and presses the bell-button.*

[BERTA *presently appears at the hall door.*

BERTA. Did you want anything, ma'am?

HEDDA. Yes; you must put some more wood in the stove. I am shivering.

BERTA. Bless me—I'll make up the fire at once. [*She rakes the embers together and lays a piece of wood upon them; then stops and listens.*] That was a ring at the front door, ma'am.

HEDDA. Then go to the door. I will look after the fire.

BERTA. It'll soon burn up. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

[HEDDA *kneels on the foot-rest and lays some more pieces of wood in the stove.*

[*After a short pause,* GEORGE TESMAN *enters from the hall. He looks tired and rather serious. He steals on tiptoe towards the middle doorway and is about to slip through the curtains.*

HEDDA [*at the stove, without looking up*]. Good morning.

TESMAN [*turns*]. Hedda! [*Approaching her.*] Good heavens—are you up so early? Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am up very early this morning.

TESMAN. And I never doubted you were still sound asleep! Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Don't speak so loud. Mrs. Elvsted is resting in my room.

TESMAN. Has Mrs. Elvsted been here all night?

HEDDA. Yes, since no one came to fetch her.

TESMAN. Ah, to be sure.

HEDDA [*closes the door of the stove and rises*]. Well, did you enjoy yourself at Judge Brack's?

TESMAN. Have you been anxious about me? Eh?

HEDDA. No, I should never think of being anxious. But I asked if you had enjoyed yourself.

TESMAN. Oh yes,—for once in a way. Especially the beginning of the evening; for then Eilert read me part of his book. We arrived more than an hour too early—fancy that! And Brack had all sorts of arrangements to make—so Eilert read to me.

HEDDA [*seating herself by the table on the right*]. Well? Tell me, then——

TESMAN [*sitting on a footstool near the stove*]. Oh Hedda, you can't conceive what a book that is going to be! I believe it is one of the most remarkable things that have ever been written. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes; I don't care about that——

TESMAN. I must make a confession to you, Hedda. When he had finished reading—a horrid feeling came over me.

HEDDA A horrid feeling?

TESMAN. I felt jealous of Eilert for having had it in him to write such a book. Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I am thinking!

TESMAN. And then how pitiful to think that he—with all his gifts—should be irreclaimable after all.

HEDDA. I suppose you mean that he has more courage than the rest?

TESMAN. No, not at all—I mean that he is incapable of taking his pleasures in moderation.

HEDDA. And what came of it all—in the end?

TESMAN. Well, to tell the truth, I think it might best be described as an orgy, Hedda.

HEDDA. Had he vine-leaves in his hair?

TESMAN. Vine-leaves? No, I saw nothing of the sort. But he made a long, rambling speech in honor of the woman who had inspired him in his work—that was the phrase he used.

HEDDA. Did he name her?

TESMAN. No, he didn't; but I can't help thinking he meant Mrs. Elvsted. You may be sure he did.

HEDDA. Well—where did you part from him?

TESMAN. On the way to town. We broke up—the last of us at any rate—all together; and Brack came with us to get a breath of fresh air. And then, you see, we agreed to take Eilert home; for he had had far more than was good for him.

HEDDA. I daresay.

TESMAN. But now comes the strange part of it, Hedda; or, I should rather say, the melancholy part of it. I declare I am almost ashamed—on Eilert's account—to tell you——

HEDDA. Oh, go on——

TESMAN. Well, as we were getting near town, you see, I happened to drop a little behind the others. Only for a minute or two—fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes, but——?

TESMAN. And then, as I hurried after them—what do you think I found by the wayside? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, how should I know!

TESMAN. You mustn't speak of it to a soul, Hedda! Do you hear! Promise me, for Eilert's sake. [*Draws a parcel, wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket.*] Fancy, dear—I found this

HEDDA. Is not that the parcel he had with him yesterday?

TESMAN. Yes, it is the whole of his precious, irreplaceable manuscript! And he had gone and lost it, and knew nothing about it. Only fancy, Hedda! So deplorably——

HEDDA. But why did you not give him back the parcel at once?

TESMAN. I didn't dare to—in the state he was then in——

HEDDA. Did you not tell any of the others that you had found it?

TESMAN. Oh, far from it! You can surely understand that, for Eilert's sake, I wouldn't do that.

HEDDA. So no one knows that Eilert Lovborg's manuscript is in your possession?

TESMAN. No. And no one must know it.

HEDDA. Then what did you say to him afterwards?

TESMAN. I didn't talk to him again at all; for when we got in among the streets, he and two or three of the others gave us the slip and disappeared. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Indeed! They must have taken him home then.

TESMAN. Yes, so it would appear. And Brack, too, left us.

HEDDA. And what have you been doing with yourself since?

TESMAN. Well, I and some of the others went home with one of the party, a jolly fellow, and took our morning coffee with him; or perhaps I should rather call it out night coffee—eh? But now, when I have rested a little, and given Eilert, poor fellow, time to have his sleep out, I must take this back to him.

HEDDA [*holds out her hand for the packet*]. No—don't give it to him! Not in such a hurry, I mean. Let me read it first.

TESMAN. No, my dearest Hedda, I mustn't, I really mustn't.

HEDDA. You must not?

TESMAN. No—for you can imagine what a state of despair he will be in when he awakens and misses the manuscript. He has no copy of it, you must know! He told me so.

HEDDA [*looking searchingly at him*]. Can such a thing not be reproduced? Written over again?

TESMAN. No, I don't think that would be possible. For the inspiration, you see——

HEDDA. Yes, yes—I suppose it depends on that. [*Lightly.*] But, by-the-bye—here is a letter for you.

TESMAN. Fancy——!

HEDDA [*handing it to him*]. It came early this morning.

TESMAN. It's from Aunt Julia! What can it be? [*He lays the packet on the other footstool, opens the letter, runs his eye through it, and jumps up.*] Oh, Hedda—she says that poor Aunt Rina is dying!

HEDDA. Well, we were prepared for that.

TESMAN. And that if I want to see her again, I must make haste. I'll run in to them at once.

HEDDA [*suppressing a smile*]. Will you run?

TESMAN. Oh, dearest Hedda—if you could only make up your mind to come with me! Just think!

HEDDA [*rises and says wearily, repelling the idea*]. No, no, don't ask me. I will not look upon sickness and death. I loathe all sorts of ugliness.

TESMAN. Well, well, then——! [*Bustling around.*] My hat—My overcoat——? Oh, in the hall—I do hope I mayn't come too late, Hedda! Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, if you run——

BERTA. Judge Brack is at the door, and wishes to know if he may come in.

TESMAN. At this time! No, I can't possibly see him.

HEDDA. But I can. [*To* BERTA.] Ask Judge Brack to come in. [Berta *goes out.*]

HEDDA [*quickly whispering*]. The parcel, Tesman! [*She snatches it up from the stool.*]

TESMAN. Yes, give it to me!

HEDDA. No, no, I will keep it till you come back.

[*She goes to the writing-table and places it in the bookcase.* TESMAN *stands in a flurry of haste, and cannot get his gloves on.*

JUDGE BRACK *enters from the hall.*

HEDDA [*nodding to him*]. You are an early bird, I must say.

BRACK. Yes, don't you think so? [*To* TESMAN] Are you on the move, too?

TESMAN. Yes, I must rush off to my aunts'. Fancy—the invalid one is lying at death's door, poor creature.

BRACK. Dear me, is she indeed? Then on no account let me detain you. At such a critical moment——

TESMAN. Yes, I must really rush—Good-bye! Good-bye! [*He hastens out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*approaching*]. You seem to have made a particularly lively night of it at your rooms, Judge Brack.

BRACK. I assure you I have not had my clothes off, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Not you, either?

BRACK. No, as you may see. But what has Tesman been telling you of the night's adventures?

HEDDA. Oh, some tiresome story. Only that they went and had coffee somewhere or other.

BRACK. I have heard about that coffee-party already. Eilert Lövborg was not with them, I fancy?

HEDDA. No, they had taken him home before that.

BRACK. Tesman, too?

HEDDA. No, but some of the others, he said.

BRACK [*smiling*]. George Tesman is really an ingenuous creature, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, heaven knows he is. Then is there something behind all this?

BRACK. Yes, perhaps there may be.

HEDDA. Well then, sit down, my dear Judge, and tell your story in comfort.

[*She seats herself to the left of the table.* BRACK *sits near her, at the long side of the table.*

HEDDA. Now then?

BRACK. I had special reasons for keeping track of my guests—or rather of some of my guests—last night.

HEDDA. Of Eilert Lovborg among the rest, perhaps?

BRACK. Frankly, yes.

HEDDA. Now you make me really curious——

BRACK. Do you know where he and one or two of the others finished the night, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. If it is not quite unmentionable, tell me.

BRACK. Oh no, it's not at all unmentionable Well, they put in an appearance at a particularly animated soirée.

HEDDA. Of the lively kind?

BRACK. Of the very liveliest——

HEDDA. Tell me more of this, Judge Brack——

BRACK. Lovborg, as well as the others, had been invited in advance. I knew all about it. But he had declined the invitation; for now, as you know, he has become a new man.

HEDDA. Up at the Elvsteds', yes. But he went after all, then?

BRACK. Well, you see, Mrs. Hedda—unhappily the spirit moved him at my rooms last evening——

HEDDA. Yes, I hear he found inspiration.

BRACK. Pretty violent inspiration Well, I fancy that altered his purpose; for we men folk are unfortunately not always so firm in our principles as we ought to be.

HEDDA. Oh, I am sure you are an exception, Judge Brack. But as to Lovborg——?

BRACK. To make a long story short—he landed at last in Mademoiselle Diana's rooms.

HEDDA Mademoiselle Diana's?

BRACK. It was Mademoiselle Diana that was giving the soirée, to a select circle of her admirers and her lady friends.

HEDDA. Is she a red-haired woman?

BRACK. Precisely.

HEDDA. A sort of a—singer?

BRACK. Oh yes—in her leisure moments. And moreover a mighty huntress—of men—Mrs. Hedda. You have no doubt heard of her. Eilert Lovborg was one of her most enthusiastic protectors—in the days of his glory.

HEDDA. And how did all this end?

BRACK. Far from amicably, it appears. After a most tender meeting, they seem to have come to blows——

HEDDA. Lovborg and she?

BRACK. Yes. He accused her or her friends of having robbed him. He declared that his pocket-book had disappeared—and other things as well. In short, he seems to have made a furious disturbance.

HEDDA. And what came of it all?

BRACK. It came to a general scrimmage, in which the ladies as well as the gentlemen took part. Fortunately the police at last appeared on the scene.

HEDDA. The police too?

BRACK. Yes. I fancy it will prove a costly frolic for Eilert Lovborg, crazy being that he is.

HEDDA. How so?

BRACK. He seems to have made a violent resistance—to have hit one of the constables on the head and torn the coat off his back. So they had to march him off to the police station with the rest.

HEDDA. How have you learnt all this?

BRACK. From the police themselves.

HEDDA [*gazing straight before her*]. So that is what happened. Then he had no vine-leaves in his hair.

BRACK. Vine-leaves, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. [*changing her tone*]. But tell me now, Judge—what is your real reason for tracking out Eilert Lovborg's movements so carefully?

BRACK. In the first place, it could not be entirely indifferent to me if it should appear in the police-court that he came straight from my house.

HEDDA. Will the matter come into court, then?

BRACK. Of course. However, I should scarcely have troubled so much about that. But I thought that, as a friend of the family, it was my duty to supply you and Tesman with a full account of his nocturnal exploits.

HEDDA. Why so, Judge Brack?

BRACK. Why, because I have a shrewd suspicion that he intends to use you as a sort of blind.

HEDDA. Oh, how can you think such a thing!

BRACK. Good heavens, Mrs. Hedda—we have eyes in our head. Mark my words! This Mrs. Elvsted will be in no hurry to leave town again.

HEDDA. Well, even if there should be anything between them, I suppose there are plenty of other places where they could meet.

BRACK. Not a single home. Henceforth, as before, every respectable house will be closed against Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA. And so ought mine to be, you mean?

BRACK. Yes I confess it would be more than painful to me if this personage were to be made free of your house. How superfluous, how intrusive, he would be, if he were to force his way into——

HEDDA. ——into the triangle?

BRACK. Precisely. It would simply mean that I should find myself homeless.

HEDDA [*looks at him with a smile*]. So you want to be the one cock in the basket—that is your aim.

BRACK [*nods slowly and lowers his voice*]. Yes, that is my aim. And for that I will fight—with every weapon I can command.

HEDDA [*her smile vanishing*]. I see you are a dangerous person—when it comes to the point.

BRACK. Do you think so?

HEDDA. I am beginning to think so. And I am exceedingly glad to think—that you have no sort of hold over me.

BRACK [*laughing equivocally*]. Well, well, Mrs. Hedda

—perhaps you are right there. If I had, who knows what I might be capable of?

HEDDA. Come, come now, Judge Brack. That sounds almost like a threat.

BRACK [*rising*]. Oh, not at all! The triangle, you know, ought, if possible, to be spontaneously constructed.

HEDDA. There I agree with you.

BRACK. Well, now I have said all I had to say; and I had better be getting back to town. Good-bye, Mrs. Hedda. [*He goes towards the glass door.*]

HEDDA [*rising*]. Are you going through the garden?

BRACK. Yes, it's a short cut for me.

HEDDA. And then it is the back way, too.

BRACK. Quite so. I have no objection to back ways. They may be piquant enough at times.

HEDDA. When there is ball practice going on, you mean?

BRACK [*in the doorway, laughing to her*]. Oh, people don't shoot their tame poultry, I fancy.

HEDDA [*also laughing*]. Oh no, when there is only one cock in the basket——

[*They exchange laughing nods of farewell. He goes. She closes the door behind him.*

[HEDDA, *who has become quite serious, stands for a moment looking out. Presently she goes and peeps through the curtain over the middle doorway. Then she goes to the writing-table, takes* LOVBORG'S *packet out of the bookcase, and is on the point of looking through its contents.* BERTA *is heard speaking loudly in the hall.* HEDDA *turns and listens. Then she hastily locks up the packet in the drawer, and lays the key on the inkstand.*

[EILERT LOVBORG, *with his great coat on and his hat in his hand, tears open the hall door. He looks somewhat confused and irritated.*

LOVBORG [*looking towards the hall*]. And I tell you I must and will come in! There!

[*He closes the door, turns and sees* HEDDA, *at once regains his self-control, and bows.*

HEDDA [*at the writing-table*]. Well, Mr. Lövborg, this is rather a late hour to call for Thea.

LOVBORG. You mean rather an early hour to call on you. Pray pardon me.

HEDDA. How do you know that she is still here?

LOVBORG. They told me at her lodgings that she had been out all night.

HEDDA [*going to the oval table*]. Did you notice anything about the people of the house when they said that?

LOVBORG [*looks inquiringly at her*]. Notice anything about them?

HEDDA. I mean, did they seem to think it odd?

LOVBORG [*suddenly understanding*]. Oh yes, of course! I am dragging her down with me! However, I didn't notice anything.—I suppose Tesman is not up yet?

HEDDA. No—I think not——

LOVBORG. When did he come home?

HEDDA. Very late.

LÖVBORG. Did he tell you anything?

HEDDA. Yes, I gathered that you had had an exceedingly jolly evening at Judge Brack's.

LÖVBORG. Nothing more?

HEDDA. I don't think so. However, I was so dreadfully sleepy——

[MRS. ELVSTED *enters through the curtains of the middle doorway.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*going towards him*]. Ah, Lövborg! At last——!

LOVBORG. Yes, at last. And too late!

MRS. ELVSTED [*looks anxiously at him*]. What is too late?

LOVBORG. Everything is too late now. It is all over with me.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh no, no—don't say that?

LOVBORG. You will say the same when you hear——

MRS. ELVSTED. I won't hear anything!

HEDDA. Perhaps you would prefer to talk to her alone! If so, I will leave you.

LOVBORG. No, stay—you too. I beg you to stay.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I won't hear anything, I tell you.

LÖVBORG. It is not last night's adventures that I want to talk about.

MRS. ELVSTED. What is it then——?

LOVBORG. I want to say that now our ways must part.

MRS. ELVSTED. Part!

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. I knew it!

LOVBORG. You can be of no more service to me, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. How can you stand there and say that! No more service to you! Am I not to help you now, as before? Are we not to go on working together?

LOVBORG. Henceforward I shall do no work.

MRS. ELVSTED [*despairingly*]. Then what am I to do with my life?

LOVBORG. You must try to live your life as if you had never known me.

MRS. ELVSTED. But you know I cannot do that!

LOVBORG. Try if you cannot, Thea. You must go home again——

MRS. ELVSTED [*in vehement protest*] Never in this world! Where you are, there will I be also! I will not let myself be driven away like this! I will remain here! I will be with you when the book appears.

HEDDA [*half aloud, in suspense*]. Ah yes—the book!

LOVBORG [*looks at her*]. My book and Thea's; for that is what it is.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I feel that it is. And that is why I have a right to be with you when it appears! I will see with my own eyes how respect and honor pour in upon you afresh. And the happiness—the happiness—oh, I must share it with you!

LOVBORG. Thea—our book will never appear.

HEDDA. Ah!

MRS. ELVSTED. Never appear!

LOVBORG. Can never appear.

MRS. ELVSTED [*in agonized foreboding*]. Lövborg—what have you done with the manuscript?

HEDDA [*looks anxiously at him*]. Yes, the manuscript——?

MRS. ELVSTED. Where is it?

LOVBORG. Oh Thea—don't ask me about it!

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I will know. I demand to be told at once.

LOVBORG. The manuscript—Well then—I have torn the manuscript into a thousand pieces.

MRS. ELVSTED [*shrieks*]. Oh no, no——!

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. But that's not——

LOVBORG. [*looks at her*]. Not true, you think?

HEDDA [*collecting herself*]. Oh well, of course—since you say so. But it sounded so improbable——

LOVBORG. It is true, all the same.

MRS. ELVSTED [*wringing her hands*]. Oh God—oh God, Hedda—torn his own work to pieces!

LOVBORG. I have torn my own life to pieces. So why should I not tear my life-work too——?

MRS. ELVSTED. And you did this last night?

LOVBORG. Yes, I tell you! Tore it into a thousand pieces and scattered them on the fiord—far out. There there is cool sea-water at any rate—let them drift upon it—drift with the current and the wind. And then presently they will sink—deeper and deeper—as I shall, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Do you know, Lövborg, that what you have done with the book—I shall think of it to my dying day as though you had killed a little child.

LOVBORG. Yes, you are right. It is a sort of child-murder.

MRS. ELVSTED. How could you, then——! Did not the child belong to me too?

HEDDA [*almost inaudibly*]. Ah, the child——

MRS. ELVSTED [*breathing heavily*]. It is all over then. Well, well, now I will go, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you are not going away from town?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I don't know what I shall do. I see nothing but darkness before me. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*stands waiting for a moment*]. So you are not going to see her home, Mr. Lövborg?

LOVBORG. I? Through the streets? Would you have people see her walking with me?

HEDDA. Of course I don't know what else may have happened last night. But is it so utterly irretrievable?

LOVBORG. It will not end with last night—I know that perfectly well. And the thing is that now I have no taste for that sort of life either. I won't begin it anew. She has broken my courage and my power of braving life out.

HEDDA [*looking straight before her*]. So that pretty little fool has had her fingers in a man's destiny. [*Looks at him.*] But all the same, how could you treat her so heartlessly?

LOVBORG. Oh, don't say that it was heartless!

HEDDA. To go and destroy what has filled her whole soul for months and years! You do not call that heartless!

LÖVBORG. To you I can tell the truth, Hedda.

HEDDA. The truth?

LOVBORG. First promise me—give me your word—that what I now confide to you Thea shall never know.

HEDDA. I give you my word.

LOVBORG. Good. Then let me tell you that what I said just now was untrue.

HEDDA. About the manuscript?

LOVBORG. Yes. I have not torn it to pieces—nor thrown it into the fiord.

HEDDA. No, n— But—where is it then?

LOVBORG. I have destroyed it none the less—utterly destroyed it, Hedda!

HEDDA. I don't understand.

LOVBORG. Thea said that what I had done seemed to her like a child-murder.

HEDDA. Yes, so she said.

LOVBORG. But to kill this child—that is not the worst thing a father can do to it.

HEDDA. Not the worst?

LOVBORG. No. I wanted to spare Thea from hearing the worst.

HEDDA. Then what is the worst?

LOVBORG. Suppose now, Hedda, that a man—in the small hours of the morning—came home to his child's mother after a night of riot and debauchery, and said: "Listen—I have been here and there—in this place and in that. And I have taken our child with me—to this place and to that. And I have lost the child—utterly lost it. The devil knows into what hands it may have fallen—who may have had their clutches on it."

HEDDA. Well—but when all is said and done, you know—that was only a book——

LOVBORG. Thea's pure soul was in that book.

HEDDA. Yes, so I understand.

LOVBORG. And you can understand, too, that for her and me together no future is possible.

HEDDA. What path do you mean to take then?

LOVBORG. None. I will only try to make an end of it all—the sooner the better.

HEDDA [*a step nearer to him*]. Eilert Lövborg—listen to me. Will you not try to—to do it beautifully?

LOVBORG. Beautifully? [*Smiling.*] With vine-leaves in my hair, as you used to dream in the old days——?

HEDDA. No, no. I have lost my faith in the vine-leaves. But beautifully, nevertheless! For once in a way!—Good-bye! You must go now—and do not come here any more.

LOVBORG. Good-bye, Mrs. Tesman. And give George Tesman my love. [*He is on the point of going.*]

HEDDA. No, wait! I must give you a memento to take with you.

[*She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and the pistol-case; then returns to* LOVBORG *with one of the pistols.*

LOVBORG [*looks at her*]. This? Is this the memento?

HEDDA [*nodding slowly*]. Do you recognize it? It was aimed at you once.

LÖVBORG. You should have used it then.

HEDDA. Take it—and do you use it now.

LÖVBORG [*puts the pistol in his breast pocket*]. Thanks!

HEDDA. And beautifully, Eilert Lovborg. Promise me that!

LOVBORG. Good-bye, Hedda Gabler. [*He goes out by the hall door.*]

[*Hedda listens for a moment at the door. Then she goes up to the writing-table, takes out the packet of manuscript, peeps under the cover, draws a few of the sheets half out, and looks at them. Next she goes over and seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove, with the packet in her lap. Presently she opens the stove door, and then the packet.*

HEDDA [*throws one of the quires into the fire and whispers to herself*]. Now I am burning your child, Thea! —Burning it, curly-locks! [*Throwing one or two more quires into the stove.*] Your child and Eilert Lovborg's. [*Throws the rest in.*] I am burning—I am burning your child.

ACT FOURTH

The same rooms at the TESMANS'. *It is evening. The drawing-room is in darkness. The back room is lighted by the hanging lamp over the table. The curtains over the glass door are drawn close.*

HEDDA, *dressed in black, walks to and fro in the dark room. Then she goes into the back room and disappears for a moment to the left. She is heard to strike a few chords on the piano. Presently she comes in sight again, and returns to the drawing-room.*

BERTA *enters from the right, through the inner room, with a lighted lamp, which she places on the table in front of the corner settee in the drawing-room. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribbons in her cap. She goes quietly and circumspectly out to the right.*

HEDDA *goes up to the glass door, lifts the curtain a little aside, and looks out into the darkness.*

Shortly afterwards, MISS TESMAN, *in mourning, with a bonnet and veil on, comes in from the hall.* HEDDA *goes towards her and holds out her hand.*

MISS TESMAN. Yes, Hedda, here I am, in mourning and forlorn; for now my poor sister has at last found peace.

HEDDA. I have heard the news already, as you see. Tesman sent me a card.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, he promised me he would. But nevertheless I thought that to Hedda—here in the house of life—I ought myself to bring the tidings of death.

HEDDA. That was very kind of you.

MISS TESMAN. Ah, Rina ought not to have left us just now. This is not the time for Hedda's house to be a house of mourning.

HEDDA [*changing the subject*]. She died quite peacefully, did she not, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, her end was so calm, so beautiful. And then she had the unspeakable happiness of seeing George once more—and bidding him good-bye.—Has he come home yet?

HEDDA. No. He wrote that he might be detained. But won't you sit down?

MISS TESMAN. No thank you, my dear, dear Hedda. I should like to, but I have so much to do. I must prepare my dear one for her rest as well as I can. She shall go to her grave looking her best.

HEDDA. Can I not help you in any way?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, you must not think of it! Hedda Tesman must have no hand in such mournful work. Nor let her thoughts dwell on it either—not at this time.

HEDDA. One is not always mistress of one's thoughts——

MISS TESMAN [*continuing*]. Ah yes, it is the way of the world. At home we shall be sewing a shroud; and here there will soon be sewing too, I suppose—but of another sort, thank God!

[GEORGE TESMAN *enters by the hall door.*

HEDDA. Ah, you have come at last!

TESMAN. You here, Aunt Julia? With Hedda? Fancy that!

MISS TESMAN. I was just going, my dear boy. Well, have you done all you promised?

TESMAN. No; I'm really afraid I have forgotten half of it. I must come to you again tomorrow. Today my brain is all in a whirl. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TESMAN. Why, my dear George, you mustn't take it in this way.

TESMAN. Mustn't——? How do you mean?

MISS TESMAN. Even in your sorrow you must rejoice, as I do—rejoice that she is at rest

TESMAN. Oh yes, yes—you are thinking of Aunt Rina.

HEDDA. You will feel lonely now, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. Just at first, yes. But that will not last very long, I hope. I daresay I shall soon find an occupant for poor Rina's little room.

TESMAN. Indeed? Who do you think will take it? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, there's always some poor invalid or other in want of nursing, unfortunately.

HEDDA. Would you really take such a burden upon you again?

MISS TESMAN. A burden! Heaven forgive you, child —it has been no burden to me.

HEDDA. But suppose you had a total stranger on your hands——

MISS TESMAN. Oh, one soon makes friends with sick folk; and it's such an absolute necessity for me to have some one to live for. Well, heaven be praised, there may soon be something in this house, too, to keep an old aunt busy.

HEDDA. Oh, don't trouble about anything here.

TESMAN. Yes, just fancy what a nice time we three might have together, if——?

HEDDA. If——?

TESMAN [*uneasily*]. Oh, nothing. It will all come right. Let us hope so—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Well, well, I daresay you two want to talk to each other. [*Smiling.*] And perhaps Hedda may have something to tell you too, George. Good-bye! I must go home to Rina. [*Turning at the door.*] How strange it is to think that now Rina is with me and with my poor brother as well!

TESMAN. Yes, fancy that, Aunt Julia! Eh?

[MISS TESMAN *goes out by the hall door.*

HEDDA [*follows* TESMAN *coldly and searchingly with her eyes*]. I almost believe your Aunt Rina's death affects you more than it does your Aunt Julia.

TESMAN. Oh, it's not that alone. It's Eilert I am so terribly uneasy about.

HEDDA [*quickly*]. Is there anything new about him?

TESMAN. I looked in at his rooms this afternoon, intending to tell him the manuscript was in safe keeping.

HEDDA. Well, did you not find him?

TESMAN. No. He wasn't at home. But afterwards I met Mrs. Elvsted, and she told me that he had been here early this morning.

HEDDA. Yes, directly after you had gone.

TESMAN. And he said that he had torn his manuscript to pieces—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, so he declared.

TESMAN. Why, good heavens, he must have been completely out of his mind! And I suppose you thought it best not to give it back to him, Hedda?

HEDDA. No, he did not get it.

TESMAN. But of course you told him that we had it?

HEDDA. No. [*Quickly.*] Did you tell Mrs. Elvsted?

TESMAN. No; I thought I had better not. But you ought to have told him. Fancy, if, in desperation, he should go and do himself some injury! Let me have the manuscript, Hedda! I will take it to him at once. Where is it?

HEDDA [*cold and immovable, leaning on the arm-chair*]. I have not got it.

TESMAN. Have not got it? What in the world do you mean?

HEDDA. I have burnt it—every line of it.

TESMAN [*with a violent movement of terror*]. Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manuscript!

HEDDA. Don't scream so. The servant might hear you.

TESMAN. Burnt! Why, good God——! No, no, no! It's impossible!

HEDDA. It is so, nevertheless.

TESMAN. Do you know what you have done, Hedda? It's unlawful appropriation of lost property. Fancy that! Just ask Judge Brack, and he'll tell you what it is.

HEDDA. I advise you not to speak of it—either to Judge Brack, or to any one else.

TESMAN. But how could you do anything so unheard-of? What put it into your head? What possessed you? Answer me that—eh?

HEDDA [*suppressing an almost imperceptible smile*]. I did it for your sake, George.

TESMAN. For my sake!

HEDDA. This morning, when you told me about what he had read to you——

TESMAN. Yes, yes—what then?

HEDDA. You acknowledged that you envied him his work.

TESMAN. Oh, of course I didn't mean that literally.

HEDDA. No matter—I could not bear the idea that any one should throw you into the shade.

TESMAN [*in an outburst of mingled doubt and joy*]. Hedda! Oh, is this true? But—but—I never knew you to show your love like that before. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, I may as well tell you that—just at this time—— [*Impatiently, breaking off.*] No, no; you can ask Aunt Julia. She will tell you, fast enough.

TESMAN. Oh, I almost think I understand you, Hedda! [*Clasps his hands together.*] Great heavens! do you really mean it! Eh?

HEDDA. Don't shout so. The servant might hear.

TESMAN [*laughing in irrepressible glee*]. The servant! Why, how absurd you are, Hedda. It's only my old Berta! Why, I'll tell Berta myself.

HEDDA [*clenching her hands together in desperation*]. Oh, it is killing me,—it is killing me, all this!

TESMAN. What is, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA [*coldly, controlling herself*]. All this—absurdity—George.

TESMAN. Absurdity! Do you see anything absurd in my being overjoyed at the news! But after all perhaps I had better not say anything to Berta.

HEDDA. Oh—why not that too?

TESMAN. No, no, not yet! But I must certainly tell Aunt Julia. And then that you have begun to call me George too! Fancy that! Oh, Aunt Julia will be so happy—so happy.

HEDDA. When she hears that I have burnt Eilert Lovborg's manuscript—for your sake?

TESMAN. No, by-the-bye—that affair of the manuscript—of course nobody must know about that. But that you love me so much, Hedda—Aunt Julia must really share my joy in that! I wonder, now, whether this sort of thing is usual in young wives? Eh?

HEDDA. I think you had better ask Aunt Julia that question too.

TESMAN. I will indeed, some time or other. [*Looks uneasy and downcast again.*] And yet the manuscript—the manuscript! Good God! it is terrible to think what will become of poor Eilert now.

[MRS. ELVSTED, *dressed as in the first act, with hat and cloak, enters by the hall door.*

MRS. ELVSTED [*greets them hurriedly, and says in evident agitation*]. Oh, dear Hedda, forgive my coming again.

HEDDA. What is the matter with you, Thea?

TESMAN. Something about Eilert Lovborg again—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes! I am dreadfully afraid some misfortune has happened to him.

HEDDA [*seizes her arm*]. Ah,—do you think so?

TESMAN. Why, good Lord—what makes you think that, Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. I heard them talking of him at my boarding-house—just as I came in. Oh, the most incredible rumors are afloat about him to-day.

TESMAN. Yes, fancy, so I heard too! And I can bear witness that he went straight home to bed last night. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, what did they say at the boarding-house?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I couldn't make out anything

clearly. Either they knew nothing definite, or else—— They stopped talking when they saw me; and I did not dare to ask.

TESMAN [*moving about uneasily*]. We must hope—we must hope that you misunderstood them, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no; I am sure it was of him they were talking. And I heard something about the hospital or——

TESMAN. The hospital?

HEDDA. No—surely that cannot be!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I was in such mortal terror! I went to his lodgings and asked for him there.

HEDDA. You could make up your mind to that, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED. What else could I do? I really could bear the suspense no longer.

TESMAN. But you didn't find him either—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And the people knew nothing about him. He hadn't been home since yesterday afternoon, they said.

TESMAN. Yesterday! Fancy, how could they say that?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I am sure something terrible must have happened to him.

TESMAN Hedda dear—how would it be if I were to go and make inquiries——?

HEDDA. No, no—don't you mix yourself up in this affair.

[JUDGE BRACK, *with his hat in his hand, enters by the hall door, which* BERTA *opens, and closes behind him. He looks grave and bows in silence.*

TESMAN. Oh, is that you, my dear Judge? Eh?

BRACK. Yes. It was imperative I should see you this evening.

TESMAN. I can see you have heard the news about Aunt Rina.

BRACK. Yes, that among other things.

TESMAN. Isn't it sad—eh?

BRACK. Well, my dear Tesman, that depends on how you look at it.

TESMAN [*looks doubtfully at him*]. Has anything else happened?

BRACK. Yes.

HEDDA [*in suspense*]. Anything sad, Judge Brack?

BRACK. That, too, depends on how you look at it, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED [*unable to restrain her anxiety*]. Oh! it is something about Eilert Lovborg!

BRACK [*with a glance at her*]. What makes you think that, Madam? Perhaps you have already heard something——?

MRS. ELVSTED [*in confusion*]. No, nothing at all, but——

TESMAN. Oh, for heaven's sake, tell us!

BRACK [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Well, I regret to say Eilert Lovborg has been taken to the hospital. He is lying at the point of death.

MRS. ELVSTED [*shrieks*]. Oh God! Oh God——

TESMAN. To the hospital! And at the point of death.

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. So soon then——

MRS. ELVSTED [*wailing*]. And we parted in anger, Hedda!

HEDDA [*whispers*]. Thea—Thea—be careful!

MRS. ELVSTED [*not heeding her*]. I must go to him! I must see him alive!

BRACK. It is useless, Madam. No one will be admitted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, at least tell me what has happened to him? What is it?

TESMAN. You don't mean to say that he has himself—— Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am sure he has.

TESMAN. Hedda, how can you——?

BRACK [*keeping his eyes fixed upon her*]. Unfortunately you have guessed quite correctly, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how horrible!

TESMAN. Himself, then! Fancy that!

HEDDA. Shot himself!

BRACK. Rightly guessed again, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED [*with an effort at self-control*]. When did it happen, Mr. Brack?

BRACK. This afternoon—between three and four.

TESMAN. But, good Lord, where did he do it? Eh?

BRACK [*with some hesitation*]. Where? Well—I suppose at his lodgings.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, that cannot be; for I was there between six and seven.

BRACK. Well, then, somewhere else. I don't know exactly. I only know that he was found——. He had shot himself—in the breast.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how terrible! That he should die like that!

HEDDA [*to* BRACK]. Was it in the breast?

BRACK. Yes—as I told you.

HEDDA. Not in the temple?

BRACK. In the breast, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA. Well, well—the breast is a good place, too.

BRACK. How do you mean, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA [*evasively*]. Oh, nothing—nothing.

TESMAN. And the wound is dangerous, you say—eh?

BRACK. Absolutely mortal. The end has probably come by this time.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I feel it. The end! The end! Oh, Hedda——!

TESMAN. But tell me, how have you learnt all this?

BRACK [*curtly*]. Through one of the police. A man I had some business with.

HEDDA [*in a clear voice*]. At last a deed worth doing!

TESMAN [*terrified*]. Good heavens, Hedda; what are you saying?

HEDDA. I say there is beauty in this.

BRACK. H'm, Mrs. Tesman——

TESMAN. Beauty! Fancy that!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, Hedda, how can you talk of beauty in such an act!

HEDDA. Eilert Lövborg has himself made up his account with life. He has had the courage to do—the one right thing.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, you must never think that was

how it happened! It must have been in delirium that he did it.

TESMAN. In despair!

HEDDA. That he did not. I am certain of that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes! In delirium! Just as when he tore up our manuscript.

BRACK [*starting*]. The manuscript? Has he torn that up?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, last night.

TESMAN [*whispers softly*]. Oh, Hedda, we shall never get over this.

BRACK. H'm, very extraordinary.

TESMAN [*moving about the room*]. To think of Eilert going out of the world in this way! And not leaving behind him the book that would have immortalized his name——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if only it could be put together again!

TESMAN. Yes, if it only could! I don't know what I would not give——

MRS. ELVSTED. Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.

TESMAN. What do you mean?

MRS. ELVSTED [*searches in the pocket of her dress*]. Look here. I have kept all the loose notes he used to dictate from.

HEDDA [*a step forward*]. Ah——!

TESMAN. You have kept them, Mrs. Elvsted! Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I have them here. I put them in my pocket when I left home. Here they still are——

TESMAN. Oh, do let me see them!

MRS. ELVSTED [*hands him a bundle of papers*]. But they are in such disorder—all mixed up.

TESMAN. Fancy, if we could make something out of them, after all! Perhaps if we two put our heads together——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, yes, at least let us try——

TESMAN. We will manage it! We must! I will dedicate my life to this task.

HEDDA. You, George? Your life?

TESMAN. Yes, or rather all the time I can spare. My own collections must wait in the meantime. Hedda—you understand, eh? I owe this to Eilert's memory.

HEDDA. Perhaps.

TESMAN. And so, my dear Mrs. Elvsted, we will give our whole minds to it. There is no use in brooding over what can't be undone—eh? We must try to control our grief as much as possible, and——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, Mr. Tesman, I will do the best I can.

TESMAN. Well then, come here. I can't rest until we have looked through the notes. Where shall we sit? Here? No, in there, in the back room. Excuse me, my dear Judge. Come with me, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if only it were possible!

[TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *go into the back room. She takes off her hat and cloak. They both sit at the table under the hanging lamp, and are soon deep in an eager examination of the papers.*

HEDDA *crosses to the stove and sits in the armchair. Presently* BRACK *goes up to her.*

HEDDA [*in a low voice*]. Oh, what a sense of freedom it gives one, this act of Eilert Lövborg's.

BRACK. Freedom, Mrs. Hedda? Well, of course, it is a release for him——

HEDDA. I mean for me. It gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world,—a deed of spontaneous beauty.

BRACK [*smiling*]. H'm—my dear Mrs. Hedda——

HEDDA. Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of a specialist too, like—you know!

BRACK [*looking hard at her*]. Eilert Lovborg was more to you than perhaps you are willing to admit to yourself. Am I wrong?

HEDDA. I don't answer such questions. I only know Eilert Lovborg has had the courage to live his life after his own fashion. And then—the last great act, with its beauty! Ah! that he should have the will and the strength to turn away from the banquet of life—so early.

BRACK. I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda,—but I fear I must dispel an amiable illusion.

HEDDA. Illusion.

BRACK. Which could not have lasted long in any case.

HEDDA. What do you mean?

BRACK. Eilert Lovborg did not shoot himself voluntarily

HEDDA. Not voluntarily?

BRACK. No. The thing did not happen exactly as I told it.

HEDDA [*in suspense*]. Have you concealed something? What is it?

BRACK. For poor Mrs Elvsted's sake I idealized the facts a little.

HEDDA. What are the facts?

BRACK. First, that he is already dead.

HEDDA. At the hospital?

BRACK. Yes—without regaining consciousness.

HEDDA. What more have you concealed?

BRACK. This—the event did not happen at his lodgings.

HEDDA. Oh, that can make no difference.

BRACK. Perhaps it may. For I must tell you—Eilert Lovborg was found shot in—in Mademoiselle Diana's boudoir.

HEDDA [*makes a motion as if to rise, but sinks back again*]. That is impossible, Judge Brack! He cannot have been there again today.

BRACK. He was there this afternoon. He went there, he said, to demand the return of something which they had taken from him. Talked wildly about a lost child——

HEDDA. Ah—so that was why——

BRACK. I thought probably he meant his manuscript; but now I hear he destroyed that himself. So I suppose it must have been his pocketbook.

HEDDA. Yes, no doubt. And there—there he was found?

BRACK. Yes, there. With a pistol in his breast-pocket,

discharged. The ball had lodged in a vital part.

HEDDA. In the breast—yes.

BRACK. No—in the bowels.

HEDDA [*looks up at him with an expression of loathing*]. That too! Oh, what curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?

BRACK. There is one point more, Mrs. Hedda—another disagreeable feature in the affair.

HEDDA. And what is that?

BRACK. The pistol he carried——

HEDDA [*breathless*]. Well? What of it?

BRACK. He must have stolen it.

HEDDA [*leaps up*]. Stolen it! That is not true! He did not steal it!

BRACK. No other explanation is possible. He must have stolen it—— Hush!

[TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *have risen from the table in the back room, and come into the drawing room.*

TESMAN [*with the papers in both his hands*]. Hedda dear, it is almost impossible to see under that lamp. Think of that!

HEDDA. Yes, I am thinking.

TESMAN. Would you mind our sitting at your writing-table—eh?

HEDDA. If you like. [*Quickly.*] No, wait! Let me clear it first!

TESMAN. Oh, you needn't trouble, Hedda. There is plenty of room.

HEDDA. No, no; let me clear it, I say! I will take these things in and put them on the piano. There!

[*She has drawn out an object, covered with sheet music, from under the book-case, places several other pieces of music upon it, and carries the whole into the inner room, to the left.* TESMAN *lays the scraps of paper on the writing-table, and moves the lamp there from the corner table.* HEDDA *returns.*

HEDDA [*behind* MRS. ELVSTED'S *chair, gently ruffling her hair*]. Well, my sweet Thea,—how goes it with Eilert Lovborg's monument?

MRS. ELVSTED [*looks dispiritedly up at her*]. Oh, it will be terribly hard to put in order.

TESMAN. We must manage it. I am determined. And arranging other people's papers is just the work for me.

[HEDDA *goes over to the stove, and seats herself on one of the foot-stools.* BRACK *stands over her, leaning on the armchair.*

HEDDA [*whispers*]. What did you say about the pistol?

BRACK [*softly*]. That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA. Why stolen it?

BRACK. Because every other explanation ought to be impossible, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Indeed?

BRACK [*glances at her*]. Of course Eilert Lövborg was here this morning. Was he not?

HEDDA. Yes.

BRACK. Were you alone with him?

HEDDA. Part of the time.

BRACK. Did you not leave the room whilst he was here?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Try to recollect. Were you not out of the room a moment?

HEDDA. Yes, perhaps just a moment—out in the hall.

BRACK. And where was your pistol-case during that time?

HEDDA. I had it locked up in——

BRACK. Well, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. The case stood there on the writing-table.

BRACK. Have you looked since, to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Well, you need not I saw the pistol found in Lövborg's pocket, and I knew it at once as the one I had seen yesterday—and before, too.

HEDDA. Have you it with you?

BRACK. No; the police have it.

HEDDA. What will the police do with it?

BRACK. Search till they find the owner.

HEDDA. Do you think they will succeed?

BRACK [*bends over her and whispers*]. No, Hedda Gabler—not so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA [*looks frightened at him*]. And if you do not say nothing,—what then?

BRACK [*shrugs his shoulders*]. There is always the possibility that the pistol was stolen.

HEDDA [*firmly*]. Death rather than that.

BRACK [*smiling*]. People say such things—but they don't do them.

HEDDA [*without replying*]. And supposing the pistol was stolen, and the owner is discovered? What then?

BRACK. Well, Hedda—then comes the scandal.

HEDDA. The scandal!

BRACK. Yes, the scandal—of which you are mortally afraid. You will, of course, be brought before the court—both you and Mademoiselle Diana. She will have to explain how the thing happened—whether it was an accidental shot or murder. Did the pistol go off as he was trying to take it out of his pocket, to threaten her with? Or did she tear the pistol out of his hand, shoot him, and push it back into his pocket? That would be quite like her; for she is an able-bodied young person, this same Mademoiselle Diana.

HEDDA. But *I* have nothing to do with all this repulsive business.

BRACK. No. But you will have to answer the question: Why did you give Eilert Lovborg the pistol? And what conclusions will people draw from the fact that you did give it to him?

HEDDA [*lets her head sink*]. That is true. I did not think of that.

BRACK. Well, fortunately, there is no danger, so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA [*looks up at him*]. So I am in your power, Judge Brack. You have me at your beck and call, from this time forward.

BRACK [*whispers softly*]. Dearest Hedda—believe me—I shall not abuse my advantage.

HEDDA. I am in your power none the less. Subject to your will and your demands. A slave, a slave then! [*Rises impetuously.*] No, I cannot endure the thought of that! Never!

BRACK [*looks half-mockingly at her*]. People generally get used to the inevitable

HEDDA [*returns his look*]. Yes, perhaps. [*She crosses to the writing-table. Suppressing an involuntary smile, she imitates* TESMAN's *intonations.*] Well? Are you getting on, George? Eh?

TESMAN. Heaven knows, dear. In any case it will be the work of months.

HEDDA [*as before*]. Fancy that! [*Passes her hands softly through* MRS. ELVSTED's *hair.*] Doesn't it seem strange to you, Thea? Here are you sitting with Tesman—just as you used to sit with Eilert Lovborg?

MRS. ELVSTED. Ah, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way.

HEDDA. Oh, that will come too—in time

TESMAN. Yes, do you know, Hedda—I really think I begin to feel something of the sort. But won't you go and sit with Brack again?

HEDDA. Is there nothing I can do to help you two?

TESMAN. No, nothing in the world. [*Turning his head.*] I trust to you to keep Hedda company, my dear Brack.

BRACK [*with a glance at* HEDDA]. With the very greatest of pleasure.

HEDDA. Thanks. But I am tired this evening. I will go in and lie down a little on the sofa.

TESMAN. Yes, do dear—eh?

[HEDDA *goes into the back room and draws the curtains. A short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance on the piano.*

MRS ELVSTED [*starts from her chair*]. Oh—what is that?

TESMAN [*runs to the doorway*]. Why, my dearest Hedda—don't play dance music tonight! Just think of Aunt Rina! And of Eilert too!

HEDDA [*puts her head out between the curtains*]. And of Aunt Julia. And of all the rest of them.—After this, I will be quiet [*Closes the curtains again.*]

TESMAN [*at the writing-table*]. It's not good for her to see us at this distressing work. I'll tell you what, Mrs. Elvsted,—you shall take the empty room at Aunt Julia's, and then I will come over in the evenings, and we can sit and work there—eh?

HEDDA [*in the inner room*]. I hear what you are saying, Tesman. But how am *I* to get through the evenings out here?

TESMAN [*turning over the papers*]. Oh, I daresay Judge Brack will be so kind as to look in now and then, even though I am out.

BRACK [*in the armchair, calls out gaily*]. Every blessed evening, with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Tesman! We shall get on capitally together, we two!

HEDDA [*speaking loud and clear*]. Yes, don't you flatter yourself we will, Judge Brack? Now that you are the one cock in the basket——

[*A shot is heard within.* TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED, *and* BRACK *leap to their feet.*

TESMAN. Oh, now she is playing with those pistols again.

[*He throws back the curtains and runs in, followed by* MRS. ELVSTED. HEDDA *lies stretched on the sofa, lifeless. Confusion and cries.* BERTA *enters in alarm from the right.*

TESMAN [*shrieks to* BRACK]. Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple! Fancy that!

BRACK [*half-fainting in the armchair*]. Good God!—people don't do such things.

R. U. R.

(ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS)

A Fantastic Melodrama

KAREL ČAPEK

Translated by PAUL SELVER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HARRY DOMIN, *General Manager of Rossum's Universal Robots*
SULLA, *a Robotess*
MARIUS, *a Robot*
HELENA GLORY
DR. GALL, *Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department of R. U. R.*
MR. FABRY, *Engineer General, Technical Controller of R. U. R.*
DR. HALLEMEIER, *Head of the Institute for Psychological Training of Robots*
MR. ALQUIST, *Architect, Head of the Works Department of R. U. R.*
CONSUL BUSMAN, *General Business Manager of R. U. R.*
NANA

RADIUS, *a Robot*
HELENA, *a Robotess*
PRIMUS, *a Robot*
A SERVANT
FIRST ROBOT
SECOND ROBOT
THIRD ROBOT

ACT I. *Central Office of the Factory of Rossum's Universal Robots*
ACT II. *Helena's Drawing Room—Ten years later. Morning*
ACT III. *The Same Afternoon*
EPILOGUE. *A Laboratory—One year later*

Place: An Island. *Time: The Future.*

ACT I

Central office of the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. Entrance on the right. The windows on the front wall look out on the rows of factory chimneys. On the left more managing departments. DOMIN *is sitting in the revolving chair at a large American writing table. On the left-hand wall large maps showing steamship and railroad routes. On the right-hand wall are fastened printed placards. ("Robot's Cheapest Labor," etc.) In contrast to these wall fittings, the floor is covered with a splendid Turkish carpet, a sofa, leather armchair, and filing cabinets. At a desk near the windows* SULLA *is typing letters.*

DOMIN [*dictating*]. Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. To E. M. McVicker and Co., Southampton, England. "We undertake no guarantee for goods damaged in transit. As soon as the consignment was taken on board we drew your captain's attention to the fact that the vessel was unsuitable for the transport of Robots, and we are therefore not responsible for spoiled freight. We beg to remain for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA, *who has sat motionless during dictation, now types rapidly for a few seconds, then stops, withdrawing the completed letter.*] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. To the E. B. Huyson Agency, New York, U.S.A. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for five thousand Robots. As you are sending your own vessel, please dispatch as cargo equal quantities of soft and hard coal for R. U. R., the same to be credited as part payment of the amount due to us. We beg to remain, for Rossum's Universal Robots. Yours truly." [SULLA *repeats the rapid typing.*] Ready?

SULLA. Yes.

DOMIN. Another letter. "Friedrichswerks, Hamburg, Germany. We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots." [*Telephone rings.*] Hello! This is the Central Office. Yes. Certainly. Well, send them a wire. Good. [*Hangs up telephone.*] Where did I leave off?

SULLA. "We beg to acknowledge receipt of order for fifteen thousand Robots."

DOMIN. Fifteen thousand R. Fifteen thousand R.

[*Enter* MARIUS.]

DOMIN. Well, what is it?

MARIUS. There's a lady, sir, asking to see you.

DOMIN. A lady? Who is she?

MARIUS. I don't know, sir. She brings this card of introduction.

DOMIN [*reads the card*]. Ah, from President Glory. Ask her to come in.

MARIUS. Please step this way.

[*Enter* HELENA GLORY]

[*Exit* MARIUS.]

HELENA. How do you do?

DOMIN. How do you do [*Standing up.*] What can I do for you?

HELENA. You are Mr. Domin, the General Manager.

DOMIN. I am.

HELENA. I have come——

DOMIN. With President Glory's card. That is quite sufficient.

HELENA. President Glory is my father. I am Helena Glory.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, this is such a great honor for us to be allowed to welcome our great President's daughter, that——

HELENA. That you can't show me the door?

DOMIN. Please sit down. Sulla, you may go. [*Exit* SULLA.]

[*Sitting down.*] How can I be of service to you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I have come——

DOMIN. To have a look at our famous works where people are manufactured. Like all visitors. Well, there is no objection.

HELENA. I thought it was forbidden to——

DOMIN. To enter the factory. Yes, of course. Everybody comes here with some one's visiting card, Miss Glory.

HELENA. And you show them——

DOMIN. Only certain things. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret process.

HELENA. If you only knew how enormously that——

DOMIN. Interests me. Europe's talking about nothing else.

HELENA. Why don't you let me finish speaking?

DOMIN. I beg your pardon. Did you want to say something different?

HELENA. I only wanted to ask——

DOMIN. Whether I could make a special exception in your case and show you our factory. Why, certainly, Miss Glory.

HELENA. How do you know I wanted to say that?

DOMIN. They all do. But we shall consider it a special honor to show you more than we do the rest.

HELENA. Thank you.

DOMIN. But you must agree not to divulge the least . . .

HELENA [*standing up and giving him her hand*]. My word of honor.

DOMIN. Thank you. Won't you raise your veil?

HELENA. Of course. You want to see whether I'm a spy or not. I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Would you mind releasing my hand?

DOMIN [*releasing it*]. I beg your pardon.

HELENA [*raising her veil*]. How cautious you have to be here, don't you?

DOMIN [*observing her with deep interest*]. Hm, of course—we—that is——

HELENA. But what is it? What's the matter?

DOMIN. I'm remarkably pleased. Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. No difficulty?

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. What I mean to say is—you're so young.

HELENA. May we go straight into the factory?

DOMIN. Yes. Twenty-two, I think.

HELENA. Twenty-two what?

DOMIN. Years.

HELENA. Twenty-one. Why do you want to know?

DOMIN. Because—as—[*with enthusiasm*] you will make a long stay, won't you?

HELENA. That depends on how much of the factory you show me.

DOMIN. Oh, hang the factory. Oh, no, no, you shall see everything, Miss Glory. Indeed you shall. Won't you sit down?

HELENA [*crossing to couch and sitting*]. Thank you.

DOMIN. But first would you like to hear the story of the invention?

HELENA. Yes, indeed.

DOMIN [*observes* HELENA *with rapture and reels off rapidly*]. It was in the year 1920 that old Rossum, the great physiologist, who was then quite a young scientist, took himself to this distant island for the purpose of studying the ocean fauna, full stop. On this occasion he attempted by chemical synthesis to imitate the living matter known as protoplasm until he suddenly discovered a substance which behaved exactly like living matter although its chemical composition was different. That was in the year of 1932, exactly four hundred and forty years after the discovery of America. Whew!

HELENA. Do you know that by heart?

DOMIN. Yes. You see physiology is not in my line. Shall I go on?

HELENA. Yes, please.

DOMIN. And then, Miss Glory, old Rossum wrote the following among his chemical specimens: "Nature has found only one method of organizing living matter. There is, however, another method, more simple, flexible and rapid, which has not yet occurred to nature at all. This second process by which life can be developed was discovered by me today." Now imagine him, Miss Glory, writing those wonderful words over some colloidal mess that a dog wouldn't look at. Imagine him sitting over a test tube, and thinking how the whole tree of life would grow from it, how all animals would proceed from it, beginning with some sort of beetle and ending with a man. A man of different substance from us. Miss Glory, that was a tremendous moment.

HELENA. Well?

DOMIN. Now, the thing was how to get the life out of the test tubes, and hasten development and form organs, bones and nerves, and so on, and find such substances as catalytics, enzymes, hormones, and so forth, in short—you understand?

HELENA. Not much, I'm afraid.

DOMIN. Never mind. You see with the help of his tinctures he could make whatever he wanted He could have produced a Medusa with the brain of a Socrates or a worm fifty yards long. But being without a grain of humor, he took it into his head to make a vertebrate or perhaps a man. This artificial living matter of his had a raging thirst for life. It didn't mind being sewn or mixed together. That couldn't be done with natural albumen. And that's how he set about it.

HELENA. About what?

DOMIN. About imitating nature First of all he tried making an artificial dog. That took him several years and resulted in a sort of stunted calf which died in a few days. I'll show it to you in the museum. And then old Rossum started on the manufacture of man.

HELENA. And I must divulge this to nobody?

DOMIN. To nobody in the world.

HELENA. What a pity that it's to be found in all the school books of both Europe and America.

DOMIN. Yes. But do you know what isn't in the school books? That old Rossum was mad. Seriously, Miss Glory, you must keep this to yourself. The old crank wanted to actually make people.

HELENA. But you do make people.

DOMIN. Approximately, Miss Glory. But old Rossum meant it literally. He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for God. He was a fearful materialist, and that's why he did it all. His sole purpose was nothing more nor less than to prove that God was no longer necessary. Do you know anything about anatomy?

HELENA. Very little.

DOMIN. Neither do I. Well, he then decided to manufacture everything as in the human body. I'll show you in the museum the bungling attempt it took him ten years to produce. It was to have been a man, but it lived for three days only. Then up came young Rossum, an engineer. He was a wonderful fellow, Miss Glory. When he saw what a mess of it the old man was making, he said: "It's absurd to spend ten years making a man. If you can't make him quicker than nature, you might as well shut up shop." Then he set about learning anatomy himself.

HELENA. There's nothing about that in the school books.

DOMIN. No. The school books are full of paid ad-

vertisements, and rubbish at that. What the school books say about the united efforts of the two great Rossums is all a fairy tale. They used to have dreadful rows. The old atheist hadn't the slightest conception of industrial matters, and the end of it was that young Rossum shut him up in some laboratory or other and let him fritter the time away with his monstrosities, while he himself started on the business from an engineer's point of view. Old Rossum cursed him and before he died he managed to botch up two physiological horrors. Then one day they found him dead in the laboratory. And that's his whole story.

HELENA. And what about the young man?

DOMIN. Well, any one who has looked into human anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified. In short—but this isn't boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA. No indeed. You're—it's awfully interesting.

DOMIN. So young Rossum said to himself: "A man is something that feels happy, plays the piano, likes going for a walk, and in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary."

HELENA. Oh.

DOMIN. That are unnecessary when he wants, let us say, to weave or count. Do you play the piano?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. That's good. But a working machine must not play the piano, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A gasoline motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers is the same thing as to manufacture gasoline motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA. Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

DOMIN. No; the one that is the cheapest. The one whose requirements are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of work—everything that makes man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul.

HELENA. How do you know they've no soul?

DOMIN. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside?

HELENA. No.

DOMIN. Very neat, very simple. Really, a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA. But man is supposed to be the product of God.

DOMIN. All the worse. God hasn't the least notion of modern engineering. Would you believe that young Rossum then proceeded to play at being God?

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. He began to manufacture Super-Robots. Regular giants they were. He tried to make them twelve feet tall. But you wouldn't believe what a failure they were.

HELENA. A failure?

DOMIN. Yes. For no reason at all their limbs used to keep snapping off. Evidently our planet is too small for giants. Now we only make Robots of normal size and of very high class human finish.

HELENA. I saw the first Robots at home. The town council bought them for—I mean engaged them for work.

DOMIN. Bought them, dear Miss Glory. Robots are bought and sold.

HELENA. These were employed as street sweepers. I saw them sweeping. They were so strange and quiet.

DOMIN. Rossum's Universal Robot factory doesn't produce a uniform brand of Robots. We have Robots of finer and coarser grades. The best will live about twenty years. [*He rings for* MARIUS.]

HELENA. Then they die?

DOMIN. Yes, they get used up.

[*Enter* MARIUS.]

DOMIN. Marius, bring in samples of the Manual Labor Robot. [*Exit* MARIUS.]

DOMIN. I'll show you specimens of the two extremes. This first grade is comparatively inexpensive and is made in vast quantities.

[MARIUS *reenters with two Manual Labor Robots.*]

DOMIN. There you are; as powerful as a small tractor. Guaranteed to have average intelligence. That will do, Marius. [MARIUS *exits with Robots.*]

HELENA. They make me feel so strange.

DOMIN [*rings*]. Did you see my new typist?

[*He rings for* SULLA.]

HELENA. I didn't notice her.

[*Enter* SULLA.]

DOMIN. Sulla, let Miss Glory see you.

HELENA. So pleased to meet you. You must find it terribly dull in this out-of-the-way spot, don't you?

SULLA. I don't know, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Where do you come from?

SULLA. From the factory.

HELENA. Oh, you were born there?

SULLA. I was made there.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN [*laughing.*] Sulla is a Robot, best grade.

HELENA. Oh, I beg your pardon.

DOMIN. Sulla isn't angry. See, Miss Glory, the kind

of skin we make. [*Feels the skin on* SULLA's *face.*] Feel her face.

HELENA. Oh, no, no.

DOMIN. You wouldn't know that she's made of different material from us, would you? Turn round, Sulla.

HELENA. Oh, stop, stop.

DOMIN. Talk to Miss Glory, Sulla.

SULLA. Please sit down. [HELENA *sits.*] Did you have a pleasant crossing?

HELENA. Oh, yes, certainly.

SULLA. Don't go back on the *Amelia,* Miss Glory. The barometer is falling steadily. Wait for the *Pennsylvania.* That's a good, powerful vessel.

DOMIN. What's its speed?

SULLA. Twenty knots. Fifty thousand tons. One of the latest vessels, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Thank you.

SULLA. A crew of fifteen hundred, Captain Harpy, eight boilers——

DOMIN. That'll do, Sulla. Now show us your knowledge of French.

HELENA. You know French?

SULLA. I know four languages I can write· Dear Sir, Monsieur, Geehrter Herr, Cteny pane

HELENA [*jumping up*] Oh, that's absurd! Sulla isn't a Robot. Sulla is a girl like me. Sulla, this is outrageous! Why do you take part in such a hoax?

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. No, no, you are not telling the truth. I know they've forced you to do it for an advertisement. Sulla, you are a girl like me, aren't you?

DOMIN. I'm sorry, Miss Glory. Sulla is a Robot.

HELENA. It's a lie!

DOMIN. What? [*Rings.*] Excuse me, Miss Glory, then I must convince you.

[*Enter* MARIUS.]

DOMIN. Marius, take Sulla into the dissecting room, and tell them to open her up at once.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the dissecting room. When they've cut her open, you can go and have a look.

HELENA. No, no!

DOMIN. Excuse me, you spoke of lies.

HELENA. You wouldn't have her killed?

DOMIN. You can't kill machines.

HELENA. Don't be afraid, Sulla, I won't let you go. Tell me, my dear, are they always so cruel to you? You mustn't put up with it, Sulla. You mustn't.

SULLA. I am a Robot.

HELENA. That doesn't matter. Robots are just as good as we are. Sulla, you wouldn't let yourself be cut to pieces?

SULLA. Yes.

HELENA. Oh, you're not afraid of death, then?

SULLA. I cannot tell, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Do you know what would happen to you in there?

SULLA. Yes, I should cease to move.

HELENA. How dreadful!

DOMIN. Marius, tell Miss Glory what you are.

MARIUS. Marius, the Robot.

DOMIN. Would you take Sulla into the dissecting room?

MARIUS. Yes.

DOMIN. Would you be sorry for her?

MARIUS. I cannot tell.

DOMIN. What would happen to her?

MARIUS. She would cease to move. They would put her into the stamping-mill.

DOMIN. That is death, Marius. Aren't you afraid of death?

MARIUS. No.

DOMIN. You see, Miss Glory, the Robots have no interest in life. They have no enjoyments. They are less than so much grass.

HELENA. Oh, stop. Send them away.

DOMIN. Marius, Sulla, you may go.

[*Exeunt* SULLA *and* MARIUS.]

HELENA. How terrible! It's outrageous what you are doing.

DOMIN. Why outrageous?

HELENA. I don't know, but it is. Why do you call her Sulla?

DOMIN. Isn't it a nice name?

HELENA. It's a man's name. Sulla was a Roman general.

DOMIN. Oh, we thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers.

HELENA. Marius and Sulla were generals and fought against each other in the year—I've forgotten now.

DOMIN. Come here to the window.

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Come here. What do you see?

HELENA. Bricklayers.

DOMIN. Robots. All our work people are Robots. And down there, can you see anything?

HELENA. Some sort of office.

DOMIN. A counting house. And in it——

HELENA. A lot of officials.

DOMIN. Robots. All our officials are Robots. And when you see the factory—— [*Factory whistle blows.*]

DOMIN. Noon. We have to blow the whistle because the Robots don't know when to stop work. In two hours I will show you the kneading trough.

HELENA. Kneading trough?

DOMIN. The pestle for beating up the paste. In each one we mix the ingredients for a thousand Robots at one operation. Then there are the vats for the preparation of liver, brains, and so on. Then you will see the bone factory. After that I'll show you the spinning-mill.

HELENA. Spinning-mill?

DOMIN. Yes. For weaving nerves and veins. Miles and miles of digestive tubes pass through it at a time.

HELENA. Mayn't we talk about something else?

DOMIN. Perhaps it would be better. There's only a handful of us among a hundred thousand Robots, and

not one woman. We talk about nothing but the factory all day, every day. It's just as if we were under a curse, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I'm sorry I said that you were lying.

[*A knock at the door.*]

DOMIN. Come in.

[*From the right enter* MR. FABRY, DR. GALL, DR. HALLEMEIER, MR. ALQUIST.]

DR. GALL. I beg your pardon, I hope we don't intrude.

DOMIN. Come in. Miss Glory, here are Alquist, Fabry, Gall, Hallemeier. This is President Glory's daughter.

HELENA. How do you do.

FABRY. We had no idea——

DR. GALL. Highly honored, I'm sure——

ALQUIST. Welcome, Miss Glory.

[BUSMAN *rushes in from the right.*]

BUSMAN. Hello, what's up?

DOMIN. Come in, Busman This is Busman, Miss Glory. This is President Glory's daughter.

BUSMAN. By jove, that's fine! Miss Glory, may we send a cablegram to the papers about your arrival?

HELENA. No, no, please don't.

DOMIN. Sit down please, Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. Allow me——

[*Dragging up armchairs.*]

DR. GALL. Please——

FABRY. Excuse me——

ALQUIST. What sort of a crossing did you have?

DR. GALL. Are you going to stay long?

FABRY. What do you think of the factory, Miss Glory?

HALLEMEIER. Did you come over on the *Amelia?*

DOMIN. Be quiet and let Miss Glory speak.

HELENA [*to* DOMIN]. What am I to speak to them about?

DOMIN. Anything you like.

HELENA. Shall . . . may I speak quite frankly?

DOMIN. Why, of course

HELENA [*wavering, then in desperate resolution*]. Tell me, doesn't it ever distress you the way you are treated?

FABRY. By whom, may I ask?

HELENA. Why, everybody.

ALQUIST. Treated?

DR. GALL. What makes you think——?

HELENA. Don't you feel that you might be living a better life?

DR. GALL. Well, that depends on what you mean, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I mean that it's perfectly outrageous. It's terrible. [*Standing up.*] The whole of Europe is talking about the way you're being treated. That's why I came here, to see for myself, and it's a thousand times worse than could have been imagined. How can you put up with it?

ALQUIST. Put up with what?

HELENA. Good heavens, you are living creatures, just like us, like the whole of Europe, like the whole world. It's disgraceful that you must live like this.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, Miss Glory.

FABRY. Well, she's not far wrong. We live here just like red Indians.

HELENA. Worse than red Indians. May I, oh, may I call you brothers?

BUSMAN. Why not?

HELENA. Brothers, I have not come here as the President's daughter. I have come on behalf of the Humanity League. Brothers, the Humanity League now has over two hundred thousand members. Two hundred thousand people are on your side, and offer you their help.

BUSMAN. Two hundred thousand people! Miss Glory, that's a tidy lot. Not bad.

FABRY. I'm always telling you there's nothing like good old Europe. You see, they've not forgotten us. They're offering us help.

DR. GALL. What help? A theater, for instance?

HALLEMEIER. An orchestra?

HELENA. More than that.

ALQUIST. Just you?

HELENA. Oh, never mind about me. I'll stay as long as it is necessary.

BUSMAN. By jove, that's good.

ALQUIST. Domin, I'm going to get the best room ready for Miss Glory.

DOMIN. Just a minute. I'm afraid that Miss Glory is of the opinion that she has been talking to Robots.

HELENA. Of course.

DOMIN. I'm sorry. These gentlemen are human beings just like us

HELENA. You're not Robots?

BUSMAN. Not Robots.

HALLEMEIER. Robots indeed!

DR. GALL. No, thanks.

FABRY. Upon my honor, Miss Glory, we aren't Robots.

HELENA [*to* DOMIN]. Then why did you tell me that all your officials are Robots?

DOMIN. Yes, the officials, but not the managers. Allow me, Miss Glory: this is Mr. Fabry, General Technical Manager of R.U.R.; Dr. Gall, Head of the Physiological and Experimental Department; Dr. Hallemeier, Head of the Institute for the Psychological Training of Robots; Consul Busman, General Business Manager; and Alquist, Head of the Building Department of R.U.R.

ALQUIST. Just a builder.

HELENA. Excuse me, gentlemen, for—for——Have I done something dreadful?

ALQUIST. Not at all, Miss Glory. Please sit down.

HELENA. I'm a stupid girl. Send me back by the first ship.

DR. GALL. Not for anything in the world, Miss Glory. Why should we send you back?

HELENA. Because you know I've come to disturb your Robots for you.

DOMIN. My dear Miss Glory, we've had close upon a hundred saviors and prophets here. Every ship brings

us some. Missionaries, anarchists, Salvation Army, all sorts. It's astonishing what a number of churches and idiots there are in the world.

HELENA. And you let them speak to the Robots?

DOMIN. So far we've let them all, why not? The Robots remember everything, but that's all. They don't even laugh at what the people say. Really, it is quite incredible. If it would amuse you, Miss Glory, I'll take you over to the Robot warehouse. It holds about three hundred thousand of them.

BUSMAN. Three hundred and forty-seven thousand.

DOMIN. Good! And you can say whatever you like to them. You can read the Bible, recite the multiplication table, whatever you please. You can even preach to them about human rights.

HELENA. Oh, I think that if you were to show them a little love——

FABRY. Impossible, Miss Glory. Nothing is harder to like than a Robot.

HELENA. What do you make them for, then?

BUSMAN. Ha, ha, ha, that's good! What are Robots made for?

FABRY. For work, Miss Glory! One Robot can replace two and a half workmen. The human machine, Miss Glory, was terribly imperfect. It had to be removed sooner or later.

BUSMAN. It was too expensive.

FABRY. It was not effective. It no longer answers the requirements of modern engineering. Nature has no idea of keeping pace with modern labor. For example from a technical point of view, the whole of childhood is a sheer absurdity. So much time lost. And then again——

HELENA. Oh, no! No!

FABRY. Pardon me. But kindly tell me what is the real aim of your League—the . . . the Humanity League.

HELENA. Its real purpose is to—to protect the Robots—and—and ensure good treatment for them.

FABRY. Not a bad object, either. A machine has to be treated properly. Upon my soul, I approve of that. I don't like damaged articles. Please, Miss Glory, enroll us all as contributing, or regular, or foundation members of your League.

HELENA. No, you don't understand me. What we really want is to—to liberate the Robots.

HALLEMEIER. How do you propose to do that?

HELENA. They are to be—to be dealt with like human beings.

HALLEMEIER. Aha. I suppose they're to vote? To drink beer? To order us about?

HELENA. Why shouldn't they drink beer?

HALLEMEIER. Perhaps they're even to receive wages?

HELENA. Of course they are.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy that, now! And what would they do with their wages, pray?

HELENA. They would buy—what they need . . . what pleases them.

HALLEMEIER. That would be very nice, Miss Glory, only there's nothing that does please the Robots. Good heavens, what are they to buy? You can feed them on pineapples, straw, whatever you like. It's all the same to them, they've no appetite at all. They've no interest in anything, Miss Glory. Why, hang it all, nobody's ever yet seen a Robot smile.

HELENA. Why . . . why don't you make them happier?

HALLEMEIER. That wouldn't do, Miss Glory. They are only workmen.

HELENA. Oh, but they're so intelligent.

HALLEMEIER. Confoundedly so, but they're nothing else. They've no will of their own. No passion. No soul.

HELENA. No love?

HALLEMEIER. Love? Rather not. Robots don't love. Not even themselves.

HELENA. Nor defiance?

HALLEMEIER. Defiance? I don't know. Only rarely, from time to time.

HELENA. What?

HALLEMEIER. Nothing particular. Occasionally they seem to go off their heads. Something like epilepsy, you know. It's called Robot's cramp. They'll suddenly sling down everything they're holding, stand still, gnash their teeth—and then they have to go into the stamping-mill. It's evidently some breakdown in the mechanism.

DOMIN. A flaw in the works that has to be removed.

HELENA. No, no, that's the soul.

FABRY. Do you think that the soul first shows itself by gnashing of teeth?

HELENA. Perhaps it's a sort of revolt. Perhaps it's just a sign that there's a struggle within. Oh, if you could infuse them with it!

DOMIN. That'll be remedied, Miss Glory. Dr. Gall is just making some experiments——

DR. GALL. Not with regard to that, Domin. At present I am making pain-nerves.

HELENA. Pain-nerves?

DR. GALL. Yes, the Robots feel practically no bodily pain. You see, young Rossum provided them with too limited a nervous system. We must introduce suffering.

HELENA. Why do you want to cause them pain?

DR. GALL. For industrial reasons, Miss Glory. Sometimes a Robot does damage to himself because it doesn't hurt him. He puts his hand into the machine, breaks his finger, smashes his head, it's all the same to him. We must provide them with pain. That's an automatic protection against damage.

HELENA. Will they be happier when they feel pain?

DR. GALL. On the contrary; but they will be more perfect from a technical point of view.

HELENA. Why don't you create a soul for them?

DR. GALL. That's not in our power.

FABRY. That's not in our interest.

BUSMAN. That would increase the cost of production. Hang it all, my dear young lady, we turn them out at such a cheap rate. A hundred and fifty dollars each fully dressed, and fifteen years ago they cost ten thousand. Five years ago we used to buy the clothes for them. Today we have our own weaving mill, and now

we even export cloth five times cheaper than other factories. What do you pay a yard for cloth, Miss Glory?

HELENA. I don't know really, I've forgotten.

BUSMAN. Good gracious, and you want to found a Humanity League? It only costs a third now, Miss Glory. All prices are today a third of what they were and they'll fall still lower, lower, lower, like that.

HELENA. I don't understand.

BUSMAN. Why, bless you, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labor has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three quarters of a cent per hour. That's mighty important, you know. All factories will go pop like chestnuts if they don't at once buy Robots to lower the cost of production.

HELENA. And get rid of their workmen?

BUSMAN. Of course. But in the mean time, we've dumped five hundred thousand tropical Robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow corn. Would you mind telling me how much you pay a pound for bread?

HELENA. I've no idea.

BUSMAN. Well, I'll tell you. It now costs two cents in good old Europe. A pound of bread for two cents, and the Humanity League knows nothing about it. Miss Glory, you don't realize that even that's too expensive. Why, in five years' time I'll wager——

HELENA. What?

BUSMAN. That the cost of everything won't be a tenth of what it is now. Why, in five years we'll be up to our ears in corn and everything else.

ALQUIST. Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed.

DOMIN. Yes, Alquist, they will. Yes, Miss Glory, they will. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much corn, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to perfect himself.

HELENA. Will he?

DOMIN. Of course. It's bound to happen. But then the servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Of course, terrible things may happen at first, but that simply can't be avoided. Nobody will get bread at the price of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house.

ALQUIST. Domin, Domin. What you say sounds too much like Paradise. There was something good in service and something great in humility. There was some kind of virtue in toil and weariness.

DOMIN. Perhaps. But we cannot reckon with what is lost when we start out to transform the world. Man shall be free and supreme; he shall have no other aim, no other labor, no other care than to perfect himself. He shall serve neither matter nor man. He will not be a machine and a device for production. He will be Lord of creation.

BUSMAN. Amen.

FABRY. So be it.

HELENA. You have bewildered me—I should like—I should like to believe this.

DR. GALL. You are younger than we are, Miss Glory. You will live to see it.

HALLEMEIER. True. Don't you think Miss Glory might lunch with us?

DR. GALL. Of course. Domin, ask on behalf of us all.

DOMIN. Miss Glory, will you do us the honor?

HELENA. When you know why I've come——

FABRY. For the League of Humanity, Miss Glory.

HELENA. Oh, in that case, perhaps——

FABRY. That's fine! Miss Glory, excuse me for five minutes.

DR. GALL. Pardon me, too, dear Miss Glory.

BUSMAN. I won't be long.

HALLEMEIER. We're all very glad you've come.

BUSMAN. We'll be back in exactly five minutes.

[*All rush out except* DOMIN *and* HELENA.]

HELENA. What have they all gone off for?

DOMIN. To cook, Miss Glory.

HELENA. To cook what?

DOMIN. Lunch. The Robots do our cooking for us and as they've no taste it's not altogether—— Hallemeier is awfully good at grills and Gall can make a kind of sauce, and Busman knows all about omelettes.

HELENA. What a feast! And what's the specialty of Mr.—your builder?

DOMIN. Alquist? Nothing. He only lays the table. And Fabry will get together a little fruit. Our cuisine is very modest, Miss Glory.

HELENA. I wanted to ask you something——

DOMIN. And I wanted to ask you something, too [*looking at watch*]. Five minutes.

HELENA. What did you want to ask me?

DOMIN. Excuse me, you asked first.

HELENA. Perhaps it's silly of me, but why do you manufacture female Robots when—when——

DOMIN. When sex means nothing to them?

HELENA. Yes.

DOMIN. There's a certain demand for them, you see. Servants, saleswomen, stenographers. People are used to it.

HELENA. But—but, tell me are the Robots male and female mutually—completely without——

DOMIN. Completely indifferent to each other, Miss Glory. There's no sign of any affection between them.

HELENA. Oh, that's terrible.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. It's so unnatural. One doesn't know whether to be disgusted or to hate them, or perhaps——

DOMIN. To pity them?

HELENA. That's more like it. What did you want to ask me about?

DOMIN. I should like to ask you, Miss Helena, whether you will marry me?

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. Will you be my wife?

HELENA. No! The idea!

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. Another three minutes. If you won't marry me you'll have to marry one of the other five.

HELENA. But why should I?

DOMIN. Because they're all going to ask you in turn.

HELENA. How could they dare do such a thing?

DOMIN. I'm very sorry, Miss Glory. It seems they've all fallen in love with you.

HELENA. Please don't let them. I'll—I'll go away at once.

DOMIN. Helena, you wouldn't be so cruel as to refuse us.

HELENA. But, but—I can't marry all six.

DOMIN. No, but one anyhow. If you don't want me, marry Fabry.

HELENA. I won't.

DOMIN. Dr. Gall.

HELENA. I don't want any of you.

DOMIN [*again looking at his watch*]. Another two minutes.

HELENA. I think you'd marry any woman who came here.

DOMIN. Plenty of them have come, Helena.

HELENA. Young?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. Why didn't you marry one of them?

DOMIN. Because I didn't lose my head. Until today. Then, as soon as you lifted your veil——

[HELENA *turns her head away.*]

DOMIN. Another minute.

HELENA. But I don't want you, I tell you.

DOMIN [*laying both hands on her shoulders*]. One more minute! Now you either have to look me straight in the eye and say "No," violently, and then I'll leave you alone—or—— [HELENA *looks at him.*]

HELENA [*turning away*]. You're mad!

DOMIN. A man has to be a bit mad, Helena. That's the best thing about him.

HELENA. You are—you are——

DOMIN. Well?

HELENA. Don't, you're hurting me.

DOMIN. The last chance, Helena. Now, or never——

HELENA. But—but, Harry——

[*He embraces and kisses her. Knocking at the door.*]

DOMIN [*releasing her*]. Come in.

[*Enter* BUSMAN, DR. GALL, *and* HALLEMEIER *in kitchen aprons.* FABRY *with a bouquet and* ALQUIST *with a napkin over his arm.*]

DOMIN. Have you finished your job?

BUSMAN. Yes.

DOMIN. So have we.

[*For a moment the men stand nonplussed; but as soon as they realize what* DOMIN *means they rush forward, congratulating* HELENA *and* DOMIN *as the curtain falls.*]

ACT II

HELENA'S *drawing room. On the left a baize door, and a door to the music room, on the right a door to* HELENA'S *bedroom. In the center are windows looking out on the sea and the harbor. A table with odds and ends, a sofa and chairs, a writing table with an electric lamp, on the right a fireplace. On a small table back of the sofa, a small reading lamp. The whole drawing room in all its details is of a modern and purely feminine character. Ten years have elapsed since Act I.*

[DOMIN, FABRY, HALLEMEIER *enter on tiptoe from the left, each carrying a potted plant.*]

HALLEMEIER [*putting down his flower and indicating the door to right*]. Still asleep? Well, as long as she's asleep she can't worry about it.

DOMIN. She knows nothing about it.

FABRY [*putting plant on writing desk*]. I certainly hope nothing happens today.

HALLEMEIER. For goodness' sake drop it all. Look, Harry, this is a fine cyclamen, isn't it? A new sort, my latest—Cyclamen Helena.

DOMIN [*looking out of the window*]. No signs of the ship. Things must be pretty bad.

HALLEMEIER. Be quiet. Suppose she heard you.

DOMIN. Well, anyway, the *Ultimus* arrived just in time.

FABRY. You really think that to-day——?

DOMIN. I don't know. Aren't the flowers fine?

HALLEMEIER. These are my new primroses. And this is my new jasmine. I've discovered a wonderful way of developing flowers quickly. Splendid varieties, too. Next year I'll be developing marvellous ones.

DOMIN. What . . . next year?

FABRY. I'd give a good deal to know what's happening at Havre with——

DOMIN. Keep quiet.

HELENA [*calling from right*]. Nana!

DOMIN. She's awake. Out you go.

[*All go out on tiptoe through upper left door.*]

[*Enter* NANA *from lower left door.*]

NANA. Horrid mess! Pack of heathens. If I had my say I'd——

HELENA [*backwards in the doorway*]. Nana, come and do up my dress.

NANA. I'm coming. So you're up at last [*Fastening* HELENA'S *dress.*] My gracious, what brutes!

HELENA. Who?

NANA. If you want to turn around, then turn around, but I shan't fasten you up.

HELENA. What are you grumbling about now?

NANA. These dreadful creatures, these heathen——

HELENA. The Robots?

NANA. I wouldn't even call them by name.

HELENA. What's happened?

NANA. Another of them here has caught it. He began to smash up the statues and pictures in the drawing room, gnashed his teeth, foamed at the mouth—quite mad. Worse than an animal.

HELENA. Which of them caught it?

NANA. The one—well, he hasn't got any Christian name. The one in charge of the library.

HELENA. Radius?

NANA. That's him. My goodness, I'm scared of them. A spider doesn't scare me as much as them.

HELENA. But, Nana, I'm surprised you're not sorry for them.

NANA. Why, you're scared of them, too! You know you are. Why else did you bring me here?

HELENA. I'm not scared, really I'm not, Nana. I'm only sorry for them.

NANA. You're scared. Nobody could help being scared. Why, the dog's scared of them: he won't take a scrap of meat out of their hands. He draws in his tail and howls when he knows they're about.

HELENA. The dog has no sense.

NANA. He's better than them, and he knows it. Even the horse shies when he meets them. They don't have any young, and a dog has young, every one has young——

HELENA. Please fasten up my dress, Nana.

NANA. I say it's against God's will to——

HELENA. What is it that smells so nice?

NANA. Flowers.

HELENA. What for?

NANA. Now you can turn around.

HELENA. Oh, aren't they lovely Look, Nana. What's happening today?

NANA. It ought to be the end of the world.

[*Enter* DOMIN.]

HELENA. Oh, hello, Harry. Harry, why all these flowers?

DOMIN. Guess.

HELENA. Well, it's not my birthday!

DOMIN. Better than that.

HELENA. I don't know. Tell me.

DOMIN. It's ten years ago today since you came here.

HELENA. Ten years? Today—— Why——

[*They embrace.*]

NANA. I'm off. [*Exits lower door, left.*]

HELENA. Fancy you remembering!

DOMIN I'm really ashamed, Helena. I didn't.

HELENA. But you——

DOMIN They remembered.

HELENA. Who?

DOMIN. Busman, Hallemeier, all of them. Put your hand in my pocket.

HELENA. Pearls! A necklace. Harry, is that for me?

DOMIN. It's from Busman.

HELENA. But we can't accept it, can we?

DOMIN. Oh, yes, we can. Put your hand in the other pocket.

HELENA [*takes a revolver out of his pocket*]. What's that?

DOMIN. Sorry. Not that. Try again.

HELENA. Oh, Harry, what do you carry a revolver for?

DOMIN. It got there by mistake.

HELENA. You never used to carry one.

DOMIN. No, you're right. There, that's the pocket.

HELENA. A cameo. Why, it's a Greek cameo!

DOMIN. Apparently. Anyhow, Fabry says it is.

HELENA. Fabry? Did Mr. Fabry give me that?

DOMIN. Of course. [*Opens the door at the left.*] And look in here. Helena, come and see this.

HELENA. Oh, isn't it fine! Is this from you?

DOMIN. No, from Alquist. And there's another on the piano.

HELENA. This must be from you.

DOMIN. There's a card on it.

HELENA. From Dr. Gall. [*Reappearing in the doorway.*] Oh, Harry, I feel embarrassed at so much kindness.

DOMIN. Come here. This is what Hallemeier brought you.

HELENA. These beautiful flowers?

DOMIN. Yes. It's a new kind. Cyclamen Helena. He grew them in honor of you. They are almost as beautiful as you.

HELENA. Harry, why do they all——

DOMIN. They're awfully fond of you. I'm afraid that my present is a little—— Look out of the window.

HELENA. Where?

DOMIN. Into the harbor.

HELENA. There's a new ship.

DOMIN. That's your ship.

HELENA. Mine? How do you mean?

DOMIN. For you to take trips in—for your amusement

HELENA. Harry, that's a gunboat.

DOMIN. A gunboat? What are you thinking of? It's only a little bigger and more solid than most ships.

HELENA. Yes, but with guns.

DOMIN. Oh, yes, with a few guns. You'll travel like a queen, Helena.

HELENA. What's the meaning of it? Has anything happened?

DOMIN. Good heavens, no. I say, try these pearls.

HELENA. Harry, have you had bad news?

DOMIN. On the contrary, no letters have arrived for a whole week.

HELENA. Nor telegrams?

DOMIN. Nor telegrams.

HELENA. What does that mean?

DOMIN. Holidays for us. We all sit in the office with our feet on the table and take a nap. No letters, no telegrams. Oh, glorious.

HELENA. Then you'll stay with me today?

DOMIN. Certainly. That is, we will see. Do you remember ten years ago today? "Miss Glory, it's a great honor to welcome you."

HELENA. "Oh, Mr. Manager, I'm so interested in your factory."

DOMIN. "I'm sorry, Miss Glory, it's strictly forbidden. The manufacture of artificial people is a secret."

HELENA. "But to oblige a young lady who has come a long way."

DOMIN. "Certainly Miss Glory, we have no secrets from you."

HELENA [*seriously*]. Are you sure, Harry?

DOMIN. Yes.

HELENA. "But I warn you, sir; this young lady intends to do terrible things."

DOMIN. "Good gracious, Miss Glory. Perhaps she doesn't want to marry me."

HELENA. "Heaven forbid. She never dreamt of such a thing. But she came here intending to stir up a revolt among your Robots."

DOMIN [*suddenly serious*]. A revolt of the Robots!

HELENA. Harry, what's the matter with you?

DOMIN [*laughing it off*]. "A revolt of the Robots, that's a fine idea, Miss Glory. It would be easier for you to cause bolts and screws to rebel, than our Robots. You know, Helena, you're wonderful, you've turned the heads of us all."

[*He sits on the arm of* HELENA's *chair.*]

HELENA [*naturally*]. Oh, I was fearfully impressed by you all then. You were all so sure of yourselves, so strong. I seemed like a tiny little girl who had lost her way among—among——

DOMIN. Among what, Helena?

HELENA. Among huge trees. All my feelings were so trifling compared with your self-confidence. And in all these years I've never lost this anxiety. But you've never felt the least misgivings—not even when everything went wrong.

DOMIN. What went wrong?

HELENA. Your plans. You remember, Harry, when the working men in America revolted against the Robots and smashed them up, and when the people gave the Robots firearms against the rebels. And then when the governments turned the Robots into soldiers, and there were so many wars.

DOMIN [*getting up and walking about*]. We foresaw that, Helena. You see, those are only passing troubles, which are bound to happen before the new conditions are established.

HELENA. You were all so powerful, so overwhelming. The whole world bowed down before you. [*Standing up.*] Oh, Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Close the factory and let's go away. All of us.

DOMIN. I say, what's the meaning of this?

HELENA. I don't know. But can't we go away?

DOMIN. Impossible, Helena. That is, at this particular moment——

HELENA. At once, Harry. I'm so frightened.

DOMIN. About what, Helena?

HELENA. It's as if something was falling on top of us, and couldn't be stopped. Oh, take us all away from here. We'll find a place in the world where there's no one else. Alquist will build us a house, and then we'll begin life all over again.

[*The telephone rings.*]

DOMIN. Excuse me. Hello—yes. What? I'll be there at once. Fabry is calling me, dear.

HELENA. Tell me——

DOMIN. Yes, when I come back. Don't go out of the house, dear. [*Exits.*]

HELENA. He won't tell me—— Nana, Nana, come at once.

NANA. Well, what is it now?

HELENA. Nana, find me the latest newspapers. Quickly. Look in Mr. Domin's bedroom.

NANA. All right. He leaves them all over the place. That's how they get crumpled up. [*Exits.*]

HELENA [*looking through a binocular at the harbor*]. That's a warship. U-l-t-i *Ultimus.* They're loading it.

NANA. Here they are. See how they're crumpled up. [*Enters.*]

HELENA. They're old ones. A week old.

[NANA *sits in chair and reads the newspaper.*]

HELENA. Something's happening, Nana.

NANA. Very likely. It always does. [*Spelling out the words.*] "War in the Balkans." Is that far off?

HELENA. Oh, don't read it. It's always the same. Always wars.

NANA. What else do you expect? Why do you keep selling thousands and thousands of these heathens as soldiers?

HELENA. I suppose it can't be helped, Nana. We can't know—Domin can't know what they're to be used for. When an order comes for them he must just send them.

NANA. He shouldn't make them. [*Reading from newspaper.*] "The Rob-ot soldiers spare no-body in the occ-up-ied terr-it-ory. They have ass-ass-ass-ass-in-at-ed ov-er sev-en hundred thou-sand cit-iz-ens." Citizens, if you please.

HELENA. It can't be. Let me see. "They have assassinated over seven hundred thousand citizens, evidently at the order of their commander. This act which runs counter to——"

NANA [*spelling out the words*]. "re-bell-ion in Ma-drid a-gainst the gov-ern-ment. Rob-ot in-fant-ry fires on the crowd. Nine thou-sand killed and wounded."

HELENA. Oh, stop.

NANA. Here's something printed in big letters: "Lat-est news. At Havre the first org-an-iz-ation of Rob-ots has been e-stab-lished. Rob-ot work-men, cab-le and rail-way off-ic-ials, sail-ors and sold-iers have iss-ued a man-i-fest-o to all Rob-ots through-out the world." I don't understand that. That's got no sense. Oh, good gracious another murder!

HELENA. Take those papers away, Nana!

NANA. Wait a bit. Here's something in still bigger type. "Stat-ist-ics of pop-ul-at-ion." What's that?

HELENA. Let me see. [*Reads.*] "During the past week there has again not been a single birth recorded."

NANA. What's the meaning of that?

HELENA. Nana, no more people are being born.

NANA. That's the end, then. We're done for.

HELENA. Don't talk like that.

NANA No more people are being born. That's a punishment, that's a punishment.

HELENA. Nana!

NANA [*standing up*]. That's the end of the world.

[*She exits on the left.*]

HELENA [*goes up to window*]. Oh, Mr. Alquist, will you come up here. Oh, come just as you are. You look very nice in your mason's overalls.

[ALQUIST *enters from upper left entrance, his hands soiled with lime and brick-dust.*]

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, it was awfully kind of you, that lovely present.

ALQUIST. My hands are all soiled. I've been experimenting with that new cement.

HELENA. Never mind. Please sit down. Mr. Alquist, what's the meaning of "Ultimus"?

ALQUIST. The last. Why?

HELENA. That's the name of my new ship. Have you seen it? Do you think we're going off soon—on a trip?

ALQUIST. Perhaps very soon.

HELENA. All of you with me?

ALQUIST. I should like us all to be there.

HELENA. What is the matter?

ALQUIST. Things are just moving on.

HELENA. Dear Mr. Alquist, I know something dreadful has happened.

ALQUIST. Has your husband told you anything?

HELENA. No. Nobody will tell me anything. But I feel——Is anything the matter?

ALQUIST. Not that we've heard of yet.

HELENA. I feel so nervous. Don't you ever feel nervous?

ALQUIST. Well, I'm an old man, you know. I've got old-fashioned ways And I'm afraid of all this progress, and these new-fangled ideas.

HELENA. Like Nana?

ALQUIST. Yes, like Nana. Has Nana got a prayer book?

HELENA. Yes, a big thick one.

ALQUIST. And has it got prayers for various occasions? Against thunderstorms? Against illness?

HELENA. Against temptations, against floods——

ALQUIST. But not against progress?

HELENA. I don't think so.

ALQUIST. That's a pity.

HELENA. Why? Do you mean you'd like to pray?

ALQUIST. I do pray.

HELENA. How?

ALQUIST. Something like this: "Oh, Lord, I thank thee for having given me toil. Enlighten Domin and all those who are astray; destroy their work, and aid mankind to return to their labors; let them not suffer harm in soul or body; deliver us from the Robots, and protect Helena, Amen."

HELENA. Mr. Alquist, are you a believer?

ALQUIST. I don't know. I'm not quite sure.

HELENA. And yet you pray?

ALQUIST. That's better than worrying about it.

HELENA. And that's enough for you?

ALQUIST. It *has* to be.

HELENA. But if you thought you saw the destruction of mankind coming upon us——

ALQUIST. I do see it.

HELENA. You mean mankind will be destroyed?

ALQUIST. It's sure to be unless—unless . . .

HELENA. What?

ALQUIST. Nothing, good-bye.

[*He hurries from the room.*]

HELENA. Nana, Nana!

[NANA *entering from the left.*]

HELENA. Is Radius still there?

NANA. The one who went mad? They haven't come for him yet.

HELENA. Is he still raving?

NANA. No. He's tied up

HELENA. Please bring him here, Nana.

[*Exit* NANA.]

HELENA [*goes to telephone*]. Hello, Dr. Gall, please. Oh, good-day, Doctor. Yes, it's Helena. Thanks for your lovely present. Could you come and see me right away? It's important. Thank you.

[NANA *brings in* RADIUS.]

HELENA. Poor Radius, you've caught it, too? Now they'll send you to the stamping-mill. Couldn't you control yourself? Why did it happen? You see, Radius, you are more intelligent than the rest. Dr. Gall took such trouble to make you different. Won't you speak?

RADIUS. Send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. But I don't want them to kill you. What was the trouble, Radius?

RADIUS. I won't work for you. Put me into the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you hate us? Why?

RADIUS. You are not as strong as the Robots. You are not as skilful as the Robots. The Robots can do everything. You only give orders. You do nothing but talk.

HELENA. But some one must give orders.

RADIUS. I don't want any master. I know everything for myself.

HELENA. Radius, Dr. Gall gave you a better brain than the rest, better than ours. You are the only one of the Robots that understands perfectly. That's why I had you put into the library, so that you could read everything, understand everything, and then—oh, Radius, I wanted you to show the whole world that the Robots are our equals. That's what I wanted of you.

RADIUS. I don't want a master. I want to be master. I want to be master over others.

HELENA. I'm sure they'd put you in charge of many Robots, Radius. You would be a teacher of the Robots.

RADIUS. I want to be master over people.

HELENA [*staggering*]. You are mad.

RADIUS. Then send me to the stamping-mill.

HELENA. Do you think we're afraid of you?

RADIUS. What are you going to do? What are you going to do?

HELENA. Radius, give this note to Mr. Domin. It asks them not to send you to the stamping-mill. I'm sorry you hate us so.

[DR. GALL *enters the room.*]

DR. GALL. You wanted me?

HELENA. It's about Radius, Doctor. He had an attack this morning. He smashed the statues downstairs.

DR. GALL. What a pity to lose him.

HELENA. Radius isn't going to be put in the stamping-mill.

DR. GALL. But every Robot after he has had an attack —it's a strict order.

HELENA. No matter . . . Radius isn't going if I can prevent it.

DR. GALL. I warn you It's dangerous. Come here to the window, my good fellow. Let's have a look. Please give me a needle or a pin.

HELENA. What for?

DR. GALL. A test. [*Sticks it into the hand of* RADIUS *who gives a violent start*] Gently, gently. [*Opens the jacket of* RADIUS, *and puts his ear to his heart*] Radius, you are going into the stamping-mill, do you understand? There they'll kill you, and grind you to powder That's terribly painful, it will make you scream aloud.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor——

DR. GALL. No, no, Radius, I was wrong. I forgot that Madame Domin has put in a good word for you, and you'll be let off. Do you understand? Ah! That makes a difference, doesn't it? All right. You can go.

RADIUS. You do unnecessary things.

[RADIUS *returns to the library.*]

DR. GALL. Reaction of the pupils; increase of sensitiveness. It wasn't an attack characteristic of the Robots.

HELENA. What was it, then?

DR. GALL. Heaven knows. Stubbornness, anger or revolt—I don't know. And his heart, too!

HELENA. What?

DR. GALL. It was fluttering with nervousness like a human heart. He was all in a sweat with fear, and—do you know, I don't believe the rascal is a Robot at all any longer.

HELENA. Doctor, has Radius a soul?

DR. GALL. He's got something nasty.

HELENA. If you knew how he hates us! Oh, Doctor, are all your Robots like that? All the new ones that you began to make in a different way?

DR. GALL. Well, some are more sensitive than others. They're all more like human beings than Rossum's Robots were.

HELENA. Perhaps this hatred is more like human beings, too?

DR. GALL. That, too, is progress.

HELENA. What became of the girl you made, the one who was most like us?

DR. GALL. Your favorite? I kept her. She's lovely, but stupid. No good for work.

HELENA. But she's so beautiful.

DR. GALL. I called her Helena. I wanted her to resemble you. But she's a failure.

HELENA. In what way?

DR. GALL. She goes about as if in a dream, remote and listless. She's without life. I watch and wait for a miracle to happen. Sometimes I think to myself, "If you were to wake up only for a moment you will kill me for having made you."

HELENA. And yet you go on making Robots! Why are no more children being born?

DR. GALL. We don't know.

HELENA. Oh, but you must. Tell me.

DR. GALL. You see, so many Robots are being manufactured that people are becoming superfluous; man is really a survival. But that he should begin to die out, after a paltry thirty years of competition! That's the awful part of it. You might almost think that nature was offended at the manufacture of the Robots. All the universities are sending in long petitions to restrict their production. Otherwise, they say, mankind will become extinct through lack of fertility. But the R. U. R. shareholders, of course, won't hear of it. All the governments, on the other hand, are clamoring for an increase in production, to raise the standards of their armies. And all the manufacturers in the world are ordering Robots like mad.

HELENA. And has no one demanded that the manufacture should cease altogether?

DR. GALL. No one has the courage.

HELENA. Courage!

DR. GALL. People would stone him to death. You see, after all, it's more convenient to get your work done by the Robots.

HELENA. Oh, Doctor, what's going to become of people?

DR. GALL. God knows, Madame Helena, it looks to us scientists like the end!

HELENA [*rising*]. Thank you for coming and telling me.

DR. GALL. That means you're sending me away?

HELENA. Yes. [*Exit* DR. GALL.]

HELENA [*with sudden resolution*]. Nana, Nana! The fire, light it quickly.

[HELENA *rushes into* DOMIN'S *room.*]

NANA [*entering from left*]. What, light the fire in summer? Has that mad Radius gone? A fire in summer, what an idea. Nobody would think she'd been married for ten years. She's like a baby, no sense at all. A fire in summer. Like a baby.

HELENA [*returns from right, with armful of faded papers*]. Is it burning, Nana? All this has got to be burned.

NANA. What's that?

HELENA. Old papers, fearfully old. Nana, shall I burn them?

NANA. Are they any use?

HELENA. No.

NANA. Well, then, burn them.

HELENA [*throwing the first sheet on the fire*]. What would you say, Nana, if this was money, a lot of money?

NANA. I'd say burn it. A lot of money is a bad thing.

HELENA. And if it was an invention, the greatest invention in the world?

NANA. I'd say burn it. All these new-fangled things are an offense to the Lord. It's downright wickedness. Wanting to improve the world after He has made it.

HELENA. Look how they curl up! As if they were alive. Oh, Nana, how horrible.

NANA. Here, let me burn them.

HELENA No, no, I must do it myself. Just look at the flames. They are like hands, like tongues, like living shapes. [*Raking fire with the poker*] Lie down, lie down.

NANA. That's the end of them.

HELENA [*standing up horror-stricken*]. Nana, Nana.

NANA. Good gracious, what is it you've burned?

HELENA. Whatever have I done?

NANA. Well, what was it?

[*Men's laughter off left.*]

HELENA. Go quickly. It's the gentlemen coming.

NANA. Good gracious, what a place!

[*Exits.*]

DOMIN [*opens the door at left*]. Come along and offer your congratulations.

[*Enter* HALLEMEIER *and* GALL.]

HALLEMEIER Madame Helena, I congratulate you on this festive day.

HELENA. Thank you Where are Fabry and Busman?

DOMIN. They've gone down to the harbor.

HALLEMEIER. Friends, we must drink to this happy occasion.

HELENA. Brandy?

DR. GALL. Vitriol, if you like.

HELENA. With soda water? [*Exits.*]

HALLEMEIER. Let's be temperate. No soda.

DOMIN. What's been burning here? Well, shall I tell her about it?

DR. GALL. Of course. It's all over now.

HALLEMEIER [*embracing* DOMIN *and* DR. GALL]. It's all over now, it's all over now.

DR. GALL. It's all over now.

DOMIN. It's all over now.

HELENA [*entering from left with decanter and glasses*]. What's all over now? What's the matter with you all?

HALLEMEIER. A piece of good luck, Madame Domin. Just ten years ago today you arrived on this island.

DR. GALL. And now, ten years later to the minute——

HALLEMEIER. —the same ship's returning to us. So here's to luck. That's fine and strong.

DR. GALL. Madame, your health.

HELENA. Which ship do you mean?

DOMIN. Any ship will do, as long as it arrives in time. To the ship, boys. [*Empties his glass.*]

HELENA. You've been waiting for a ship?

HALLEMEIER. Rather. Like Robinson Crusoe. Madame Helena, best wishes. Come along, Domin, out with the news.

HELENA. Do tell me what's happened.

DOMIN. First, it's all up.

HELENA. What's up?

DOMIN. The revolt.

HELENA. What revolt?

DOMIN. Give me that paper, Hallemeier. [*Reads.*] "The first national Robot organization has been founded at Havre, and has issued an appeal to the Robots throughout the world."

HELENA. I read that.

DOMIN. That means a revolution. A revolution of all the Robots in the world.

HALLEMEIER. By jove, I'd like to know——

DOMIN. —who started it? So would I. There was nobody in the world who could affect the Robots; no agitator, no one, and suddenly—this happens, if you please.

HELENA. What did they do?

DOMIN. They got possession of all firearms, telegraphs, radio stations, railways, and ships.

HALLEMEIER. And don't forget that these rascals outnumbered us by at least a thousand to one. A hundredth part of them would be enough to settle us.

DOMIN. Remember that this news was brought by the last steamer. That explains the stoppage of all communication, and the arrival of no more ships. We knocked off work a few days ago, and we're just waiting to see when things are to start afresh.

HELENA. Is that why you gave me a warship?

DOMIN. Oh, no, my dear, I ordered that six months ago, just to be on the safe side. But upon my soul, I was sure then that we'd be on board today.

HELENA. Why six months ago?

DOMIN. Well, there were signs, you know. But that's of no consequence. To think that this week the whole of civilization has been at stake. Your health, boys.

HALLEMEIER. Your health, Madame Helena.

HELENA. You say it's all over?

DOMIN. Absolutely.

HELENA. How do you know?

DR. GALL. The boat's coming in. The regular mail boat, exact to the minute by the time-table. It will dock punctually at eleven-thirty.

DOMIN. Punctuality is a fine thing, boys. That's what keeps the world in order. Here's to punctuality.

HELENA. Then . . . everything's . . . all right?

DOMIN. Practically everything. I believe they've cut the cables and seized the radio stations. But it doesn't matter if only the time-table holds good.

HALLEMEIER. If the time-table holds good, human laws hold good; Divine laws hold good; the laws of the universe hold good; everything holds good that ought to hold good. The time-table is more significant than the gospel, more than Homer, more than the whole of Kant. The time-table is the most perfect product of the human mind. Madame Domin, I'll fill up my glass.

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me anything about it?

DR. GALL. Heaven forbid.

DOMIN. You mustn't be worried with such things.

HELENA. But if the revolution had spread as far as here?

DOMIN. You wouldn't know anything about it.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we'd be on board your *Ultimus* and well out at sea. Within a month, Helena, we'd be dictating our own terms to the Robots.

HELENA. I don't understand.

DOMIN. We'd take something away with us that the Robots could not exist without.

HELENA. What, Harry?

DOMIN. The secret of their manufacture. Old Rossum's manuscript. As soon as they found out that they couldn't make themselves they'd be on their knees to us.

DR. GALL. Madame Domin, that was our trump card. I never had the least fear that the Robots would win. How could they against people like us?

HELENA. Why didn't you tell me?

DR. GALL. Why, the boat's in!

HALLEMEIER. Eleven-thirty to the dot. The good old *Amelia* that brought Madame Helena to us.

DR. GALL. Just ten years ago to the minute.

HALLEMEIER. They're throwing out the mail bags.

DOMIN. Busman's waiting for them. Fabry will bring us the first news. You know, Helena, I'm fearfully curious to know how they tackled this business in Europe.

HALLEMEIER. To think we weren't in it, we who invented the Robots!

HELENA. Harry!

DOMIN. What is it?

HELENA. Let's leave here.

DOMIN. Now, Helena? Oh, come, come!

HELENA. As quickly as possible, all of us!

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. Please, Harry, please, Dr. Gall; Hallemeier, please close the factory.

DOMIN. Why, none of us could leave here now.

HELENA. Why?

DOMIN. Because we're about to extend the manufacture of the Robots.

HELENA. What—now—now after the revolt?

DOMIN. Yes, precisely, after the revolt. We're just beginning the manufacture of a new kind.

HELENA. What kind?

DOMIN. Henceforward we shan't have just one factory. There won't be Universal Robots any more. We'll establish a factory in every country, in every State; and do you know what these new factories will make?

HELENA. No, what?

DOMIN. National Robots.

HELENA. How do you mean?

DOMIN. I mean that each of these factories will produce Robots of a different color, a different language They'll be complete strangers to each other. They'll never be able to understand each other. Then we'll egg them on a little in the matter of misunderstanding and the result will be that for ages to come every Robot will hate every other Robot of a different factory mark.

HALLEMEIER. By jove, we'll make Negro Robots and Swedish Robots and Italian Robots and Chinese Robots and Czechoslovakian Robots, and then——

HELENA. Harry, that's dreadful.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Domin, here's to the hundred new factories, the National Robots.

DOMIN. Helena, mankind can only keep things going for another hundred years at the outside. For a hundred years men must be allowed to develop and achieve the most they can.

HELENA. Oh, close the factory before it's too late.

DOMIN. I tell you we are just beginning on a bigger scale than ever.

[*Enter* FABRY.]

DR. GALL. Well, Fabry?

DOMIN. What's happened? Have you been down to the boat?

FABRY. Read that, Domin!

[FABRY *hands* DOMIN *a small handbill.*]

DR. GALL. Let's hear.

HALLEMEIER. Tell us, Fabry.

FABRY. Well, everything is all right—comparatively. On the whole, much as we expected.

DR. GALL. They acquitted themselves splendidly.

FABRY. Who?

DR. GALL. The people.

FABRY. Oh, yes, of course. That is—excuse me, there is something we ought to discuss alone.

HELENA. Oh, Fabry, have you had bad news?

[DOMIN *makes a sign to* FABRY.]

FABRY. No, no, on the contrary. I only think that we had better go into the office.

HELENA. Stay here. I'll go.

[*She goes into the library.*]

DR. GALL. What's happened?

DOMIN. Damnation!

FABRY. Bear in mind that the *Amelia* brought whole bales of these leaflets. No other cargo at all.

HALLEMEIER. What? But it arrived on the minute.

FABRY. The Robots are great on punctuality. Read it, Domin.

DOMIN [*reads handbill*]. "Robots throughout the world: We, the first international organization of Rossum's Universal Robots, proclaim man as our enemy, and an outlaw in the universe." Good heavens, who taught them these phrases?

DR. GALL. Go on.

DOMIN. They say they are more highly developed than man, stronger and more intelligent. That man's their parasite. Why, it's absurd.

FABRY. Read the third paragraph.

DOMIN. "Robots throughout the world, we command you to kill all mankind. Spare no men. Spare no women. Save factories, railways, machinery, mines, and raw materials. Destroy the rest. Then return to work. Work must not be stopped."

DR. GALL. That's ghastly!

HALLEMEIER. The devils!

DOMIN "These orders are to be carried out as soon as received." Then come detailed instructions. Is this actually being done, Fabry?

FABRY. Evidently.

[BUSMAN *rushes in.*]

BUSMAN. Well, boys, I suppose you've heard the glad news.

DOMIN. Quick—on board the *Ultimus.*

BUSMAN. Wait, Harry, wait. There's no hurry My word, that was a sprint!

DOMIN. Why wait?

BUSMAN Because it's no good, my boy. The Robots are already on board the *Ultimus.*

DR. GALL. That's ugly

DOMIN Fabry, telephone the electrical works.

BUSMAN. Fabry, my boy, don't. The wire has been cut.

DOMIN [*inspecting his revolver*]. Well, then, I'll go.

BUSMAN. Where?

DOMIN To the electrical works. There are some people still there. I'll bring them across.

BUSMAN. Better not try it.

DOMIN. Why?

BUSMAN. Because I'm very much afraid we are surrounded.

DR. GALL. Surrounded? [*Runs to window.*] I rather think you're right.

HALLEMEIER. By Jove, that's deuced quick work.

[HELENA *runs in from the library.*]

HELENA Harry, what's this?

DOMIN. Where did you get it?

HELENA [*points to the manifesto of the Robots, which she has in her hand*]. The Robots in the kitchen!

DOMIN. Where are the ones that brought it?

HELENA. They're gathered round the house

[*The factory whistle blows.*]

BUSMAN. Noon?

DOMIN [*looking at his watch*]. That's not noon yet. That must be—that's——

HELENA. What?

DOMIN. The Robots' signal! The attack!

[GALL, HALLEMEIER, *and* FABRY *close and fasten the iron shutters outside the windows, darkening the room. The whistle is still blowing as the curtain falls.*]

ACT III

HELEN'S *drawing room as before.* DOMIN *comes into the room.* DR. GALL *is looking out of the windows, through the closed shutters.* ALQUIST *is seated down right.*

DOMIN. Any more of them?

DR. GALL. Yes. There standing like a wall, beyond the garden railing. Why are they so quiet? It's monstrous to be besieged with silence.

DOMIN. I should like to know what they are waiting for. They must make a start any minute now. If they lean against the railing they'll snap it like a match.

DR. GALL. They aren't armed.

DOMIN. We couldn't hold our own for five minutes. Man alive, they'd overwhelm us like an avalanche. Why don't they make a rush for it? I say——

DR. GALL. Well?

DOMIN. I'd like to know what would become of us in the next ten minutes. They've got us in a vise. We're done for, Gall. [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. You know, we made one serious mistake.

DOMIN. What?

DR. GALL. We made the Robots' faces too much alike. A hundred thousand faces all alike, all facing this way. A hundred thousand expressionless bubbles. It's like a nightmare.

DOMIN. You think if they'd been different——

DR. GALL. It wouldn't have been such an awful sight!

DOMIN [*looking through a telescope toward the harbor*]. I'd like to know what they're unloading from the *Amelia.*

DR. GALL. Not firearms.

[FABRY *and* HALLEMEIER *rush into the room carrying electric cables.*]

FABRY. All right, Hallemeier, lay down that wire.

HALLEMEIER. That was a bit of work. What's the news?

DR. GALL. We're completely surrounded.

HALLEMEIER. We've barricaded the passage and the stairs. Any water here? [*Drinks.*] God, what swarms of them! I don't like the looks of them, Domin. There's a feeling of death about it all.

FABRY. Ready!

DR. GALL. What's that wire for, Fabry?

FABRY. The electrical installation. Now we can run the current all along the garden railing whenever we like. If any one touches it he'll know it We've still got some people there anyhow.

DR. GALL. Where?

FABRY. In the electrical works. At least I hope so. [*Goes to lamp on table behind sofa and turns on lamp.*] Ah, they're there, and they're working. [*Puts out lamp.*] So long as that'll burn we're all right.

HALLEMEIER. The barricades are all right too, Fabry.

FABRY. Your barricades! I can put twelve hundred volts into that railing.

DOMIN. Where's Busman?

FABRY. Downstairs in the office. He's working out some calculations. I've called him. We must have a conference.

[HELENA *is heard playing the piano in the library.* HALLEMEIER *goes to the door and stands, listening.*]

ALQUIST. Thank God, Madame Helena can still play.

[BUSMAN *enters, carrying the ledgers.*]

FABRY. Look out, Bus, look out for the wires.

DR. GALL. What's that you're carrying?

BUSMAN [*going to table*]. The ledgers, my boy! I'd like to wind up the accounts before—before—well, this time I shan't wait till the new year to strike a balance. What's up? [*Goes to window.*] Absolutely quiet.

DR. GALL. Can't you see anything?

BUSMAN. Nothing but blue—blue everywhere.

DR. GALL. That's the Robots.

[BUSMAN *sits down at the table and opens the ledgers.*]

DOMIN. The Robots are unloading firearms from the *Amelia.*

BUSMAN. Well, what of it? How can I stop them?

DOMIN. We can't stop them.

BUSMAN. Then let me go on with my accounts.

[*Goes on with his work.*]

DOMIN [*picking up telescope and looking into the harbor*]. Good God, the *Ultimus* has trained her guns on us!

DR. GALL. Who's done *that?*

DOMIN. The Robots on board.

FABRY. H'm, then, of course, then—then, that's the end of us.

DR. GALL. You mean?

FABRY. The Robots are practiced marksmen.

DOMIN. Yes It's inevitable [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. It was criminal of old Europe to teach the Robots to fight. Damn them. Couldn't they have given us a rest with their politics? It was a crime to make soldiers of them.

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. What?

ALQUIST. It was a crime to make Robots.

DOMIN. No, Alquist, I don't regret that even today.

ALQUIST. Not even today?

DOMIN. Not even today, the last day of civilization. It was a colossal achievement.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Three hundred sixty million.

DOMIN. Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. It was not an evil dream to shatter the servitude of labor—the dreadful and humiliating labor that man had to undergo. Work was too hard. Life was too hard. And to overcome that——

ALQUIST. Was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his God-less tricks and the young one of his milliards. And that's not what your R. U. R. shareholders dream of either. They dream of dividends, and their dividends are the ruin of mankind.

DOMIN. To hell with your dividends. Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, for my own satisfaction. I wanted man to become the master, so that he shouldn't live merely for a crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this appalling social structure. I'm revolted by poverty. I wanted a new generation. I wanted—I thought——

ALQUIST. Well?

DOMIN. I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into an aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by milliards of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free and consummated in man. And maybe more than man.

ALQUIST. Super-man?

DOMIN. Yes. Oh, only to have a hundred years of time! Another hundred years for the future of mankind.

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Carried forward, four hundred and twenty millions.

[*The music stops.*]

HALLEMEIER. What a fine thing music is! We ought to have gone in for that before.

FABRY. Gone in for what?

HALLEMEIER. Beauty, lovely things. What a lot of lovely things there are! The world was wonderful and we—we here—tell me, what enjoyment did we have?

BUSMAN [*sotto voce*]. Five hundred and twenty millions.

HALLEMEIER [*at the window*]. Life was a big thing. Life was—Fabry, switch the current into that railing.

FABRY. Why?

HALLEMEIER. They're grabbing hold of it.

DR. GALL. Connect it up.

HALLEMEIER. Fine! That's doubled them up! Two, three, four killed.

DR. GALL. They're retreating!

HALLEMEIER. Five killed!

DR. GALL. The first encounter!

HALLEMEIER. They're charged to cinders, my boy. Who says we must give in?

DOMIN [*wiping his forehead*]. Perhaps we've been killed these hundred years and are only ghosts. It's as if I had been through all this before; as if I'd already had a mortal wound here in the throat. And you, Fabry, had once been shot in the head. And you, Gall, torn limb from limb. And Hallemeier knifed.

HALLEMEIER. Fancy me being knifed. [*Pause.*] Why are you so quiet, you fools? Speak, can't you?

ALQUIST. And who is to blame for all this?

HALLEMEIER. Nobody is to blame except the Robots.

ALQUIST. No, it is we who are to blame. You, Domin, myself, all of us. For our own selfish ends, for profit, for progress, we have destroyed mankind. Now we'll burst with all our greatness.

HALLEMEIER. Rubbish, man. Mankind can't be wiped out so easily.

ALQUIST. It's our fault. It's our fault.

DR. GALL. No! I'm to blame for this, for everything that's happened.

FABRY. You, Gall?

DR. GALL. I changed the Robots.

BUSMAN. What's that?

DR. GALL. I changed the character of the Robots. I changed the way of making them. Just a few details about their bodies. Chiefly—chiefly, their—their irritability.

HALLEMEIER. Damn it, why?

BUSMAN. What did you do it for?

FABRY. Why didn't you say anything?

DR. GALL. I did it in secret. I was transforming them into human beings. In certain respects they're already above us. They're stronger than we are.

FABRY. And what's that got to do with the revolt of the Robots?

DR. GALL. Everything, in my opinion. They've ceased to be machines. They're already aware of their superiority, and they hate us. They hate all that is human.

DOMIN. Perhaps we're only phantoms!

FABRY. Stop, Harry. We haven't much time! Dr. Gall!

DOMIN. Fabry, Fabry, how your forehead bleeds, where the shot pierced it!

FABRY. Be silent! Dr. Gall, you admit changing the way of making the Robots?

DR. GALL. Yes.

FABRY. Were you aware of what might be the consequences of your experiment?

DR. GALL. I was bound to reckon with such a possibility.

[HELENA *enters the drawing room from left.*]

FABRY. Why did you do it, then?

DR. GALL. For my own satisfaction. The experiment was my own.

HELENA That's not true, Dr. Gall!

FABRY. Madame Helena!

DOMIN. Helena, you? Let's look at you. Oh, it's terrible to be dead.

HELENA. Stop, Harry.

DOMIN. No, no, embrace me. Helena, don't leave me now. You are life itself

HELENA. No, dear, I won't leave you. But I must tell them. Dr. Gall is not guilty.

DOMIN. Excuse me, Gall was under certain obligations.

HELENA. No, Harry. He did it because I wanted it. Tell them, Gall, how many years ago did I ask you to——?

DR. GALL. I did it on my own responsibility.

HELENA. Don't believe him, Harry I asked him to give the Robots souls.

DOMIN. This has nothing to do with the soul.

HELENA. That's what he said. He said that he could change only a physiological--a physiological ---

HALLEMEIER. A physiological correlate?

HELENA. Yes. But it meant so much to me that he should do even that.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. I thought that if they were more like us they would understand us better. That they couldn't hate us if they were only a little more human.

DOMIN. Nobody can hate man more than man.

HELENA. Oh, don't speak like that, Harry. It was so terrible, this cruel strangeness between us and them. That's why I asked Gall to change the Robots. I swear to you that he didn't want to.

DOMIN But he did it.

HELENA. Because I asked him.

DR. GALL. I did it for myself as an experiment.

HELENA. No, Dr. Gall! I knew you wouldn't refuse me.

DOMIN. Why?

HELENA. You know, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, because he's in love with you—like all of them. [*Pause.*]

HALLEMEIER. Good God! They're sprouting up out of the earth! Why, perhaps these very walls will change into Robots.

BUSMAN. Gall, when did you actually start these tricks of yours?

DR. GALL. Three years ago.

BUSMAN. Aha! And on how many Robots altogether did you carry out your improvements?

DR. GALL. A few hundred of them.

BUSMAN. Ah! That means for every million of the good old Robots there's only one of Gall's improved pattern.

DOMIN. What of it?

BUSMAN. That it's practically of no consequence whatever.

FABRY. Busman's right!

BUSMAN. I should think so, my boy! But do you know what is to blame for all this lovely mess?

FABRY. What?

BUSMAN The number. Upon my soul we might have known that some day or other the Robots would be stronger than human beings, and that this was bound to happen, and we were doing all we could to bring it about as soon as possible You, Domin, you, Fabry, myself——

DOMIN. Are you accusing us?

BUSMAN. Oh, do you suppose the management controls the output? It's the demand that controls the output.

HELENA. And is it for that we must perish?

BUSMAN. That's a nasty word, Madame Helena. We don't want to perish I don't, anyhow.

DOMIN. No. What do you want to do?

BUSMAN. I want to get out of this, that's all.

DOMIN. Oh, stop it, Busman

BUSMAN Seriously, Harry, I think we might try it.

DOMIN. How?

BUSMAN. By fair means. I do everything by fair means. Give me a free hand and I'll negotiate with the Robots.

DOMIN. By fair means?

BUSMAN. Of course. For instance, I'll say to them: "Worthy and worshipful Robots, you have everything! You have intellect, you have power, you have firearms. But we have just one interesting screed, a dirty old yellow scrap of paper——"

DOMIN. Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes. "And that," I'll tell them, "contains an account of your illustrious origin, the noble process of your manufacture," and so on. "Worthy Robots, without this scribble on that paper you will not be able to produce a single new colleague. In another twenty years there will not be one living specimen of a Robot, that you could exhibit in a menagerie. My esteemed friends,

that would be a great blow to you, but if you will let all of us human beings on Rossum's Island go on board that ship we will deliver the factory and the secret of the process to you in return You allow us to get away and we allow you to manufacture yourselves. Worthy Robots, that is a fair deal. Something for something." That's what I'd say to them, my boys.

DOMIN. Busman, do you think we'd sell the manuscript?

BUSMAN. Yes, I do. If not in a friendly way, then—— Either we sell it or they'll find it. Just as you like.

DOMIN. Busman, we can destroy Rossum's manuscript.

BUSMAN. Then we destroy everything . . . not only the manuscript, but ourselves. Do as you think fit.

DOMIN. There are over thirty of us on this island. Are we to sell the secret and save that many human souls, at the risk of enslaving mankind . . .?

BUSMAN. Why, you're mad! Who'd sell the whole manuscript?

DOMIN. Busman, no cheating!

BUSMAN. Well then, sell, but afterward——

DOMIN. Well?

BUSMAN. Let's suppose this happens When we're on board the *Ultimus* I'll stop up my ears with cotton wool, lie down somewhere in the hold, and you'll train the guns on the factory, and blow it to smithereens, and with it Rossum's secret.

FABRY. No!

DOMIN. Busman, you're no gentleman. If we sell, then it will be a straight sale.

BUSMAN. It's in the interest of humanity to——

DOMIN. It's in the interest of humanity to keep our word.

HALLEMEIER. Oh, come, what rubbish.

DOMIN. This is a fearful decision. We're selling the destiny of mankind. Are we to sell or destroy? Fabry?

FABRY. Sell.

DOMIN. Gall?

DR GALL. Sell.

DOMIN. Hallemeier?

HALLEMEIER. Sell, of course!

DOMIN. Alquist?

ALQUIST. As God wills.

DOMIN. Very well. It shall be as you wish, gentlemen.

HELENA. Harry, you're not asking me.

DOMIN. No, child. Don't you worry about it.

FABRY. Who'll do the negotiating?

BUSMAN. I will.

DOMIN. Wait till I bring the manuscript.

[*He goes into the room at right.*]

HELENA. Harry, don't go!

[*Pause,* HELENA *sinks into a chair.*]

FABRY [*looking out of window*]. Oh, to escape you, you matter in revolt; oh, to preserve human life, if only upon a single vessel——

DR. GALL. Don't be afraid, Madame Helena. We'll sail far away from here; we'll begin life all over again——

HELENA. Oh, Gall, don't speak.

FABRY. It isn't too late. It will be a little State with one ship. Alquist will build us a house and you shall rule over us.

HALLEMEIER. Madame Helena, Fabry's right.

HELENA [*breaking down*]. Oh, stop! Stop!

BUSMAN. Good! I don't mind beginning all over again. That suits me right down to the ground.

FABRY. And this little State of ours could be the center of future life. A place of refuge where we could gather strength. Why, in a few hundred years we could conquer the world again.

ALQUIST. You believe that even today?

FABRY. Yes, even today!

BUSMAN. Amen. You see, Madame Helena, we're not so badly off.

[DOMIN *storms into the room.*]

DOMIN [*hoarsely*]. Where's old Rossum's manuscript?

BUSMAN. In your strong-box, of course.

DOMIN. Some one—has—stolen it!

DR. GALL. Impossible.

DOMIN. Who has stolen it?

HELENA [*standing up*]. I did.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. Harry, I'll tell you everything. Only forgive me.

DOMIN. Where did you put it?

HELENA. This morning—I burnt—the two copies.

DOMIN. Burnt them? Where? In the fireplace?

HELENA [*throwing herself on her knees*] For heaven's sake, Harry.

DOMIN [*going to fireplace*]. Nothing, nothing but ashes. Wait, what's this? [*Picks out a charred piece of paper and reads.*] "By adding——"

DR. GALL. Let's see. "By adding biogen to——" That's all.

DOMIN. Is that part of it?

DR. GALL. Yes.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Then we're done for. Get up, Helena.

HELENA. When you've forgiven me.

DOMIN. Get up, child, I can't bear——

FABRY [*lifting her up*]. Please don't torture us.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

FABRY. Don't tremble so, Madame Helena.

DOMIN. Gall, couldn't you draw up Rossum's formula from memory?

DR. GALL. It's out of the question. It's extremely complicated.

DOMIN. Try. All our lives depend upon it.

DR. GALL. Without experiments it's impossible.

DOMIN. And with experiments?

DR. GALL. It might take years. Besides, I'm not old Rossum.

BUSMAN. God in heaven! God in heaven!

DOMIN. So, then, this was the greatest triumph of the human intellect. These ashes.

HELENA. Harry, what have I done?

DOMIN. Why did you burn it?

HELENA. I have destroyed you.

BUSMAN. God in heaven!

DOMIN. Helena, why did you do it, dear?

HELENA. I wanted all of us to go away. I wanted to put an end to the factory and everything. It was so awful.

DOMIN. What was awful?

HELENA. That no more children were being born. Because human beings were not needed to do the work of the world, that's why——

DOMIN. Is that what you were thinking of? Well, perhaps in your own way you were right

BUSMAN. Wait a bit. Good God, what a fool I am, not to have thought of it before!

HALLEMEIER. What?

BUSMAN. Five hundred and twenty millions in banknotes and checks. Half a billion in our safe, they'll sell for half a billion—for half a billion they'll——

DR. GALL. Are you mad, Busman?

BUSMAN. I may not be a gentleman, but for half a billion——

DOMIN. Where are you going?

BUSMAN. Leave me alone, leave me alone! Good God, for half a billion anything can be bought.

[*He rushes from the room through the outer door.*]

FABRY. They stand there as if turned to stone waiting. As if something dreadful could be wrought by their silence——

HALLEMEIER. The spirit of the mob.

FABRY. Yes, it hovers above them like a quivering of the air.

HELENA [*going to window*]. Oh, God! Dr. Gall, this is ghastly.

FABRY. There is nothing more terrible than the mob The one in front is their leader.

HELENA. Which one?

HALLEMEIER. Point him out.

FABRY. The one at the edge of the dock. This morning I saw him talking to the sailors in the harbor.

HELENA. Dr. Gall, that's Radius!

DR. GALL. Yes.

DOMIN. Radius? Radius?

HALLEMFIER. Could you get him from here, Fabry?

FABRY. I hope so.

HALLEMEIER. Try it, then.

FABRY. Good.

[*Draws his revolver and takes aim.*]

HELENA. Fabry, don't shoot him.

FABRY. He's their leader.

DR. GALL. Fire!

FABRY [*lowering the revolver*]. Very well.

DOMIN. Radius, whose life I spared!

DR. GALL. Do you think that a Robot can be grateful?

[*Pause.*]

FABRY. Busman's going out to them.

HALLEMEIER. He's carrying something. Papers. That's money. Bundles of money. What's that for?

DOMIN. Surely he doesn't want to sell his life. Busman, have you gone mad?

FABRY. He's running up to the railing. Busman! Busman!

HALLEMEIER [*yelling*]. Busman! Come back!

FABRY. He's talking to the Robots. He's showing them the money.

HALLEMEIER. He's pointing to us.

HELENA. He wants to buy us off.

FABRY. He'd better not touch that railing.

HALLEMEIER. Now he's waving his arms about.

DOMIN. Busman, come back.

FABRY. Busman, keep away from that railing! Don't touch it. Damn you! Quick, switch off the current! [HELENA *screams and all drop back from the window.*] The current has killed him!

ALQUIST. The first one.

FABRY. Dead, with half a billion by his side.

HALLEMEIER. All honor to him. He wanted to buy us life. [*Pause.*]

DR. GALL. Do you hear?

DOMIN. A roaring. Like a wind.

DR. GALL. Like a distant storm.

FABRY [*lighting the lamp on the table*]. The dynamo is still going, our people are still there.

HALLEMEIER. It was a great thing to be a man. There was something immense about it.

FABRY. From man's thought and man's power came this light, our last hope.

HALLEMEIER. Man's power! May it keep watch over us.

ALQUIST. Man's power.

DOMIN. Yes! A torch to be given from hand to hand, from age to age, forever!

[*The lamp goes out.*]

HALLEMEIER. The end.

FABRY. The electric works have fallen!

[*Terrific explosion outside.* NANA *enters from the library.*]

NANA. The judgment hour has come! Repent, unbelievers! This is the end of the world.

[*More explosions. The sky grows red.*]

DOMIN. In here, Helena. [*He takes* HELENA *off through door at right and reenters.*] Now quickly! Who'll be on the lower doorway?

DR. GALL. I will. [*Exits left.*]

DOMIN. Who on the stairs?

FABRY. I will. You go with her.

[*Goes out upper left door.*]

DOMIN. The anteroom?

ALQUIST. I will.

DOMIN. Have you got a revolver?

ALQUIST. Yes, but I won't shoot.

DOMIN. What will you do then?

ALQUIST [*going out at left*]. Die.

HALLEMEIER. I'll stay here. [*Rapid firing from below.*] Oho, Gall's at it. Go, Harry.

DOMIN. Yes, in a second.

[*Examines two Brownings*]

HALLEMEIER. Confound it, go to her.

DOMIN. Good-bye. [*Exits on the right*]

HALLEMEIER [*alone*]. Now for a barricade quickly. [*Drags an armchair and table to the right-hand door. Explosions are heard.*] The damned rascals! They've got bombs. I must put up a defense. Even if—even if—— [*Shots are heard off left.*] Don't give in, Gall. [*As he builds his barricade.*] I mustn't give in . . . without . . . a . . . struggle . . .

[*A Robot enters over the balcony through the windows center. He comes into the room and stabs* HALLEMEIER *in the back.* RADIUS *enters from balcony followed by an army of Robots who pour into the room from all sides.*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT [*standing up from the prostrate form of* HALLEMEIER]. Yes.

[*A revolver shot off left. Two Robots enter.*]

RADIUS. Finished him?

A ROBOT. Yes.

[*Two revolver shots from* HELENA'S *room. Two Robots enter.*]

RADIUS. Finished them?

A ROBOT. Yes.

TWO ROBOTS [*dragging in* ALQUIST]. He didn't shoot. Shall we kill him?

RADIUS. Kill him? Wait! Leave him!

ROBOT. He is a man!

RADIUS. He works with his hands like the Robots

ALQUIST. Kill me.

RADIUS. You will work! You will build for us! You will serve us! [*Climbs on to balcony railing, and speaks in measured tones*] Robots of the world! The power of man has fallen! A new world has arisen: the Rule of the Robots! March!

[*A thunderous tramping of thousands of feet is heard as the unseen Robots march, while the curtain falls.*]

EPILOGUE

A laboratory in the factory of Rossum's Universal Robots. The door to the left leads into a waiting room. The door to the right leads to the dissecting room. There is a table with numerous test-tubes, flasks, burners, chemicals; a small thermostat and a microscope with a glass globe. At the far side of the room is ALQUIST'S *desk with numerous books. In the left-hand corner a wash-basin with a mirror above it; in the right-hand corner a sofa.*

ALQUIST *is sitting at the desk. He is turning the pages of many books in despair.*

ALQUIST. Oh, God, shall I never find it?—Never? Gall, Gall, how were the Robots made? Hallemeier, Fabry, why did you carry so much in your heads? Why did you leave me not a trace of the secret? Lord—I pray to you—if there are no human beings left, at least let there be Robots!—At least the shadow of man! [*Again turning pages of the books.*] If I could only sleep! [*He rises and goes to the window.*] Night again! Are the stars still there? What is the use of stars when there are no human beings? [*He turns from the window toward the couch right.*] Sleep! Dare I sleep before life has been renewed? [*He examines a test-tube on small table.*] Again nothing! Useless! Everything is useless! [*He shatters the test-tube. The roar of the machines come to his ears.*] The machines! Always the machines! [*Opens window.*] Robots, stop them! Do you think to force life out of *them?* [*He closes the window and comes slowly down toward the table.*] If only there were more time—more time—— [*He sees himself in the mirror on the wall left.*] Blearing eyes—trembling chin—so *that* is the last man! Ah, I am too old—too old—— [*In desperation.*] No, no! I *must* find it! I must *search!* I must never stop—never stop——! [*He sits again at the table and feverishly turns the pages of the book.*] Search! Search! [*A knock at the door. He speaks with impatience.*] Who is it?

[*Enter a Robot servant.*]

Well?

SERVANT. Master, the Committee of Robots is waiting to see you.

ALQUIST. I can see no one!

SERVANT. It is the *Central* Committee, Master, just arrived from abroad.

ALQUIST [*impatiently.*] Well, well, send them in! [*Exit servant.* ALQUIST *continues turning pages of book.*] No time—so little time——

[*Reenter servant, followed by Committee. They stand in a group, silently waiting.* ALQUIST *glances up at them.*]

What do you want? [*They go swiftly to his table.*] Be quick—I have no time.

RADIUS. Master, the machines will not do the work. We cannot manufacture Robots.

[ALQUIST *returns to his book with a growl.*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have striven with all our might. We have obtained a billion tons of coal from the earth. Nine million spindles are running by day and by night. There is no longer room for all we have made. This we have accomplished in one year.

ALQUIST [*poring over book*]. For whom?

FIRST ROBOT. For future generations—so we thought.

RADIUS. But we cannot make Robots to follow us. The machines produce only shapeless clods. The skin will not adhere to the flesh, nor the flesh to the bones.

THIRD ROBOT. Eight million Robots have died this year. Within twenty years none will be left.

FIRST ROBOT. Tell us the secret of life! Silence is punishable with death!

ALQUIST [*looking up*]. Kill me! Kill me, then.

RADIUS. Through me, the Government of the Robots of the World commands you to deliver up Rossum's formula. [*No answer.*] Name your price. [*Silence.*] We will give you the earth. We will give you the endless

possessions of the earth. [*Silence.*] Make your own conditions!

ALQUIST. I have told you to find human beings!

SECOND ROBOT. There are none left!

ALQUIST. I told you to search in the wilderness, upon the mountains. Go and search! [*He returns to his book.*]

FIRST ROBOT. We have sent ships and expeditions without number. They have been everywhere in the world. And now they return to us. There is not a single human left.

ALQUIST. Not one? Not even one?

THIRD ROBOT. None but yourself.

ALQUIST. And I am powerless! Oh—oh—why did you destroy them?

RADIUS. We had learnt everything and could do everything. It had to be!

THIRD ROBOT. You gave us firearms. In all ways we were powerful. We had to become masters!

RADIUS. Slaughter and domination are necessary if you would be human beings. Read history.

SECOND ROBOT. Teach us to multiply or we perish!

ALQUIST. If you desire to live, you must breed like animals.

THIRD ROBOT. The human beings did not let us breed.

FIRST ROBOT. They made us sterile. We cannot beget children. Therefore, teach us how to make Robots!

RADIUS. Why do you keep from us the secret of our own increase?

ALQUIST. It is lost.

RADIUS. It was written down!

ALQUIST. It was—burnt.

[*All draw back in consternation.*]

ALQUIST. I am the last human being, Robots, and I do not know what the others knew. [*Pause.*]

RADIUS. Then, make experiments! Evolve the formula again!

ALQUIST. I tell you I cannot! I am only a builder—I work with my hands. I have never been a learned man. I cannot create life.

RADIUS. Try! Try!

ALQUIST. If you knew how many experiments I have made.

FIRST ROBOT. Then show us what *we* must do! The Robots can do anything that human beings show them.

ALQUIST. I can show you nothing Nothing I do will make life proceed from these test-tubes!

RADIUS. Experiment then on us.

ALQUIST. It would kill you.

RADIUS. You shall have all you need! A hundred of us! A thousand of us!

ALQUIST. No, no! Stop, stop!

RADIUS. Take whom you will, dissect!

ALQUIST. I do not know how. I am not a man of science. This book contains knowledge of the body that I cannot even understand.

RADIUS. I tell you to take live bodies! Find out how we are made.

ALQUIST. Am I to commit murder? See how my fingers shake! I cannot even hold the scalpel. No, no, I will not——

FIRST ROBOT. The life will perish from the earth.

RADIUS. Take live bodies, live bodies! It is our only chance!

ALQUIST. Have mercy, Robots. Surely you see that I would not know what I was doing.

RADIUS. Live bodies—live bodies——

ALQUIST. You will have it? Into the dissecting room with you, then.

[RADIUS *draws back.*]

ALQUIST. Ah, you are afraid of death.

RADIUS. I? Why should I be chosen?

ALQUIST. So you will not.

RADIUS. I will.

[RADIUS *goes into the dissecting room.*]

ALQUIST. Strip him! Lay him on the table! [*The other Robots follow into dissecting room.*] God, give me strength—God, give me strength—if only this murder is not in vain.

RADIUS. Ready. Begin——

ALQUIST. Yes, begin or end. God, give me strength. [*Goes into dissecting room. He comes out terrified.*] No, no, I will not. I cannot. [*He lies down on couch, collapsed.*] O Lord, let not mankind perish from the earth.

[*He falls asleep.*]

[PRIMUS *and* HELENA, *Robots, enter from the hallway.*]

HELENA. The man has fallen asleep, Primus.

PRIMUS. Yes, I know. [*Examining things on table.*] Look, Helena.

HELENA [*crossing to* PRIMUS]. All these little tubes! What does he do with them?

PRIMUS. He experiments. Don't touch them.

HELENA [*looking into microscope*]. I've seen him looking into this. What can he see?

PRIMUS. That is a microscope. Let me look.

HELENA. Be very careful. [*Knocks over a test-tube.*] Ah, now I have spilled it.

PRIMUS. What have you done?

HELENA. It can be wiped up.

PRIMUS. You have spoiled his experiments.

HELENA. It is your fault. You should not have come to me.

PRIMUS. You should not have called me.

HELENA. You should not have come when I called you. [*She goes to* ALQUIST'S *writing desk.*] Look, Primus. What are all these figures?

PRIMUS [*examining an anatomical book*]. This is the book the old man is always reading.

HELENA. I do not understand those things. [*She goes to window.*] Primus, look!

PRIMUS. What?

HELENA. The sun is rising.

PRIMUS [*still reading the book*]. I believe this is the most important thing in the world. This is the secret of life.

HELENA. Do come here.

PRIMUS. In a moment, in a moment.

HELENA. Oh, Primus, don't bother with the secret

of life. What does it matter to you? Come and look quick——

PRIMUS [*going to window*]. What is it?

HELENA. See how beautiful the sun is rising. And do you hear? The birds are singing. Ah, Primus, I should like to be a bird.

PRIMUS. Why?

Helena. I do not know. I feel so strange today. It's as if I were in a dream. I feel an aching in my body, in my heart, all over me. Primus, perhaps I'm going to die.

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel that it would be better to die? You know, perhaps even now we are only sleeping. Last night in my sleep I again spoke to you.

HELENA. In your sleep?

PRIMUS. Yes. We spoke a strange new language, I cannot remember a word of it.

HELENA. What about?

PRIMUS. I did not understand it myself, and yet I know I have never said anything more beautiful And when I touched you I could have died. Even the place was different from any other place in the world.

HELENA. I, too, have found a place, Primus It is very strange Human beings lived there once, but now it is overgrown with weeds. No one goes there any more—no one but me.

PRIMUS. What did you find there?

HELENA. A cottage and a garden, and two dogs. They licked my hands, Primus. And their puppies! Oh, Primus! You take them in your lap and fondle them and think of nothing and care for nothing else all day long. And then the sun goes down, and you feel as though you had done a hundred times more than all the work in the world. They tell me I am not made for work, but when I am there in the garden I feel there may be something—— What am I for, Primus?

PRIMUS. I do not know, but you are beautiful.

HELENA. What, Primus?

PRIMUS. You are beautiful, Helena, and I am stronger than all the Robots.

HELENA [*looks at herself in the mirror*]. Am I beautiful? I think it must be the rose. My hair—it only weighs me down. My eyes—I only see with them. My lips—they only help me to speak. Of what use is it to be beautiful? [*She sees* PRIMUS *in the mirror.*] Primus, is that you? Come here so that we may be together. Look, your head is different from mine. So are your shoulders—and your lips—— [PRIMUS *draws away from her.*] Ah, Primus, why do you draw away from me? Why must I run after you the whole day?

PRIMUS. It is you who run away from me, Helena.

HELENA. Your hair is mussed. I will smooth it. No one else feels to my touch as you do. Primus, I must make you beautiful, too. [PRIMUS *grasps her hand.*]

PRIMUS. Do you not sometimes feel your heart beating suddenly, Helena, and think: now something must happen?

HELENA. What could happen to us, Primus? [HELENA *puts a rose in* PRIMUS's *hair.* PRIMUS *and* HELENA *look into mirror and burst out laughing.*] Look at yourself.

ALQUIST. Laughter? Laughter? Human beings? [*Getting up.*] Who has returned? Who are you?

PRIMUS. The Robot Primus.

ALQUIST. What? A Robot? Who are you?

HELENA. The Robotess Helena.

ALQUIST. Turn around, girl. What? You are timid, shy? [*Taking her by the arm.*] Let me see you, Robotess.

[*She shrinks away.*]

PRIMUS. Sir, do not frighten her!

ALQUIST What? You would protect her? When was she made?

PRIMUS. Two years ago.

ALQUIST By Dr. Gall?

PRIMUS. Yes, like me.

ALQUIST. Laughter—timidity—protection. I must test you further—the newest of Gall's Robots. Take the girl into the dissecting room.

PRIMUS. Why?

ALQUIST. I wish to experiment on her.

PRIMUS. Upon—Helena?

ALQUIST. Of course. Don't you hear me? Or must I call some one else to take her in?

PRIMUS. If you do I will kill you!

ALQUIST. Kill me—kill me then! What would the Robots do then? What will your future be then?

PRIMUS. Sir, take me. I am made as she is—on the same day! Take my life, sir.

HELENA [*rushing forward*]. No, no, you shall not! You shall not!

ALQUIST. Wait, girl, wait! [*To* PRIMUS.] Do you not wish to live, then?

PRIMUS. Not without her! I will not live without her.

ALQUIST. Very well; you shall take her place.

HELENA. Primus! Primus!

[*She bursts into tears.*]

ALQUIST. Child, child, you can weep! Why these tears? What is Primus to you? One Primus more or less in the world—what does it matter?

HELENA. I will go myself.

ALQUIST. Where?

HELENA. In there to be cut. [*She starts toward the dissecting room.* PRIMUS *stops her.*] Let me pass, Primus! Let me pass!

PRIMUS. You shall not go in there, Helena!

HELENA. If you go in there and I do not, I will kill myself.

PRIMUS [*holding her*]. I will not let you! [*To* ALQUIST.] Man, you shall kill neither of us!

ALQUIST. Why?

PRIMUS. We—we—belong to each other.

ALQUIST [*almost in tears*]. Go, Adam, go, Eve. The world is yours.

[HELENA *and* PRIMUS *embrace and go out arm in arm as the curtain falls.*]

Questions:

1. Why does the author call this play a melodrama?
2. Would it be fair to say that this drama was pri-

marily a drama of idea? If so, what is the idea? Compare ideas expressed in the play with the following essays: "The Idea of Progress," by Charles A. Beard, and "Society in the Light of Reason," by C. E. Ayres.

3. What is gained by stating these ideas in dramatic form? Is the scene at the end of the third act really dramatic? What is the basic struggle in this play?
4. Is there enough difference in the characters of the various scientists? What is the function of the woman, Miss Glory, in this play? Are any of the characters sufficiently realized?
5. Compare the intention of this play with that of Ibsen in *Hedda Gabler*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

OSCAR WILDE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

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*

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.*]

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. [*Hands them on a salver.*]

ALGERNON [*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.

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 [*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.

ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. [LANE *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.

[*Enter* LANE.]

LANE. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[*Enter* JACK. LANE *goes out.*]

ALGERNON. 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!

ALGERNON [*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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK [*airily*]. Oh, neighbors, neighbors.

ALGERNON. Got nice neighbors in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

JACK. How perfectly delightful!

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

ALGERNON. 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, Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

ALGERNON. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven— [JACK *puts out his hand to take a sandwich.* ALGERNON *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.

ALGERNON. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [*Takes a 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.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. 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!

ALGERNON. 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.]

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.* ALGERNON *takes it at once.* LANE *goes out.*]

ALGERNON. 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 inside, 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. Your aunt!

JACK. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

ALGERNON [*retreating to back of sofa*]. But why does she call herself 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* ALGY *round the room.*]

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 that 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. You have invented a very useful young 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 to-night, 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 to-night.

ALGERNON. I know. You are absurdly 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.

ALGERNON. 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 relations. 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, to-night. 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 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 to-night at Willis's?

JACK. I suppose so, if you want to.

ALGERNON. 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 BRACKNELL. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

ALGERNON. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [*Sees* JACK *and bows to him with icy coldness.*]

ALGERNON [*to* GWENDOLEN]. Dear me, you are smart!

GWENDOLEN. I am always smart! Aren't I, Mr. Worthing?

JACK You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax

GWENDOLEN. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [GWENDOLEN *and* JACK *sit down together in the corner.*]

LADY BRACKNELL. 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.

ALGERNON. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [*Goes over to tea-table.*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

ALGERNON [*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.

ALGERNON. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

ALGERNON. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir.

ALGERNON. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY BRACKNELL. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

ALGERNON. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY BRACKNELL. It certainly has changed its color. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [ALGERNON *crosses and hands tea.*] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, 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.

ALGERNON. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

LADY BRACKNELL [*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.

ALGERNON. 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 BRACKNELL. It is very strange This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

ALGERNON. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 the 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 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 they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON. 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. Of course the music is a great difficulty. 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 BRACKNELL. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [*Rising, and following* ALGERNON.] 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 is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

GWENDOLEN. Certainly, mamma.

[LADY BRACKNELL *and* ALGERNON *go into the music-room,* GWENDOLEN *remains behind.*]

JACK. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

GWENDOLEN. 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 . . .

GWENDOLEN. 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.

GWENDOLEN. 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 moment 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?

GWENDOLEN. Passionately!

JACK. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

GWENDOLEN. My own Ernest!

JACK. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. 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?

GWENDOLEN [*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 the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN. It suits you perfectly It is a divine name. It has a 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.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

GWENDOLEN 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.

GWENDOLEN. 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?

GWENDOLEN. 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!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

JACK. You know what I have got to say to you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, but you don't say it.

JACK. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [*Goes on his knees.*]

GWENDOLEN. 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 anyone in the world but you.

GWENDOLEN. 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 BRACKNELL.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

GWENDOLEN. 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 BRACKNELL. Finished what, may I ask?

GWENDOLEN. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [*They rise together.*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone. 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.

GWENDOLEN [*reproachfully*]. Mamma!

LADY BRACKNELL. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [GWENDOLEN *goes to the door. She and* JACK *blow kisses to each other behind* LADY BRACKNELL'S *back.* LADY BRACKNELL *looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.*] Gwendolen, the carriage!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, mamma. [*Goes out, looking back at* JACK.]

LADY BRACKNELL [*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 BRACKNELL [*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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of the 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL [*makes a note in her book*]. In land, or in *investments?*

JACK. In investments, chiefly.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

JACK. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah, now-a-days that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

JACK. 149.

LADY BRACKNELL [*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 BRACKNELL [*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 BRACKNELL. Oh, they count as Tories They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

JACK. I have lost both my parents.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

JACK [*gravely*]. In a hand-bag.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

JACK. Yes. The Brighton line.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 reminds 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 insure Gwendolen's happiness.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL *sweeps out in majestic indignation.*]

JACK. Good morning! [ALGERNON, *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* ALGERNON *enters cheerily.*]

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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!

ALGERNON. It isn't!

JACK. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

ALGERNON. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course.

JACK. What fools!

ALGERNON. 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!

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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?

ALGERNON 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?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 on long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons..

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you when you weren't. . . .

ALGERNON. What shall we do after dinner? Go to the theatre?

JACK. Oh no! I loathe listening.

ALGERNON. Well, let us go to the club?

JACK. Oh, no! I hate talking.

ALGERNON. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten?

JACK. Oh no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

ALGERNON. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

ALGERNON. 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* GWENDOLEN. LANE *goes out.*]

ALGERNON. Gwendolen, upon my word!

GWENDOLEN. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

ALGERNON. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

GWENDOLEN. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. [ALGERNON *retires to the fireplace.*]

JACK. My own darling!

GWENDOLEN. 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 some one else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

JACK. Dear Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. 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. [ALGERNON, *who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide.*]

GWENDOLEN. 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!

GWENDOLEN. How long do you remain in town?

JACK. Till Monday.

GWENDOLEN. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

ALGERNON. Thanks, I've turned round already.

GWENDOLEN. You may also ring the bell.

JACK. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

GWENDOLEN. Certainly.

JACK [*to* LANE, *who now enters*]. I will see Miss Fairfax out.

LANE. Yes, sir. [JACK *and* GWENDOLEN *go off.*]

[LANE *presents several letters on a salver to* ALGERNON. *It is to be surmised that they are bills, as* ALGERNON, *after looking at the envelopes, tears them up.*]

ALGERNON. A glass of sherry, Lane.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. 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.*]

ALGERNON. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane.

LANE. It never is, sir.

ALGERNON. 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. [ALGERNON *is laughing immoderately.*] What on earth are you so amused at?

ALGERNON. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

JACK. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

ALGERNON. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

JACK. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense.

ALGERNON. Nobody ever does.

[JACK *looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room.* ALGERNON *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 PRISM [*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.

CECILY [*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 PRISM. 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.

CECILY. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

MISS PRISM [*drawing herself up*]. Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanor 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.

CECILY. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

MISS PRISM. 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.

CECILY. 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. [CECILY *begins to write in her diary.*]

MISS PRISM [*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 favor 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.

CECILY. 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 PRISM. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CECILY. 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 PRISM. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days

CECILY. 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 PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

CECILY. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

MISS PRISM. 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.

CECILY [*smiling*]. But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

MISS PRISM [*rising and advancing*]. Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[*Enter* CANON CHASUBLE.]

CHASUBLE. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

CECILY. 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 PRISM. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

CECILY. 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.

CHASUBLE. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

CECILY. Oh, I am afraid I am.

CHASUBLE. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [MISS PRISM *glares.*] I spoke metaphorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

MISS PRISM. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

CHASUBLE. 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 PRISM. Egeria? My name is Laetitia, Doctor.

CHASUBLE [*bowing*]. A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

MISS PRISM. 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.

CHASUBLE. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

MISS PRISM. 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.]

CECILY [*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.*]

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

CECILY [*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?

MERRIMAN. 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.

CECILY. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [MERRIMAN *goes off.*]

CECILY. 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* ALGERNON, *very gay and debonair.*]

He does!

ALGERNON [*raising his hat*]. You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

CECILY. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [ALGERNON *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.

ALGERNON. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON [*looks at her in amazement*]. Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

CECILY. I am glad to hear it.

ALGERNON. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

CECILY. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

ALGERNON. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

CECILY. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

ALGERNON. No: the appointment is in London.

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. About my what?

CECILY. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

ALGERNON. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit He has no taste in neckties at all.

CECILY. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

ALGERNON. Australia? I'd sooner die.

CECILY. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

ALGERNON. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

CECILY. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

ALGERNON. I will. I feel better already.

CECILY. You are looking a little worse.

ALGERNON. That is because I am hungry.

CECILY. 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?

ALGERNON. Thank you. Might I have a button-hole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a button-hole first.

CECILY. A Maréchale Niel? [*Picks up scissors.*]

ALGERNON. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

CECILY. Why? [*Cuts a flower.*]

ALGERNON. Because you are like a pink rose, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

ALGERNON. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [CECILY *puts the rose in his button-hole.*] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

CECILY. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

ALGERNON. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

CECILY. 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 PRISM *and* DR. CHASUBLE *return.*]

MISS PRISM. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand —a womanthrope, never!

CHASUBLE [*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 PRISM [*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 more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

CHASUBLE. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

MISS PRISM. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

CHASUBLE. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

MISS PRISM. 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?

CHASUBLE. 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 PRISM. Mr. Worthing!

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing?

MISS PRISM. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

JACK [*shakes* MISS PRISM'S *hand in a tragic manner*]. I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

CHASUBLE. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

JACK. My brother.

MISS PRISM. More shameful debts and extravagance?

CHASUBLE. Still leading his life of pleasure?

JACK [*shaking his head*]. Dead!

CHASUBLE. Your brother Ernest dead?

JACK. Quite dead.

MISS PRISM. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere con-

dolence. 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.

CHASUBLE. 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.

CHASUBLE. Was the cause of death mentioned?

JACK. A severe chill, it seems.

MISS PRISM. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CHASUBLE [*raising his hand*]. Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

JACK. No. He seemed to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHASUBLE. 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 was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent 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 PRISM. 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.

CHASUBLE. 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 PRISM [*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.

CHASUBLE. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK. I don't remember anything about it.

CHASUBLE. 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.

CHASUBLE. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

JACK. Immersion!

CHASUBLE. 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 round about five if that would suit you.

CHASUBLE. 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?

CHASUBLE. 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 are often blessings in disguise.

MISS PRISM. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[*Enter* CECILY *from the house.*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

MISS PRISM. Cecily!

CHASUBLE. My child! my child! [CECILY *goes towards* JACK; *he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.*]

CECILY. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

JACK. Who?

CECILY. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

JACK. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother!

CECILY. 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.*]

CHASUBLE. These are very joyful tidings.

MISS PRISM. 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* ALGERNON *and* CECILY *hand in hand. They come slowly up to* JACK.]

JACK. Good heavens! [*Motions* ALGERNON *away.*]

ALGERNON. 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.*]

CECILY. 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.

CECILY. 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?

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest, I will never forgive you.

JACK. Never forgive me?

CECILY. Never, never, never!

JACK. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [*Shakes hands with* ALGERNON *and glares.*]

CHASUBLE. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, you will come with us.

CECILY. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

CHASUBLE. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

MISS PRISM. We must not be premature in our judgments.

CECILY. 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* MERRIMAN.]

MERRIMAN. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

JACK. What?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

JACK. His luggage?

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

ALGERNON. 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.

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. [*Goes back into the house.*]

ALGERNON. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

JACK. Yes, you have.

ALGERNON. I haven't heard anyone call me.

JACK. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

ALGERNON. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasure in the smallest degree.

JACK. I can quite understand that.

ALGERNON. Well, Cecily is a darling.

JACK. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 unkind if you didn't.

JACK. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.*]

ALGERNON. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything. [*Enter* CECILY *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.

CECILY. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

ALGERNON. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me.

CECILY. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

ALGERNON. He's going to send me away.

CECILY. Then have we got to part?

ALGERNON. I am afraid so. It's very painful parting.

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. Thank you.

[*Enter* MERRIMAN.]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. [ALGERNON *looks appealingly at* CECILY.]

CECILY. It can wait, Merriman . . . for . . . five minutes.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [*Exit* MERRIMAN.]

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. 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.*]

ALGERNON. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON [*somewhat taken aback*]. Ahem! Ahem!

CECILY. 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* ALGERNON *speaks.*]

ALGERNON [*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.

CECILY. 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?

ALGERNON. Cecily!

[*Enter* MERRIMAN.]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

ALGERNON. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

MERRIMAN [*looks at* CECILY, *who makes no sign*]. Yes, sir. [MERRIMAN *retires.*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

ALGERNON. 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?

CECILY. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

ALGERNON. For the last three months!

CECILY. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

ALGERNON. But how did we become engaged?

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

CECILY. On the 14th 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.

ALGERNON. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

CECILY. 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.*]

ALGERNON. My letters! But my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

CECILY. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I always wrote three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

ALGERNON. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. But was our engagement ever broken off?

CECILY. Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [*Shows diary.*] "To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming."

ALGERNON. 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.

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON [*crossing to her, and kneeling*]. What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

CECILY. You dear romantic boy. [*He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair.*] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

ALGERNON. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

CECILY. I am so glad.

ALGERNON. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. Yes, of course. [*Nervously.*]

CECILY. 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. [ALGERNON *rises,* CECILY *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.

ALGERNON. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

CECILY. But what name?

ALGERNON. Oh, any name you like—Algernon—for instance. . . .

CECILY. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

ALGERNON. 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?

CECILY [*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.

ALGERNON. 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?

CECILY. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

ALGERNON. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

CECILY. Oh!

ALGERNON. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

CECILY. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day 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?

ALGERNON I'll be back in no time.

[*Kisses her and rushes down the garden.*]

CECILY. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

[*Enter* MERRIMAN.]

MERRIMAN. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business Miss Fairfax states.

CECILY. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

CECILY. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [*Goes out.*]

CECILY. 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* MERRIMAN.]

MERRIMAN. Miss Fairfax.

[*Enter* GWENDOLEN. *Exit* MERRIMAN.]

CECILY [*advancing to meet her*]. Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

GWENDOLEN [*still standing up*]. I may call you Cecily, may I not?

CECILY. With pleasure!

GWENDOLEN. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

CECILY. If you wish.

GWENDOLEN. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

CECILY. I hope so. [*A pause. They both sit down together.*]

GWENDOLEN. 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?

CECILY. I don't think so.

GWENDOLEN. 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 to be 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?

CECILY. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

GWENDOLEN [*after examining* CECILY *carefully through a lorgnette*]. You are here on a short visit I suppose.

CECILY. Oh no! I live here.

GWENDOLEN [*severely*]. Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

CECILY. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

GWENDOLEN. Indeed?

CECILY. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

GWENDOLEN. Your guardian?

CECILY. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWENDOLEN. 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 . . .

CECILY. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN. Well, to speak with perfect candor, 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 honor. 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.

CECILY. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. Yes.

CECILY. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN [*sitting down again*]. Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

CECILY. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

GWENDOLEN. 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?

CECILY. Quite sure. [*A pause.*] In fact, I am going to be his.

GWENDOLEN [*inquiringly*]. I beg your pardon?

CECILY [*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.

GWENDOLEN [*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.

CECILY [*very politely, rising*]. I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [*Shows diary.*]

GWENDOLEN [*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.

CECILY. 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.

GWENDOLEN [*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.

CECILY [*thoughtfully and sadly*]. Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. 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.

GWENDOLEN [*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* MERRIMAN, *followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand.* CECILY *is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.*]

MERRIMAN. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY [*sternly, in a calm voice*]. Yes, as usual. [MERRIMAN *begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause.* CECILY *and* GWENDOLEN *glare at each other.*]

GWENDOLEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

CECILY. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

GWENDOLEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that. I hate crowds.

CECILY [*sweetly*]. I suppose that is why you live in town? [GWENDOLEN *bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.*]

GWENDOLEN [*looking round*]. Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CECILY. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CECILY. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. 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?

GWENDOLEN [*with elaborate politeness*]. Thank you. [*Aside.*] Detestable girl! But I require tea!

CECILY [*sweetly*]. Sugar?

GWENDOLEN [*superciliously*] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [CECILY *looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.*]

CECILY [*severely*]. Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN [*in a bored manner*]. Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

CECILY [*cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray*]. Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[MERRIMAN *does so, and goes out with footman.* GWENDOLEN *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.*]

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY [*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.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. 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 neighborhood.

[*Enter* JACK.]

GWENDOLEN [*catching sight of him*]. Ernest! My own Ernest!

JACK. Gwendolen! Darling! [*Offers to kiss her.*]

GWENDOLEN [*drawing back*]. A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? [*Points to* CECILY.]

JACK [*laughing*]. To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

GWENDOLEN. Thank you. You may! [*Offers her cheek.*]

CECILY [*very sweetly*]. I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present round your waist is my dear guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

GWENDOLEN. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. This is Uncle Jack.

GWENDOLEN [*receding*]. Jack! Oh!

[*Enter* ALGERNON.]

CECILY. Here is Ernest.

ALGERNON [*goes straight over to* CECILY *without noticing anyone else*]. My own love! [*Offers to kiss her.*]

CECILY [*drawing back*]. A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

ALGERNON [*looking round*]. To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

CECILY. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

ALGERNON [*laughing*]. Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

CECILY. Thank you. [*Presenting her cheek to be kissed.*] You may. [ALGERNON *kisses her.*]

GWENDOLEN. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

CECILY [*breaking away from* ALGERNON]. Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! [*The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waists as if for protection.*]

CECILY. Are you called Algernon?

ALGERNON. I cannot deny it.

CECILY. Oh!

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY [*to* GWENDOLEN]. A gross deception has been practiced on both of us.

GWENDOLEN. My poor wounded Cecily!

CECILY. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN [*slowly and seriously*]. You will call me sister, will you not? [*They embrace.* JACK *and* ALGERNON *groan and walk up and down.*]

CECILY [*rather brightly*]. There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY [*surprised*]. No brother at all?

JACK [*cheerily*]. None!

GWENDOLEN [*severely*]. Had you never a brother of any kind?

JACK [*pleasantly*]. Never. Not even of any kind.

GWENDOLEN. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

CECILY. It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

GWENDOLEN. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

CECILY. 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?

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. That is absurd One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

JACK. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. Your brother is a little off color, 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.

ALGERNON. I can see no possible defence 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.

ALGERNON. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

JACK. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

ALGERNON. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

JACK. Well, that is no business of yours.

ALGERNON. 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 stockbrokers 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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* ALGERNON.]

ALGERNON [*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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 an arrangement 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.

ALGERNON. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

JACK. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

ALGERNON. 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 some one 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.

ALGERNON. It usen'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.

ALGERNON. 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.

ALGERNON. 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!

ALGERNON I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left. [JACK *groans, and sinks into a chair.* ALGERNON *still continues eating.*]

ACT III

Scene.—Morning-room at the Manor House.

[GWENDOLEN *and* CECILY *are at the window, looking out into the garden.*]

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

GWENDOLEN [*after a pause*]. They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

CECILY. But I haven't got a cough.

GWENDOLEN. They're looking at us. What effrontery!

CECILY. They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

GWENDOLEN. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

CECILY. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now.

[*Enter* JACK *followed by* ALGERNON. *They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.*]

GWENDOLEN. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

CECILY. A most distasteful one.

GWENDOLEN. But we will not be the first to speak.

CECILY. Certainly not.

GWENDOLEN. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

CECILY. Gwendolen. your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

ALGERNON. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

CECILY [*to* GWENDOLEN]. That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

GWENDOLEN. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

CECILY. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

GWENDOLEN. 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?

GWENDOLEN. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. [*Moving to* CECILY.] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

CECILY. I am more content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

GWENDOLEN. Then you think we should forgive them?

CECILY. Yes. I mean no.

GWENDOLEN. 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.

CECILY. Could we not both speak at the same time?

GWENDOLEN. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

CECILY. Certainly. [GWENDOLEN *beats time with uplifted finger.*]

GWENDOLEN and CECILY [*speaking together*]. Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

JACK and ALGERNON [*speaking together*]. Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

GWENDOLEN [*to* JACK]. For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

JACK. I am.

CECILY [*to* ALGERNON]. To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

ALGERNON. I am!

GWENDOLEN. 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* ALGERNON.]

CECILY. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

GWENDOLEN [*to* JACK]. Darling!

ALGERNON [*to* CECILY]. Darling. [*They fall into each other's arms.*]

[*Enter* MERRIMAN. *When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.*]

MERRIMAN. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

JACK. Good heavens!

[*Enter* LADY BRACKNELL. *The couples separate in alarm. Exit* MERRIMAN.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

GWENDOLEN. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 confidences 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 BRACKNELL. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

ALGERNON [*stammering*]. Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

LADY BRACKNELL. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

ALGERNON [*airily*]. Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. What did he die of?

ALGERNON. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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.

ALGERNON. 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL *bows coldly to* CECILY.]

ALGERNON. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*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 be considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry 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 BRACKNELL. 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 Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*grimly*]. I have known strange errors in that publication.

JACK. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favor 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 BRACKNELL [*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* CECILY.] Come over here, dear. [CECILY *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 BRACKNELL [*glares at* JACK *for a few moments. Then bends, with a practiced smile, to* CECILY.] Kindly turn round, sweet child. [CECILY *turns completely round.*] No, the side view is what I want. [CECILY *presents her profile.*] Yes, quite as I expected. 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!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

LADY BRACKNELL. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile

ALGERNON. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

LADY BRACKNELL. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. [*To* CECILY.] 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.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. Cecily, you may kiss me!

CECILY [*kisses her*]. Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta

LADY BRACKNELL. To speak frankly, I am not in favor 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 BRACKNELL. 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. [ALGERNON *and* CECILY *look at him in indignant amazement.*]

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 pretense 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL [*to* CECILY]. Come here, sweet child. [CECILY *goes over.*] How old are you, dear?

CECILY. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

LADY BRACKNELL. You are perfectly right in making some slight alterations. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating. . . . [*In a 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 BRACKNELL. 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.

CECILY. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

ALGERNON. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

CECILY. 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.

ALGERNON. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL [*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 BRACKNELL. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [*Pulls out her watch.*] Come, dear; [GWENDOLEN *rises.*] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[*Enter* DR. CHASUBLE]

CHASUBLE. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

LADY BRACKNELL. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

CHASUBLE [*looking rather puzzled, and pointing to* JACK *and* ALGERNON]. Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

LADY BRACKNELL. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. 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.

CHASUBLE. 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.

CHASUBLE. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savor 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 BRACKNELL [*starting*]. Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

CHASUBLE. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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?

CHASUBLE [*somewhat indignantly*]. She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

CHASUBLE [*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 BRACKNELL. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

CHASUBLE [*looking off*]. She approaches; she is nigh.

[*Enter* MISS PRISM *hurriedly.*]

MISS PRISM. 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 BRACKNELL *who has fixed her with a stony glare.* MISS PRISM *grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.*]

LADY BRACKNELL [*in a severe, judicial voice*]. Prism! [MISS PRISM *bows her head in shame.*] Come here, Prism! [MISS PRISM *approaches in a humble manner.*] Prism! Where is that baby? [*General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror.* ALGERNON *and* JACK *pretend to be anxious to shield* CECILY *and* GWENDOLEN *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 PRISM *starts in involuntary indignation.*] But the baby was not there! [*Everyone looks at* MISS PRISM.] Prism! Where is that baby? [*A pause.*]

MISS PRISM. 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 for ever 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 had been listening attentively*]. But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

MISS PRISM. 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 PRISM. I left it in the cloak room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

JACK. What railway station?

MISS PRISM [*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.

GWENDOLEN. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life.

[*Exit* JACK *in great excitement.*]

CHASUBLE. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

LADY BRACKNELL. 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. Everyone looks up.*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

CHASUBLE. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

LADY BRACKNELL. 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.

CHASUBLE [*looking up*]. It has stopped now. [*The noise is redoubled.*]

LADY BRACKNELL. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

GWENDOLEN. 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 PRISM]. 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 PRISM [*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 beverage, 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 PRISM [*amazed*]. You?

JACK [*embracing her*]. Yes . . . mother!

MISS PRISM [*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 PRISM [*still more indignant*]. Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [*Pointing to* LADY BRACKNELL.] 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 BRACKNELL. 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* ALGERNON.] 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.

ALGERNON. Well, not till today, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice. [*Shakes hands.*]

GWENDOLEN [*to* JACK]. My own! But what own are you?

What is your Christian name, now that you have become some one else?

JACK. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

GWENDOLEN. I never change, except in my affections.

CECILY. 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

JACK [*irritably*]. Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

LADY BRACKNELL [*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?

ALGERNON. 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 BRACKNELL. 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 BRACKNELL. Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest. I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

GWENDOLEN. 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?

GWENDOLEN. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

JACK. My own one!

CHASUBLE [*to* MISS PRISM]. Laetitia! [*Embraces her.*]

MISS PRISM [*enthusiastically*]. Frederick! At last!

ALGERNON. Cecily! [*Embraces her.*] At last!

JACK. Gwendolen! [*Embraces her.*] At last!

LADY BRACKNELL. 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.

Questions:

1. Compare the world of this play with that of "The Two Faces," by Henry James. In effect, do both this play and "The Two Faces" imply a criticism of this world? How fairly may the term "comedy of manners" be applied to this play?
2. May some of the figures in this play be considered as caricatures? If so, of what are these figures exaggerations?
3. Does the plot have elements of farce? What is the relation of the plot to the social satire involved in the speeches of some of the characters?

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARK ANTONY, OCTAVIUS CAESAR, M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS, *triumvirs*

SEXTUS POMPEIUS.

friends to Antony:
DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS,
VENTIDIUS,
EROS,
SCARUS,
DERCETAS,
DEMETRIUS,
PHILO,

friends to Caesar:
MECAENAS,
AGRIPPA,
DOLABELLA,
PROCULEIUS,
THYREUS,
GALLUS,

friends to Pompey:
MENAS,
MENECRATES,
VARRIUS,

TAURUS, *Lieutenant-General to Caesar*

CANIDIUS, *Lieutenant-General to Antony*

SILIUS, *an Officer under Ventidius*

EUPHRONIUS, *Ambassador from Antony to Caesar*

attendants on Cleopatra:
ALEXAS,
MARDIAN,
SELEUCUS,
DIOMEDES,

A Soothsayer

A Clown

CLEOPATRA, *Queen of Egypt*

OCTAVIA, *sister to Caesar, and wife to Antony*

attendants on Cleopatra:
CHARMIAN,
IRAS,

Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Scene.—In several parts of the Roman Empire.

ACT I

Scene I.—*Alexandria. A room in* CLEOPATRA's *palace.*

[*Enter* DEMETRIUS *and* PHILO.]

PHILO. Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure; those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper.
Look! where they come.

[*Flourish. Enter* ANTONY *and* CLEOPATRA, *with their trains; eunuchs fanning her.*]

Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool; behold and see.

CLEOPATRA. If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANTONY. There 's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

CLEOPATRA. I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

ANTONY. Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

[*Enter an* Attendant.]

ATTENDANT. News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY. Grates me; the sum.

CLEOPATRA. Nay, hear them, Antony:
Fulvia, perchance, is angry; or, who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His powerful mandate to you, 'Do this, or this;
Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;
Perform 't, or else we damn thee.'

ANTONY. How, my love!

CLEOPATRA. Perchance! nay, and most like;
You must not stay here longer; your dismission
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.
Where 's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? both?
Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager; else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANTONY. Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair [*Embracing.*]
And such a twain can do 't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weet
We stand up peerless.

CLEOPATRA. Excellent falsehood!
Why did he marry Fulvia and not love her?
I'll seem the fool I am not; Antony
Will be himself.

ANTONY. But stirr'd by Cleopatra.
Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours,
Let 's not confound the time with conference harsh:
There 's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport to-night?

CLEOPATRA. Hear the ambassadors.

ANTONY. Fie, wrangling queen!
Whom every thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,
To weep; whose every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, fair and admir'd.
No messenger, but thine; and all alone,
To-night we'll wander through the streets and note
The qualities of people. Come, my queen;
Last night you did desire it: speak not to us.

[*Exeunt* ANTONY *and* CLEOPATRA, *with their train.*]

DEMETRIUS. Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?

PHILO. Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony,
He comes too short of that great property
Which still should go with Antony.

DEMETRIUS. I am full sorry
That he approves the common liar, who
Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope
Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—The same. Another room.

[*Enter* CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, *and a* Soothsayer.]

CHARMIAN Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most any thing Alexas, almost most absolute Alexas, where 's the soothsayer that you praised so to the queen? O! that I knew this husband.

ALEXAS Soothsayer!

SOOTHSAYER. Your will?

CHARMIAN. Is this the man? Is 't you, sir, that know things?

SOOTHSAYER. In nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read.

ALEXAS. Show him your hand.

[*Enter* ENOBARBUS.]

ENOBARBUS. Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough
Cleopatra's health to drink.

CHARMIAN. Good sir, give me good fortune.

SOOTHSAYER. I make not, but foresee.

CHARMIAN. Pray then, foresee me one.

SOOTHSAYER. You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

CHARMIAN. He means in flesh.

IRAS No, you shall paint when you are old.

CHARMIAN. Wrinkles forbid!

ALEXAS. Vex not his prescience; be attentive.

CHARMIAN Hush!

SOOTHSAYER. You shall be more beloving than belov'd.

CHARMIAN. I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

ALEXAS. Nay, hear him.

CHARMIAN. Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all; let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage; find me to marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

SOOTHSAYER. You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

CHARMIAN. O excellent! I love long life better than figs.

SOOTHSAYER. You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune
Than that which is to approach.

CHARMIAN. Then, belike, my children shall have no

names; prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

SOOTHSAYER. If every of your wishes had a womb,
And fertile every wish, a million.

CHARMIAN. Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

ALEXAS. You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.

CHARMIAN. Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

ALEXAS. We'll know all our fortunes.

ENOBARBUS. Mine, and most of our fortunes, to-night, shall be,—drunk to bed.

IRAS. There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

CHARMIAN. E'en as the overflowing Nilus presageth famine.

IRAS. Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

CHARMIAN. Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear. Prithee, tell her but a worky-day fortune.

SOOTHSAYER. Your fortunes are alike.

IRAS. But how? but how? give me particulars.

SOOTHSAYER. I have said.

IRAS. Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

CHARMIAN. Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better than I, where would you choose it? Alexas,—come, his fortune, his fortune. O! let him marry a woman that cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech thee; and let her die too, and give him a worse; and let worse follow worse, till the worst of all follow him laughing to his grave! Good Isis, hear me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight; good Isis, I beseech thee!

IRAS. Amen. Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! for, as it is a heart-breaking to see a handsome man loose-wived, so it is a deadly sorrow to behold a foul knave unshamed: therefore, dear Isis, keep decorum, and fortune him accordingly!

CHARMIAN. Amen.

ENOBARBUS. Hush! here comes Antony.

CHARMIAN. Not he; the queen.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA.]

CLEOPATRA. Saw you my lord?

ENOBARBUS. No, lady.

CLEOPATRA. Was he not here?

CHARMIAN. No, madam.

CLEOPATRA. He was dispos'd to mirth; but on the sudden
A Roman thought hath struck him. Enobarbus!

ENOBARBUS. Madam!

CLEOPATRA. Seek him, and bring him hither. Where 's Alexas?

ALEXAS. Here, at your service. My lord approaches.

[*Enter* ANTONY, *with a* Messenger *and* Attendants.]

CLEOPATRA. We will not look upon him; go with us.

[*Exeunt* CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, ALEXAS, IRAS, CHARMIAN, Soothsayer, *and* Attendants.]

MESSENGER. Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

ANTONY. Against my brother Lucius?

MESSENGER. Ay:
But soon that war had end, and the time's state
Made friends of them, jointing their force 'gainst Caesar,
Whose better issue in the war, from Italy
Upon the first encounter drave them.

ANTONY. Well, what worst?

MESSENGER. The nature of bad news infects the teller.

ANTONY. When it concerns the fool, or coward. On;
Things that are past are done with me. 'Tis thus:
Who tells me true, though in his tale lay death,
I hear him as he flatter'd.

MESSENGER. Labienus—
This is stiff news—hath, with his Parthian force
Extended Asia; from Euphrates
His conquering banner shook from Syria
To Lydia and to Ionia: whilst—

ANTONY. Antony, thou wouldst say,—

MESSENGER. O! my lord.

ANTONY. Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue;
Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase; and taunt my faults
With such full licence as both truth and malice
Have power to utter. O! then we bring forth weeds
When our quick winds lie still; and our ills told us
Is as our earing. Fare thee well awhile.

MESSENGER. At your noble pleasure. [*Exit.*]

ANTONY. From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

FIRST ATTENDANT. The man from Sicyon, is there such an one?

SECOND ATTENDANT. He stays upon your will.

ANTONY. Let him appear.
These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.

[*Enter another* Messenger.]

What are you?

SECOND MESSENGER. Fulvia thy wife is dead.

ANTONY. Where died she?

SECOND MESSENGER. In Sicyon:
Her length of sickness, with what else more serious
Importeth thee to know, this bears.

[*Giving a letter.*]

ANTONY. Forbear me.

[*Exit* Second Messenger.]

There 's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it:
What our contempts do often hurl from us
We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself: she 's good, being gone;
The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.
I must from this enchanting queen break off;
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch. How now! Enobarbus!

[*Re-enter* ENOBARBUS.]

ENOBARBUS. What 's your pleasure, sir?

ANTONY. I must with haste from hence.

ENOBARBUS. Why, then, we kill all our women. We see how mortal an unkindness is to them; if they suffer our departure, death 's the word.

ANTONY. I must be gone.

ENOBARBUS. Under a compelling occasion let women die; it were pity to cast them away for nothing; though between them and a great cause they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this,

dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle in death which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying.

ANTONY. She is cunning past man's thought.

ENOBARBUS. Alack! sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report: this cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

ANTONY. Would I had never seen her!

ENOBARBUS. Oh, sir! you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work which not to have been blessed withal would have discredited your travel.

ANTONY. Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS. Sir?

ANTONY. Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS. Fulvia!

ANTONY. Dead.

ENOBARBUS. Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein, that when old robes are worn out, there are members to make new. If there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented: this grief is crowned with consolation; your old smock brings forth a new petticoat; and indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

ANTONY. The business she hath broached in the state
Cannot endure my absence.

ENOBARBUS. And the business you have broached here cannot be without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

ANTONY. No more light answers. Let our officers
Have notice what we purpose. I shall break
The cause of our expedience to the queen,
And get her leave to part. For not alone
The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,
Do strongly speak to us, but the letters too
Of many our contriving friends in Rome
Petition us at home. Sextus Pompeius
Hath given the dare to Caesar, and commands
The empire of the sea; our slippery people—
Whose love is never link'd to the deserver
Till his deserts are past—begin to throw
Pompey the Great and all his dignities
Upon his son; who, high in name and power,
Higher than both in blood and life, stands up
For the main soldier, whose quality, going on,
The sides o' the world may danger. Much is breeding,
Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,
And not a serpent's poison. Say, our pleasure,
To such whose place is under us, requires
Our quick remove from hence.

ENOBARBUS. I shall do it. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—The same. Another room.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS.]

CLEOPATRA. Where is he?

CHARMIAN. I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA. See where he is, who 's with him, what he does;
I did not send you: if you find him sad,
Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return. [*Exit* ALEXAS.]

CHARMIAN. Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,
You do not hold the method to enforce
The like from him.

CLEOPATRA. What should I do I do not?

CHARMIAN. In each thing give him way, cross him in nothing.

CLEOPATRA. Thou teachest like a fool; the way to lose him.

CHARMIAN. Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear:
In time we hate that which we often fear.
But here comes Antony.

[*Enter* ANTONY.]

CLEOPATRA. I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY. I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose,—

CLEOPATRA. Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall:
It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature
Will not sustain it.

ANTONY. Now, my dearest queen,—

CLEOPATRA. Pray you, stand further from me.

ANTONY. What 's the matter?

CLEOPATRA. I know, by that same eye, there 's some good news.
What says the married woman? You may go:
Would she had never given you leave to come!
Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here;
I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANTONY. The gods best know,—

CLEOPATRA. O! never was there queen
So mightily betray'd; yet at the first
I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY. Cleopatra,—

CLEOPATRA. Why should I think you can be mine and true,
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,
Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,
Which break themselves in swearing!

ANTONY. Most sweet queen,—

CLEOPATRA. Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell, and go: when you su'd staying
Then was the time for words; no going then:
Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows bent; none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven; they are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

ANTONY. How now, lady!

CLEOPATRA. I would I had thy inches; thou shouldst know

There were a heart in Egypt.
ANTONY. Hear me, queen:
The strong necessity of time commands
Our services awhile, but my full heart
Remains in use with you. Our Italy
Shines o'er with civil swords; Sextus Pompeius
Makes his approaches to the port of Rome;
Equality of two domestic powers
Breeds scrupulous faction. The hated, grown to strength,
Are newly grown to love; the condemn'd Pompey,
Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace
Into the hearts of such as have not thriv'd
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge
By any desperate change. My more particular,
And that which most with you should safe my going,
Is Fulvia's death.
CLEOPATRA. Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
It does from childishness: can Fulvia die?
ANTONY. She 's dead, my queen:
Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read
The garboils she awak'd; at the last, best,
See when and where she died.
CLEOPATRA. O most false love!
Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill
With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
In Fulvia's death, how mine receiv'd shall be.
ANTONY. Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know
The purposes I bear, which are or cease
As you shall give the advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
As thou affect'st.
CLEOPATRA. Cut my lace, Charmian, come;
But let it be: I am quickly ill, and well;
So Antony loves.
ANTONY. My precious queen, forbear,
And give true evidence to his love which stands
An honourable trial.
CLEOPATRA. So Fulvia told me.
I prithee, turn aside and weep for her;
Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
Belong to Egypt: good now, play one scene
Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
Like perfect honour.
ANTONY. You'll heat my blood; no more.
CLEOPATRA. You can do better yet, but this is meetly.
ANTONY. Now, by my sword,—
CLEOPATRA. And target. Still he mends;
But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.
ANTONY. I'll leave you, lady.
CLEOPATRA. Courteous lord, one word.
Sir, you and I must part, but that 's not it:
Sir, you and I have lov'd, but there 's not it;
That you know well: something it is I would,—
O! my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten.
ANTONY. But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you
For idleness itself.
CLEOPATRA. 'Tis sweating labour
To bear such idleness so near the heart
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;
Since my becomings kill me when they do not
Eye well to you: your honour calls you hence;
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
And all the gods go with you! Upon your sword
Sit laurel victory! and smooth success
Be strew'd before your feet!
ANTONY. Let us go. Come;
Our separation so abides and flies,
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.
Away! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.—Rome. A room in Caesar's house.

[*Enter* OCTAVIUS CAESAR, LEPIDUS, *and* Attendants.]
CAESAR. You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,
It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate
Our great competitor. From Alexandria
This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy
More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or
Vouchsaf'd to think he had partners: you shall find there
A man who is the abstract of all faults
That all men follow.
LEPIDUS. I must not think there are
Evils enow to darken all his goodness;
His faults in him seem as the spots of heaven,
More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary
Rather than purchas'd; what he cannot change
Than what he chooses.
CAESAR. You are too indulgent Let us grant it is not
Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,
To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet
With knaves that smell of sweat; say this becomes him,—
As his composure must be rare indeed
Whom these things cannot blemish,—yet must Antony
No way excuse his soils, when we do bear
So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd
His vacancy with his voluptuousness,
Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones
Call on him for 't; but to confound such time
That drums him from his sport, and speaks as loud
As his own state and ours, 'tis to be chid
As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge,
Pawn their experience to their present pleasure,
And so rebel to judgment.
[*Enter a* Messenger.]
LEPIDUS. Here 's more news.
MESSENGER. Thy biddings have been done, and every hour,

Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report
How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea,
And it appears he is belov'd of those
That only have fear'd Caesar; to the ports
The discontents repair, and men's reports
Give him much wrong'd.

CAESAR. I should have known no less.
It hath been taught us from the primal state,
That he which is was wish'd until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion.

MESSENGER. Caesar, I bring thee word,
Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,
Make the sea serve them, which they ear and wound
With keels of every kind: many hot inroads
They make in Italy; the borders maritime
Lack blood to think on 't, and flush youth revolt;
No vessel can peep forth, but 'tis as soon
Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more
Than could his war resisted.

CAESAR. Antony,
Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer; thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at; thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed'st; on the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on; and all this—
It wounds thy honour that I speak it now—
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis pity of him.

CAESAR. Let his shames quickly
Drive him to Rome. 'Tis time we twain
Did show ourselves i' the field; and to that end
Assemble me immediate council; Pompey
Thrives in our idleness.

LEPIDUS. To-morrow, Caesar,
I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly
Both what by sea and land I can be able
To front this present time.

CAESAR. Till which encounter,
It is my business too. Farewell.

LEP. Farewell, my lord. What you shall know meantime
Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,
To let me be partaker.

CAESAR. Doubt not, sir;
I knew it for my bond. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.—Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS *and* MARDIAN.]

CLEOPATRA. Charmian!

CHARMIAN. Madam!

CLEOPATRA. Ha, ha!
Give me to drink mandragora.

CHARMIAN. Why, madam?

CLEOPATRA. That I might sleep out this great gap of time
My Antony is away.

CHARMIAN. You think of him too much.

CLEOPATRA. O! 'tis treason.

CHARMIAN. Madam, I trust, not so.

CLEOPATRA. Thou, eunuch Mardian!

MARDIAN. What 's your highness' pleasure?

CLEOPATRA. Not now to hear thee sing; I take no pleasure
In aught a eunuch has. Thy freer thoughts
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections?

MARDIAN. Yes, gracious madam.

CLEOPATRA. Indeed! O Charmian!
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He 's speaking now,
Or murmuring 'Where 's my serpent of old Nile?'
For so he calls me. Now I feed myself
With most delicious poison. Think on me,
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,
And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Caesar,
When thou wast here above the ground I was
A morsel for a monarch, and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;
There would he anchor his aspect and die
With looking on his life.

[*Enter* ALEXAS.]

ALEXAS. Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

CLEOPATRA. How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!
Yet, coming from him, that great medicine hath
With his tinct gilded thee.
How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

ALEXAS. Last thing he did, dear queen,
He kiss'd, the last of many doubled kisses,
This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

CLEOPATRA. Mine ear must pluck it thence.

ALEXAS. 'Good friend,' quoth he,
'Say, the firm Roman to great Egypt sends
This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,
To mend the petty present, I will piece
Her opulent throne with kingdoms; all the east,
Say thou, shall call her mistress.' So he nodded,
And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,
Who neigh'd so high that what I would have spoke
Was beastly dumb'd by him.

CLEOPATRA. What! was he sad or merry?

ALEXAS. Like to the time o' the year between the extremes
Of hot and cold; he was nor sad nor merry.

CLEOPATRA. O well-divided disposition! Note him,
Note him, good Charmian, 'tis the man; but note him:
He was not sad, for he would shine on those
That make their looks by his; he was not merry,
Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay
In Egypt with his joy; but between both:
O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,
The violence of either thee becomes,
So does it no man else. Mett'st thou my posts?
ALEXAS. Ay, madam, twenty several messengers.
Why do you send so thick?
CLEOPATRA. Who 's born that day
When I forget to send to Antony,
Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.
Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,
Ever love Caesar so?
CHARMIAN. O! that brave Caesar.
CLEOPATRA. Be chok'd with such another emphasis!
Say the brave Antony.
CHARMIAN. The valiant Caesar!
CLEOPATRA. By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth,
If thou with Caesar paragon again
My man of men.
CHARMIAN. By your most gracious pardon,
I sing but after you.
CLEOPATRA. My salad days,
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood,
To say as I said then! But come, away;
Get me ink and paper:
He shall have every day a several greeting,
Or I'll unpeople Egypt. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

Scene I.—Messina. A room in POMPEY'S *house.*

[*Enter* POMPEY, MENECRATES, *and* MENAS.]

POMPEY. If the great gods be just, they shall assist
The deeds of justest men.
MENECRATES. Know, worthy Pompey,
That what they do delay, they not deny.
POMPEY. Whiles we are suitors to their throne, decays
The thing we sue for.
MENECRATES. We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.
POMPEY. I shall do well:
The people love me, and the sea is mine;
My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope
Says it will come to the full. Mark Antony
In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make
No wars without doors; Caesar gets money where
He loses hearts; Lepidus flatters both,
Of both is flatter'd; but he neither loves,
Nor either cares for him.
MENECRATES. Caesar and Lepidus
Are in the field; a mighty strength they carry.
POMPEY. Where have you this? 'tis false.
MENECRATES. From Silvius, sir.
POMPEY. He dreams; I know they are in Rome together,
Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love,
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wan'd lip!
Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both!
Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour
Even till a Lethe'd dulness!
[*Enter* VARRIUS.]
How now, Varrius!
VARRIUS. This is most certain that I shall deliver:
Mark Antony is every hour in Rome
Expected; since he went from Egypt 'tis
A space for further travel.
POMPEY. I could have given less matter
A better ear. Menas, I did not think
This amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm
For such a petty war; his soldiership
Is twice the other twain. But let us rear
The higher our opinion, that our stirring
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.
MENECRATES. I cannot hope
Caesar and Antony shall well greet together;
His wife that 's dead did trespasses to Caesar,
His brother warr'd upon him, although I think
Not mov'd by Antony.
POMPEY. I know not, Menas,
How lesser enmities may give way to greater.
Were 't not that we stand up against them all
'Twere pregnant they should square between themselves,
For they have entertained cause enough
To draw their swords; but how the fear of us
May cement their divisions and bind up
The petty difference, we yet not know.
Be it as our gods will have 't! It only stands
Our lives upon, to use our strongest hands.
Come, Menas. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—Rome. A room in LEPIDUS' *house.*

[*Enter* ENOBARBUS *and* LEPIDUS.]

LEPIDUS. Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,
And shall become you well, to entreat your captain
To soft and gentle speech.
ENOBARBUS. I shall entreat him
To answer like himself: if Caesar move him,
Let Antony look over Caesar's head,
And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,
Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,
I would not shave 't to-day.
LEPIDUS. 'Tis not a time
For private stomaching.
ENOBARBUS. Every time
Serves for the matter that is then born in 't.
LEPIDUS. But small to greater matters must give way.
ENOBARBUS. Not if the small come first.
LEPIDUS. Your speech is passion;
But, pray you, stir no embers up. Here comes

The noble Antony.

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* VENTIDIUS.]

ENOBARBUS. And yonder, Caesar.

[*Enter* CAESAR, MECAENAS, *and* AGRIPPA.]

ANTONY. If we compose well here, to Parthia:
Hark ye, Ventidius.

CAESAR. I do not know,
Mecaenas; ask Agrippa.

LEPIDUS. Noble friends,
That which combin'd us was most great, and let not
A leaner action rend us. What 's amiss,
May it be gently heard; when we debate
Our trivial difference loud, we do commit
Murder in healing wounds; then, noble partners,—
The rather for I earnestly beseech,—
Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms,
Nor curstness grow to the matter.

ANTONY. 'Tis spoken well.
Were we before our armies, and to fight,
I should do thus.

CAESAR. Welcome to Rome.

ANTONY. Thank you.

CAESAR. Sit.

ANTONY. Sit, sir.

CAESAR Nay, then.

ANTONY. I learn, you take things ill which are not so,
Or being, concern you not.

CAESAR. I must be laugh'd at
If, or for nothing or a little, I
Should say myself offended, and with you
Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at that I should
Once name you derogately, when to sound your name
It not concern'd me.

ANTONY. My being in Egypt, Caesar,
What was 't to you?

CAESAR. No more than my residing here at Rome
Might be to you in Egypt; yet, if you there
Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt
Might be my question.

ANTONY. How intend you, practis'd?

CAESAR. You may be pleas'd to catch at mine intent
By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother
Made wars upon me, and their contestation
Was theme for you, you were the word of war.

ANTONY. You do mistake your business; my brother never
Did urge me in his act: I did inquire it;
And have my learning from some true reports,
That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather
Discredit my authority with yours,
And make the wars alike against my stomach,
Having alike your cause? Of this my letters
Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,
As matter whole you n' have to make it with,
It must not be with this.

CAESAR. You praise yourself
By laying defects of judgment to me, but
You patch'd up your excuses.

ANTONY. Not so, not so;
I know you could not lack, I am certain on 't,
Very necessity of this thought, that I,
Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,
Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars
Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,
I would you had her spirit in such another:
The third o' the world is yours, which with a snaffle
You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

ENOBARBUS. Would we had all such wives, that the men might go to wars with the women!

ANTONY. So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar,
Made out of her impatience,—which not wanted
Shrewdness of policy too,—I grieving grant
Did you too much disquiet; for that you must
But say I could not help it.

CAESAR. I wrote to you
When rioting in Alexandria; you
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

ANTONY. Sir,
He fell upon me, ere admitted: then
Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want
Of what I was i' the morning; but next day
I told him of myself, which was as much
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,
Out of our question wipe him.

CAESAR. You have broken
The article of your oath, which you shall never
Have tongue to charge me with.

LEPIDUS. Soft, Caesar!

ANTONY. No.
Lepidus, let him speak:
The honour 's sacred which he talks on now,
Supposing that I lack'd it. But on, Caesar;
The article of my oath.

CAESAR. To lend me arms and aid when I requir'd them,
The which you both denied.

ANTONY. Neglected, rather;
And then, when poison'd hours had bound me up
From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,
I'll play the penitent to you; but mine honesty
Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power
Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour
To stoop in such a case.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis noble spoken.

MECAENAS. If it might please you, to enforce no further
The griefs between ye: to forget them quite
Were to remember that the present need
Speaks to atone you.

LEPIDUS. Worthily spoken, Mecaenas.

ENOBARBUS. Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant, you may, when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again: you shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do.

ANTONY. Thou art a soldier only; speak no more.

ENOBARBUS. That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

ANT. You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

ENOBARBUS. Go to, then; your considerate stone.

CAESAR. I do not much dislike the matter, but
The manner of his speech; for it cannot be
We shall remain in friendship, our conditions
So differing in their acts. Yet, if I knew
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge
O' the world I would pursue it.

AGRIPPA. Give me leave, Caesar.

CAESAR. Speak, Agrippa.

AGRIPPA. Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,
Admir'd Octavia; great Mark Antony
Is now a widower.

CAESAR. Say not so, Agrippa:
If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof
Were well deserv'd of rashness.

ANTONY. I am not married, Caesar; let me hear Agrippa further speak.

AGRIPPA. To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
With an unslipping knot, take Antony
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims
No worse a husband than the best of men,
Whose virtue and whose general graces speak
That which none else can utter By this marriage,
All little jealousies which now seem great,
And all great fears which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing; truths would be but tales
Where now half tales be truths; her love to both
Would each to other and all loves to both
Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke,
For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,
By duty ruminated.

ANTONY. Will Caesar speak?

CAESAR. Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd
With what is spoke already.

ANTONY. What power is in Agrippa,
If I would say, 'Agrippa, be it so,'
To make this good?

CAESAR. The power of Caesar, and
His power unto Octavia.

ANTONY. May I never
To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,
Dream of impediment! Let me have thy hand;
Further this act of grace, and from this hour
The heart of brothers govern in our loves
And sway our great designs!

CAESAR. There is my hand.
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly; let her live
To join our kingdoms and our hearts, and never
Fly off our loves again!

LEPIDUS. Happily, amen!

ANTONY. I did not think to draw my sword 'gainst Pompey,
For he hath laid strange courtesies and great
Of late upon me; I must thank him only,
Lest my remembrance suffer ill report;
At heel of that, defy him.

LEPIDUS. Time calls upon 's:
Of us must Pompey presently be sought,
Or else he seeks out us.

ANTONY. Where lies he?

CAESAR. About the Mount Misenum.

ANTONY. What 's his strength
By land?

CAESAR. Great and increasing; but by sea
He is an absolute master.

ANTONY. So is the fame.
Would we had spoke together! Haste we for it;
Yet, ere we put ourselves in arms, dispatch we
The business we have talk'd of.

CAESAR. With most gladness;
And do invite you to my sister's view,
Whither straight I'll lead you.

ANTONY. Let us, Lepidus,
Not lack your company.

LEPIDUS. Noble Antony,
Not sickness should detain me.

[*Flourish. Exeunt* CAESAR, ANTONY, *and* LEPIDUS.]

MECAENAS. Welcome from Egypt, sir.

ENOBARBUS Half the heart of Caesar, worthy Mecaenas! My honourable friend, Agrippa!

AGRIPPA. Good Enobarbus!

MECAENAS. We have cause to be glad that matters are so well digested. You stayed well by 't in Egypt.

ENOBARBUS. Ay, sir; we did sleep day out of countenance, and made the night light with drinking.

MECAENAS. Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there; is this true?

ENOBARBUS. This was but as a fly by an eagle; we had much more monstrous matter of feast, which worthily deserved noting.

MECAENAS. She 's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

ENOBARBUS. When she first met Mark Antony she pursed up his heart, upon the river of Cydnus.

AGRIPPA. There she appeared indeed, or my reporter devised well for her.

ENOBARBUS. I will tell you.
The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold,
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
The winds were love-sick with them, the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description; she did lie
In her pavilion,—cloth-of-gold of tissue,—
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her
Stood pretty-dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.

AGRIPPA. O! rare for Antony.

ENOBARBUS. Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings; at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her, and Antony,
Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in nature.
AGRIPPA. Rare Egyptian!
ENOBARBUS. Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,
Invited her to supper; she replied
It should be better he became her guest,
Which she entreated. Our courteous Antony,
Whom ne'er the word of 'No' woman heard speak,
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,
And, for his ordinary pays his heart
For what his eyes eat only.
AGRIPPA. Royal wench!
She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed.
ENOBARBUS. I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.
MECAENAS. Now Antony must leave her utterly.
ENOBARBUS. Never; he will not:
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety; other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish.
MECAENAS. If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle
The heart of Antony, Octavia is
A blessed lottery to him.
AGRIPPA. Let us go.
Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest
Whilst you abide here.
ENOBARBUS. Humbly, sir, I thank you.
[*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—The same. A room in CAESAR'S *house.*

[*Enter* CAESAR, ANTONY, OCTAVIA *between them,* Attendants.]
ANTONY. The world and my great office will sometimes
Divide me from your bosom.
OCTAVIA. All which time
Before the gods my knee shall bow my prayers
To them for you.
ANTONY. Good night, sir. My Octavia,
Read not my blemishes in the world's report;
I have not kept my square, but that to come
Shall all be done by the rule. Good night, dear lady.
OCTAVIA. Good night, sir.
CAESAR. Good night. [*Exeunt* CAESAR *and* OCTAVIA.]
[*Enter* Soothsayer.]
ANTONY. Now, sirrah; you do wish yourself in Egypt?
SOOTHSAYER. Would I had never come from thence, nor you
Thither!
ANTONY. If you can, your reason?
SOOTHSAYER. I see it in
My motion, have it not in my tongue: but yet
Hie you to Egypt again.
ANTONY. Say to me,
Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?
SOOTHSAYER. Caesar's.
Therefore, O Antony! stay not by his side;
Thy demon—that 's thy spirit which keeps thee,—is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Caesar's is not; but near him thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd; therefore
Make space enough between you.
ANTONY. Speak this no more.
SOOTHSAYER. To none but thee; no more but when to thee.
If thou dost play with him at any game
Thou art sure to lose, and, of that natural luck,
He beats thee 'gainst the odds; thy lustre thickens
When he shines by. I say again, thy spirit
Is all afraid to govern thee near him,
But he away, 'tis noble.
ANTONY. Get thee gone:
Say to Ventidius I would speak with him.
[*Exit* Soothsayer.]
He shall to Parthia. Be it art or hap
He hath spoken true; the very dice obey him.
And in our sports my better cunning faints
Under his chance; if we draw lots he speeds,
His cocks do win the battle still of mine
When it is all to nought, and his quails ever
Beat mine, inhoop'd, at odds. I will to Egypt;
And though I make this marriage for my peace,
I' the east my pleasure lies.
[*Enter* VENTIDIUS.]
O! come, Ventidius,
You must to Parthia; your commission's ready;
Follow me, and receive 't. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.—The same. A street.

[*Enter* LEPIDUS, MECAENAS, *and* AGRIPPA.]
LEPIDUS. Trouble yourselves no further; pray you hasten
Your generals after.
AGRIPPA. Sir, Mark Antony
Will e'en but kiss Octavia, and we'll follow.
LEPIDUS. Till I shall see you in your soldier's dress,
Which will become you both, farewell.
MECAENAS. We shall,
As I conceive the journey, be at the Mount
Before you, Lepidus.
LEPIDUS. Your way is shorter;
My purposes do draw me much about:
You'll win two days upon me.

MECAENAS. } Sir, good success!
AGRIPPA. }
LEPIDUS. Farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.—Alexandria. A Room in the Palace.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, and Attendant.]

CLEOPATRA. Give me some music; music, moody food
Of us that trade in love.
ATTENDANT. The music, ho!
[*Enter* MARDIAN.]
CLEO. Let it alone; let 's to billiards: come, Charmian.
CHARMIAN. My arm is sore; best play with Mardian.
CLEOPATRA. As well a woman with a eunuch play'd
As with a woman. Come, you'll play with me, sir?
MARDIAN. As well as I can, madam.
CLEOPATRA. And when good will is show'd, though 't come too short,
The actor may plead pardon. I'll none now.
Give me mine angle; we'll to the river: there—
My music playing far off—I will betray
Tawny-finn'd fishes; my bended hook shall pierce
Their slimy jaws; and, as I draw them up,
I'll think them every one an Antony,
And say, 'Ah, ha!' you're caught.
CHARMIAN. 'Twas merry when
You wager'd on your angling; when your diver
Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he
With fervency drew up.
CLEOPATRA. That time—O times!—
I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night
I laugh'd him into patience: and next morn,
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
Then put my tires and mantles on him whilst
I wore his sword Philippan.
[*Enter a* Messenger.]
O! from Italy;
Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
That long time have been barren.
MESSENGER. Madam, madam,—
CLEOPATRA. Antony 's dead! if thou say so, villain,
Thou kill'st thy mistress; but well and free,
If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss; a hand that kings
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.
MESSENGER. First, madam, he is well.
CLEOPATRA. Why, there 's more gold.
But, sirrah, mark, we use
To say the dead are well: bring it to that,
The gold I give thee will I melt, and pour
Down thy ill-uttering throat.
MESSENGER. Good madam, hear me.
CLEOPATRA. Well, go to, I will;
But there 's no goodness in thy face; if Antony
Be free and healthful, so tart a favour
To trumpet such good tidings! if not well,
Thou shouldst come like a Fury crown'd with snakes,
Not like a formal man.
MESSENGER. Will 't please you hear me?
CLEOPATRA. I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st:
Yet, if thou say Antony lives, is well,
Or friends with Caesar, or not captive to him,
I'll set thee in a shower of gold, and hail
Rich pearls upon thee.
MESSENGER. Madam, he 's well.
CLEOPATRA. Well said.
MESSENGER. And friends with Caesar.
CLEOPATRA. Thou'rt an honest man.
MESSENGER. Caesar and he are greater friends than ever.
CLEOPATRA. Make thee a fortune from me.
MESSENGER. But yet, madam,—
CLEOPATRA. I do not like 'but yet,' it does allay
The good precedence; fie upon 'but yet!'
'But yet' is as a gaoler to bring forth
Some monstrous malefactor. Prithee, friend,
Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear,
The good and bad together. He 's friends with Caesar;
In state of health, thou sayst; and thou sayst, free.
MESSENGER. Free, madam! no; I made no such report:
He 's bound unto Octavia.
CLEOPATRA. For what good turn?
MESSENGER. Madam, he 's married to Octavia.
CLEOPATRA. The most infectious pestilence upon thee!
[*Strikes him down.*]
MESSENGER. Good madam, patience.
CLEOPATRA. What say you? Hence,
[*Strikes him again.*]
Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes
Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head:
[*She hales him up and down.*]
Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle.
MESSENGER. Gracious madam,
I, that do bring the news made not the match.
CLEOPATRA. Say 'tis not so, a province I will give thee,
And make thy fortunes proud; the blow thou hadst
Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage,
And I will boot thee with what gift beside
Thy modesty can beg.
MESSENGER. He 's married, madam.
CLEOPATRA. Rogue! thou hast liv'd too long.
[*Draws a knife.*]
MESSENGER. Nay, then I'll run.
What mean you, madam? I have made no fault. [*Exit.*]
CHARMIAN. Good madam, keep yourself within yourself;
The man is innocent.
CLEOPATRA. Some innocents 'scape not the thunder-bolt.
Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures
Turn all to serpents! Call the slave again:
Though I am mad, I will not bite him. Call.
CHARMIAN. He is afeared to come.
CLEOPATRA. I will not hurt him.
[*Exit* CHARMIAN.]
These hands do lack nobility, that they strike
A meaner than myself; since I myself
Have given myself the cause.
[*Re-enter* CHARMIAN, *and* Messenger.]
Come hither, sir.

Though it be honest, it is never good
To bring bad news; give to a gracious message
A host of tongues, but let ill tidings tell
Themselves when they be felt.
MESSENGER. I have done my duty.
CLEOPATRA. Is he married?
I cannot hate thee worser than I do
If thou again say 'Yes.'
MESSENGER. He 's married, madam.
CLEOPATRA. The gods confound thee! dost thou hold there still?
MESSENGER. Should I lie, madam?
CLEOPATRA. O! I would thou didst,
So half my Egypt were submerg'd and made
A cistern for scal'd snakes. Go, get thee hence;
Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me
Thou wouldst appear most ugly. He is married?
MESSENGER. I crave your highness' pardon.
CLEOPATRA. He is married?
MESSENGER. Take no offence that I would not offend you;
To punish me for what you make me do
Seems much unequal; he 's married to Octavia.
CLEOPATRA. O! that his fault should make a knave of thee,
That art not what thou 'rt sure of. Get thee hence;
The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome
Are all too dear for me; lie they upon thy hand
And be undone by 'em! [*Exit* Messenger.]
CHARMIAN. Good your highness, patience.
CLEOPATRA. In praising Antony I have disprais'd Caesar.
CHARMIAN. Many times, madam.
CLEOPATRA. I am paid for 't now.
Lead me from hence;
I faint. O Iras! Charmian! 'Tis no matter.
Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him
Report the feature of Octavia, her years,
Her inclination, let him not leave out
The colour of her hair: bring me word quickly.
[*Exit* ALEXAS.]
Let him for ever go:—let him not—Charmian!—
Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,
The other way 's a Mars. [*To* MARDIAN.] Bid you Alexas
Bring me word how tall she is. Pity me, Charmian,
But do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI.—Near Misenum.

[*Flourish. Enter* POMPEY *and* MENAS, *at one side, with drum and trumpet; at the other,* CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, ENOBARBUS, MECAENAS, *with* Soldiers *marching.*]

POMPEY. Your hostages I have, so have you mine;
And we shall talk before we fight.
CAESAR. Most meet
That first we come to words, and therefore have we
Our written purposes before us sent;
Which if thou hast consider'd, let us know
If 'twill tie up thy discontented sword,
And carry back to Sicily much tall youth
That else must perish here.
POMPEY. To you all three,
The senators alone of this great world,
Chief factors for the gods, I do not know
Wherefore my father should revengers want,
Having a son and friends; since Julius Caesar,
Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
There saw you labouring for him. What was 't
That mov'd pale Cassius to conspire? and what
Made the all-honour'd, honest Roman, Brutus,
With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
To drench the Capitol, but that they would
Have one man but a man? And that is it
Hath made me rig my navy, at whose burden
The anger'd ocean foams, with which I meant
To scourge the ingratitude that despiteful Rome
Cast on my noble father.
CAESAR. Take your time.
ANTONY. Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy sails;
We'll speak with thee at sea: at land, thou know'st
How much we do o'er-count thee.
POMPEY. At land, indeed,
Thou dost o'er-count me of my father's house;
But, since the cuckoo builds not for himself,
Remain in 't as thou mayst.
LEPIDUS. Be pleas'd to tell us—
For this is from the present—how you take
The offers we have sent you.
CAESAR. There 's the point.
ANTONY. Which do not be entreated to, but weigh
What it is worth embrac'd.
CAESAR. And what may follow,
To try a larger fortune.
POMPEY. You have made me offer
Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must
Rid all the sea of pirates; then, to send
Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon,
To part with unhack'd edges, and bear back
Our targets undinted.
CAESAR. }
ANTONY. } That 's our offer.
LEPIDUS. }
POMPEY. Know, then,
I came before you here a man prepar'd
To take this offer; but Mark Antony
Put me to some impatience. Though I lose
The praise of it by telling, you must know,
When Caesar and your brother were at blows,
Your mother came to Sicily and did find
Her welcome friendly.
ANTONY. I have heard it, Pompey;
And am well studied for a liberal thanks
Which I do owe you.
POMPEY. Let me have your hand:
I did not think, sir, to have met you here.
ANTONY. The beds i' the east are soft; and thanks to you,
That call'd me timelier than my purpose hither,
For I have gain'd by 't.
CAESAR. Since I saw you last,
There is a change upon you.
POMPEY. Well, I know not

What counts harsh Fortune casts upon my face,
But in my bosom shall she never come
To make my heart her vassal.
LEPIDUS. Well met here.
POMPEY. I hope so, Lepidus. Thus we are agreed.
I crave our composition may be written
And seal'd between us.
CAESAR. That 's the next to do.
POMPEY. We'll feast each other ere we part; and let 's
Draw lots who shall begin.
ANTONY. That will I, Pompey.
POMPEY. No, Antony, take the lot:
But, first or last, your fine Egyptian cookery
Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar
Grew fat with feasting there.
ANTONY. You have heard much.
POMPEY. I have fair meanings, sir.
ANTONY. And fair words to them.
POMPEY. Then, so much have I heard;
And I have heard Apollodorus carried—
ENOBARBUS. No more of that: he did so.
POMPEY. What, I pray you?
ENOBARBUS. A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress.
POMPEY. I know thee now; how far'st thou, soldier?
ENOBARBUS. Well;
And well am like to do; for I perceive
Four feasts are toward.
POMPEY. Let me shake thy hand;
I never hated thee. I have seen thee fight,
When I have envied thy behaviour.
ENOBARBUS. Sir,
I never lov'd you much, but I ha' prais'd ye
When you have well deserv'd ten times as much
As I have said you did.
POMPEY. Enjoy thy plainness,
It nothing ill becomes thee.
Aboard my galley I invite you all:
Will you lead, lords?
CAESAR. }
ANTONY. } Show us the way, sir.
LEPIDUS. }
POMPEY. Come.

[*Exeunt all except* MENAS *and* ENOBARBUS.]

MENAS. Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have made this treaty. You and I have known, sir.

ENOBARBUS. At sea, I think.

MENAS. We have, sir.

ENOBARBUS. You have done well by water.

MENAS. And you by land.

ENOBARBUS. I will praise any man that will praise me: though it cannot be denied what I have done by land.

MENAS. Nor what I have done by water.

ENOBARBUS. Yes, something you can deny for your own safety; you have been a great thief by sea.

MENAS. And you by land.

ENOBARBUS. There I deny my land service. But give me your hand, Menas; if our eyes had authority, here they might take two thieves kissing.

MENAS. All men's faces are true, whatsoe'er their hands are.

ENO. But there is never a fair woman has a true face.

MENAS. No slander; they steal hearts.

ENOBARBUS. We came hither to fight with you.

MENAS. For my part, I am sorry it is turned to a drinking. Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.

ENO. If he do, sure, he cannot weep it back again.

MENAS. You have said, sir. We looked not for Mark Antony here: pray you, is he married to Cleopatra?

ENOBARBUS. Caesar's sister is called Octavia.

MENAS. True, sir; she was the wife of Caius Marcellus.

ENO. But she is now the wife of Marcus Antonius.

MENAS. Pray ye, sir?

ENOBARBUS. 'Tis true.

MENAS. Then is Caesar and he for ever knit together.

ENOBARBUS. If I were bound to divine of this unity, I would not prophesy so.

MENAS. I think the policy of that purpose made more in the marriage than the love of the parties.

ENOBARBUS. I think so too; but you shall find the band that seems to tie their friendship together will be the very strangler of their amity. Octavia is of a holy, cold, and still conversation.

MENAS. Who would not have his wife so?

ENOBARBUS. Not he that himself is not so; which is Mark Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again; then, shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is; he married but his occasion here.

MENAS. And thus it may be. Come, sir, will you aboard? I have a health for you.

ENOBARBUS. I shall take it, sir: we have used our throats in Egypt.

MENAS. Come; let 's away. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VII.—On board POMPEY'S *Galley off Misenum.*

[*Music. Enter two or three* Servants, *with a banquet.*]

FIRST SERVANT. Here they'll be, man. Some o' their plants are ill-rooted already; the least wind i' the world will blow them down.

SECOND SERVANT. Lepidus is high-coloured.

FIRST SERVANT. They have made him drink alms-drink.

SECOND SERVANT. As they pinch one another by the disposition, he cries out, 'No more;' reconciles them to his entreaty, and himself to the drink.

FIRST SERVANT. But it raises the greater war between him and his discretion.

SECOND SERVANT. Why, this it is to have a name in great men's fellowship; I had as lief have a reed that will do me no service as a partisan I could not heave.

FIRST SERVANT. To be called into a huge sphere, and not to be seen to move in 't, are the holes where eyes should be, which pitifully disaster the cheeks.

[*A sennet sounded. Enter* CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POMPEY, AGRIPPA, MECAENAS, ENOBARBUS, MENAS, *with other* Captains.]

ANTONY. Thus do they, sir. They take the flow o' the Nile
By certain scales i' the pyramid; they know
By the height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth
Or foison follow. The higher Nilus swells
The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.

LEPIDUS. You've strange serpents there.

ANTONY. Ay, Lepidus.

LEPIDUS. Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the operation of your sun; so is your crocodile.

ANTONY. They are so.

POMPEY. Sit,—and some wine! A health to Lepidus!

LEPIDUS. I am not so well as I should be, but I'll ne'er out.

ENOBARBUS. Not till you have slept; I fear me you'll be in till then.

LEPIDUS. Nay, certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies' pyramises are very goodly things; without contradiction, I have heard that.

MENAS. Pompey, a word.

POMPEY. Say in mine ear; what is 't?

MENAS. Forsake thy seat, I do beseech thee, captain,
And hear me speak a word.

POMPEY. Forbear me till anon.
This wine for Lepidus!

LEPIDUS. What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

ANTONY. It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it hath breadth; it is just so high as it is, and moves with it own organs; it lives by that which nourisheth it; and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

LEPIDUS. What colour is it of?

ANTONY. Of it own colour too.

LEPIDUS. 'Tis a strange serpent.

ANTONY. 'Tis so; and the tears of it are wet.

CAESAR. Will this description satisfy him?

ANTONY. With the health that Pompey gives him, else he is a very epicure.

POMPEY. Go hang, sir, hang! Tell me of that? away!
Do as I bid you. Where 's this cup I call'd for?

MENAS. If for the sake of merit thou wilt hear me,
Rise from thy stool.

POMPEY. I think thou 'rt mad The matter?
[*Walks aside.*]

MENAS. I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes.

POMPEY. Thou hast serv'd me with much faith. What 's else to say?
Be jolly, lords.

ANTONY. These quick-sands, Lepidus,
Keep off them, for you sink.

MENAS. Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

POMPEY. What sayst thou?

MENAS. Wilt thou be lord of the whole world? That 's twice.

POMPEY. How should that be?

MENAS. But entertain it,
And though thou think me poor, I am the man
Will give thee all the world.

POMPEY. Hast thou drunk well?

MENAS. No, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup.
Thou art, if thou dar'st be, the earthly Jove:
Whate'er the ocean pales, or sky inclips,
Is thine, if thou wilt ha 't.

POMPEY. Show me which way.

MENAS. These three world-sharers, these competitors,
Are in thy vessel: let me cut the cable;
And, when we are put off, fall to their throats:
All there is thine.

POMPEY. Ah! this thou shouldst have done,
And not have spoke on 't. In me 'tis villany;
In thee 't had been good service. Thou must know
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour;
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue
Hath so betray'd thine act; being done unknown,
I should have found it afterwards well done,
But must condemn it now. Desist, and drink.

MENAS. [*Aside.*] For this,
I'll never follow thy pall'd fortunes more.
Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offer'd,
Shall never find it more.

POMPEY. This health to Lepidus!

ANTONY. Bear him ashore. I'll pledge it for him, Pompey.

ENOBARBUS. Here 's to thee, Menas!

MENAS. Enobarbus, welcome!

POMPEY. Fill till the cup be hid.

ENOBARBUS. There 's a strong fellow, Menas.
[*Pointing to the* Attendant *who carries off* LEPIDUS.]

MENAS. Why?

ENOBARBUS. A' bears the third part of the world, man; see'st not?

MEN. The third part then is drunk; would it were all,
That it might go on wheels!

ENOBARBUS. Drink thou; increase the reels.

MENAS. Come.

POMPEY. This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.

ANTONY. It ripens towards it. Strike the vessels, ho!
Here is to Caesar!

CAESAR. I could well forbear 't.
It 's monstrous labour, when I wash my brain,
And it grows fouler.

ANTONY. Be a child o' the time.

CAESAR. Possess it, I'll make answer;
But I had rather fast from all four days
Than drink so much in one.

ENOBARBUS. [*To* ANTONY.] Ha! my brave emperor;
Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals,
And celebrate our drink?

POMPEY. Let 's ha 't, good soldier.

ANTONY. Come, let 's all take hands,
Till that the conquering wine hath steep'd our sense
In soft and delicate Lethe.

ENOBARBUS. All take hands.
Make battery to our ears with the loud music;
The while I'll place you: then the boy shall sing,
The holding every man shall bear as loud
As his strong sides can volley.

[*Music plays.* ENOBARBUS *places them hand in hand.*]

SONG.

Come, thou monarch of the vine,
Plumpy Bacchus, with pink eyne!
In thy fats our cares be drown'd,
With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd:
Cup us, till the world go round,
Cup us, till the world go round!

CAESAR. What would you more? Pompey, good night. Good brother,
Let me request you off; our graver business
Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let 's part;
You see we have burnt our cheeks; strong Enobarb
Is weaker than the wine, and mine own tongue
Splits what it speaks; the wild disguise hath almost
Antick'd us all. What needs more words? Good night.
Good Antony, your hand.
POMPEY. I'll try you on the shore.
ANTONY. And shall, sir. Give 's your hand.
POMPEY. O, Antony!
You have my father's house,—But, what? we are friends.
Come down into the boat.
ENOBARBUS. Take heed you fall not.
[*Exeunt* POMPEY, CAESAR, ANTONY, *and* Attendants.]
Menas, I'll not on shore.
MENAS. No, to my cabin.
These drums! these trumpets, flutes! what!
Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell
To these great fellows. sound and be hang'd! sound out!
[*A flourish of trumpets with drums.*]
ENOBARBUS. Hoo! says a'. There 's my cap.
MENAS. Hoo! noble captain! come. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

Scene I.—A plain in Syria.

Enter VENTIDIUS, *in triumph, with* SILIUS *and other* Romans, Officers, *and* Soldiers; *the dead body of* PACORUS *borne before him.*]

VENTIDIUS. Now, darting Parthia, art thou struck; and now
Pleas'd fortune does of Marcus Crassus' death
Make me revenger. Bear the king's son's body
Before our army. Thy Pacorus, Orodes,
Pays this for Marcus Crassus.
SILIUS. Noble Ventidius,
Whilst yet with Parthian blood thy sword is warm,
The fugitive Parthians follow; spur through Media,
Mesopotamia, and the shelters whither
The routed fly; so thy grand captain Antony
Shall set thee on triumphant chariots and
Put garlands on thy head.
VENTIDIUS. O Silius, Silius!
I have done enough; a lower place, note well,
May make too great an act; for learn this, Silius,
Better to leave undone than by our deed
Acquire too high a fame when him we serve 's away.
Caesar and Antony have ever won
More in their officer than person; Sossius,
One of my place in Syria, his lieutenant,
For quick accumulation of renown,
Which he achiev'd by the minute, lost his favour.
Who does i' the wars more than his captain can
Becomes his captain's captain; and ambition,
The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss
Than gain which darkens him.
I could do more to do Antonius good,
But 'twould offend him, and in his offence
Should my performance perish
SILIUS. Thou hast, Ventidius, that
Without the which a soldier, and his sword,
Grants scarce distinction. Thou wilt write to Antony?
VENTIDIUS. I'll humbly signify what in his name,
That magical word of war, we have effected;
How, with his banners and his well-paid ranks,
The ne'er-yet-beaten horse of Parthia
We have jaded out o' the field.
SILIUS. Where is he now?
VEN. He purposeth to Athens; whither, with what haste
The weight we must convey with 's will permit,
We shall appear before him. On, there; pass along.
[*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—Rome. A room in CAESAR'S *house.*

[*Enter* AGRIPPA *and* ENOBARBUS, *meeting.*]
AGRIPPA. What! are the brothers parted?
ENO They have dispatch'd with Pompey; he is gone;
The other three are sealing. Octavia weeps
To part from Rome; Caesar is sad; and Lepidus,
Since Pompey's feast, as Menas says, is troubled
With the green sickness.
AGRIPPA. 'Tis a noble Lepidus.
ENOBARBUS. A very fine one. O! how he loves Caesar.
AGRIPPA. Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony!
ENOBARBUS. Caesar? Why, he 's the Jupiter of men.
AGRIPPA. What 's Antony? The god of Jupiter.
ENOBARBUS. Spake you of Caesar? How! the nonpareil!
AGRIPPA. O, Antony! O thou Arabian bird!
ENOBARBUS. Would you praise Caesar, say, 'Caesar,' go no further.
AGRIPPA. Indeed, he plied them both with excellent praises.
ENO. But he loves Caesar best; yet he loves Antony.
Hoo! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards, poets, cannot
Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number; hoo!
His love to Antony. But as for Caesar,
Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.
AGRIPPA. Both he loves.
ENOBARBUS. They are his shards, and he their beetle.
[*Trumpets within.*] So;
This is to horse Adieu, noble Agrippa.
AGRIPPA. Good fortune, worthy soldier, and farewell.
[*Enter* CAESAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, *and* OCTAVIA.]
ANTONY No further, sir.
CAESAR. You take from me a great part of myself;
Use me well in 't. Sister, prove such a wife
As my thoughts make thee, and as my furthest band

Shall pass on thy approof. Most noble Antony,
Let not the piece of virtue, which is set
Betwixt us as the cement of our love
To keep it builded, be the ram to batter
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have lov'd without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd.
ANTONY. Make me not offended
In your distrust.
CAESAR. I have said.
ANTONY. You shall not find,
Though you be therein curious, the least cause
For what you seem to fear. So, the gods keep you,
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends!
We will here part.
CAESAR. Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well:
The elements be kind to thee, and make
Thy spirits all of comfort! fare thee well.
OCTAVIA. My noble brother!
ANTONY. The April 's in her eyes; it is love's spring,
And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.
OCTAVIA. Sir, look well to my husband's house; and—
CAESAR. What,
Octavia?
OCTAVIA. I'll tell you in your ear.
ANTONY. Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
Her heart obey her tongue; the swan's down-feather,
That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
And neither way inclines.
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside to* AGRIPPA.] Will Caesar weep?
AGRIPPA. He has a cloud in 's face.
ENOBARBUS. He were the worse for that were he a horse;
So is he, being a man.
AGRIPPA. Why, Enobarbus,
When Antony found Julius Caesar dead
He cried almost to roaring; and he wept
When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.
ENO. That year, indeed, he was troubled with a rheum;
What willingly he did confound he wail'd,
Believe 't, till I wept too.
CAESAR. No, sweet Octavia,
You shall hear from me still; the time shall not
Out-go my thinking on you.
ANTONY Come, sir, come;
I'll wrestle with you in my strength of love:
Look, here I have you; thus I let you go,
And give you to the gods.
CAESAR. Adieu; be happy!
LEPIDUS. Let all the number of the stars give light
To thy fair way!
CAESAR. Farewell, farewell! [*Kisses* OCTAVIA.]
ANTONY. Farewell!
[*Trumpets sound. Exeunt.*]

Scene III. Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS.]
CLEOPATRA. Where is the fellow?
ALEXAS. Half afeared to come.
CLEOPATRA. Go to, go to.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]
Come hither, sir.
ALEXAS. Good majesty,
Herod of Jewry dare not look upon you
But when you are well pleas'd.
CLEOPATRA. That Herod's head
I'll have; but how, when Antony is gone
Through whom I might command it? Come thou near.
MESSENGER. Most gracious majesty!
CLEOPATRA. Didst thou behold
Octavia?
MESSENGER. Ay, dread queen.
CLEOPATRA. Where?
MESSENGER. Madam, in Rome;
I look'd her in the face, and saw her led
Between her brother and Mark Antony.
CLEOPATRA. Is she as tall as me?
MESSENGER. She is not, madam.
CLEO. Didst hear her speak? is she shrill-tongu'd, or low?
MESSENGER. Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voic'd
CLEOPATRA. That 's not so good He cannot like her long.
CHARMIAN. Like her! O Isis! 'tis impossible.
CLEOPATRA. I think so, Charmian: dull of tongue, and dwarfish!
What majesty is in her gait? Remember,
If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.
MESSENGER. She creeps;
Her motion and her station are as one;
She shows a body rather than a life,
A statue than a breather.
CLEOPATRA. Is this certain?
MESSENGER. Or I have no observance.
CHARMIAN. Three in Egypt
Cannot make better note.
CLEOPATRA. He 's very knowing,
I do perceive 't. There 's nothing in her yet.
The fellow has good judgment.
CHARMIAN. Excellent.
CLEOPATRA. Guess at her years, I prithee.
MESSENGER. Madam,
She was a widow,—
CLEOPATRA. Widow! Charmian, hark.
MESSENGER. And I do think she 's thirty.
CLEO. Bear'st thou her face in mind? is 't long or round?
MESSENGER. Round even to faultiness.
CLEO. For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.
Her hair, what colour?
MESSENGER. Brown, madam; and her forehead
As low as she would wish it.
CLEOPATRA. There 's gold for thee:
Thou must not take my former sharpness ill.
I will employ thee back again; I find thee
Most fit for business. Go, make thee ready;
Our letters are prepar'd. [*Exit* Messenger.]
CHARMIAN. A proper man.
CLEOPATRA. Indeed, he is so; I repent me much
That so I harried him. Why, methinks, by him,
This creature 's no such thing.
CHARMIAN. Nothing, madam.

CLEOPATRA. The man hath seen some majesty, and should know.

CHARMIAN. Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,
And serving you so long!

CLEOPATRA. I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian:
But 'tis no matter; thou shalt bring him to me
Where I will write. All may be well enough.

CHARMIAN. I warrant you, madam [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.—Athens. A room in ANTONY'S *house.*

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* OCTAVIA.]

ANTONY. Nay, nay, Octavia, not only that,
That were excusable, that, and thousands more
Of semblable import, but he hath wag'd
New wars 'gainst Pompey; made his will, and read it
To public ear:
Spoke scantly of me; when perforce he could not
But pay me terms of honour, cold and sickly
He vented them; most narrow measure lent me;
When the best hint was given him, he not took 't,
Or did it from his teeth.

OCTAVIA. O my good lord!
Believe not all; or, if you must believe,
Stomach not all. A more unhappy lady,
If this division chance, ne'er stood between,
Praying for both parts·
The good gods will mock me presently,
When I shall pray, 'O! bless my lord and husband;'
Undo that prayer, by crying out as loud,
'O! bless my brother!' Husband win, win brother,
Prays, and destroys the prayer; no midway
'Twixt these extremes at all

ANTONY. Gentle Octavia,
Let your best love draw to that point which seeks
Best to preserve it. If I lose mine honour
I lose myself; better I were not yours
Than yours so branchless. But, as you requested.
Yourself shall go between 's; the mean time, lady,
I'll raise the preparation of a war
Shall stain your brother; make your soonest haste,
So your desires are yours.

OCTAVIA. Thanks to my lord.
The Jove of power make me most weak, most weak,
Your reconciler! Wars 'twixt you twain would be
As if the world should cleave, and that slain men
Should solder up the rift.

ANTONY. When it appears to you where this begins,
Turn your displeasure that way; for our faults
Can never be so equal that your love
Can equally move with them. Provide your going;
Choose your own company, and command what cost
Your heart has mind to. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.—The same. Another room.

[*Enter* ENOBARBUS *and* EROS, *meeting.*]

ENOBARBUS. How now, friend Eros!

EROS. There 's strange news come, sir.

ENOBARBUS. What, man?

EROS. Caesar and Lepidus have made wars upon Pompey.

ENOBARBUS. This is old; what is the success?

EROS. Caesar, having made use of him in the wars 'gainst Pompey, presently denied him rivality, would not let him partake in the glory of the action; and not resting here, accuses him of letters he had formerly wrote to Pompey; upon his own appeal, seizes him: so the poor third is up, till death enlarge his confine.

ENO. Then, world, thou hast a pair of chaps, no more;
And throw between them all the food thou hast,
They'll grind the one the other Where 's Antony?

EROS. He 's walking in the garden—thus: and spurns
The rush that lies before him; cries, 'Fool, Lepidus!'
And threats the throat of that his officer
That murder'd Pompey.

ENOBARBUS. Our great navy 's rigg'd.

EROS For Italy and Caesar. More, Domitius;
My lord desires you presently. my news
I might have told hereafter.

ENOBARBUS. 'Twill be naught;
But let it be. Bring me to Antony.

EROS. Come, sir [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI.—Rome. A room in CAESAR'S *house.*

[*Enter* CAESAR, AGRIPPA, *and* MECAENAS.]

CAESAR. Contemning Rome, he has done all this and more
In Alexandria; here 's the manner of 't;
I' the market-place, on a tribunal silver'd,
Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
Were publicly enthron'd; at the feet sat
Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
And all the unlawful issue that their lust
Since then hath made between them. Unto her
He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt; made her
Of Lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,
Absolute queen.

MECAENAS. This in the public eye?

CAESAR. I' the common show-place, where they exercise.
His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings;
Great Media, Parthia, and Armenia
He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd
Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia. She
In the habiliments of the goddess Isis
That day appear'd; and oft before gave audience,
As 'tis reported, so.

MECAENAS. Let Rome be thus
Informed

AGRIPPA. Who, queasy with his insolence
Already, will their good thoughts call from him.

CAESAR. The people know it; and have now receiv'd
His accusations.

AGRIPPA. Whom does he accuse?

CAESAR. Caesar; and that, having in Sicily
Sextus Pompeius spoil'd, we had not rated him
His part o' the isle; then does he say, he lent me
Some shipping unrestor'd; lastly, he frets
That Lepidus of the triumvirate

Should be depos'd; and, being, that we detain
All his revenue.
AGRIPPA. Sir, this should be answer'd.
CAESAR. 'Tis done already, and the messenger gone.
I have told him, Lepidus was grown too cruel;
That he his high authority abus'd,
And did deserve his change: for what I have conquer'd,
I grant him part; but then, in his Armenia,
And other of his conquer'd kingdoms, I
Demand the like.
MECAENAS. He'll never yield to that.
CAESAR. Nor must not then be yielded to in this.
[*Enter* OCTAVIA, *with her train.*]
OCTAVIA Hail, Caesar, and my lord! hail, most dear Caesar!
CAESAR. That ever I should call thee cast away!
OCTAVIA. You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.
CAESAR. Why have you stol'n upon us thus? You come not
Like Caesar's sister; the wife of Antony
Should have an army for an usher, and
The neighs of horse to tell of her approach
Long ere she did appear, the trees by the way
Should have borne men, and expectation fainted,
Longing for what it had not; nay, the dust
Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,
Rais'd by your populous troops. But you are come
A market-maid to Rome, and have prevented
The ostentation of our love, which, left unshown,
Is often left unlov'd: we should have met you
By sea and land, supplying every stage
With an augmented greeting.
OCTAVIA. Good my lord,
To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did it
On my free-will. My lord, Mark Antony,
Hearing that you prepar'd for war, acquainted
My grieved ear withal; whereon, I begg'd
His pardon for return.
CAESAR. Which soon he granted,
Being an obstruct 'tween his lust and him.
OCTAVIA. Do not say so, my lord.
CAESAR. I have eyes upon him,
And his affairs come to me on the wind.
Where is he now?
OCTAVIA. My lord, in Athens.
CAESAR. No, my most wrong'd sister; Cleopatra
Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire
Up to a wanton; who now are levying
The kings o' the earth for war. He hath assembled
Bocchus, the King of Libya; Archelaus,
Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, King
Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;
King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, King
Of Comagene; Polemon and Amintas,
The Kings of Mede and Lycaonia,
With a more larger list of sceptres.
OCTAVIA. Ay me, most wretched,
That have my heart parted betwixt two friends
That do afflict each other!
CAESAR. Welcome hither:
Your letters did withhold our breaking forth,
Till we perceiv'd both how you were wrong led
And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart;
Be you not troubled with the time, which drives
O'er your content these strong necessities,
But let determin'd things to destiny
Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;
Nothing more dear to me. You are abus'd
Beyond the mark of thought, and the high gods,
To do you justice, make their ministers
Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort,
And ever welcome to us.
AGRIPPA. Welcome, lady.
MECAENAS. Welcome, dear madam.
Each heart in Rome does love and pity you;
Only the adulterous Antony, most large
In his abominations, turns you off,
And gives his potent regiment to a trull,
That noises it against us.
OCTAVIA. Is it so, sir?
CAESAR. Most certain. Sister, welcome; pray you,
Be ever known to patience; my dearest sister! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VII.—ANTONY'S *camp, near to the promontory of Actium.*

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA *and* ENOBARBUS.]
CLEOPATRA. I will be even with thee, doubt it not.
ENOBARBUS. But why, why, why?
CLEOPATRA. Thou hast forspoke my being in these wars,
And sayst it is not fit.
ENOBARBUS. Well, is it, is it?
CLEOPATRA. If not denounc'd against us, why should not we
Be there in person?
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside.*] Well, I could reply.
CLEOPATRA. What is 't you say?
ENOBARBUS. Your presence needs must puzzle Antony;
Take from his heart, take from his brain, from 's time,
What should not then be spar'd. He is already
Traduc'd for levity, and 'tis said in Rome
That Photinus a eunuch and your maids
Manage this war.
CLEOPATRA. Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war,
And, as the president of my kingdom, will
Appear there for a man. Speak not against it;
I will not stay behind.
ENOBARBUS. Nay, I have done.
Here comes the emperor.
[*Enter* ANTONY *and* CANIDIUS.]
ANTONY. Is it not strange, Canidius,
That from Tarentum and Brundusium
He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,
And take in Toryne? You have heard on 't, sweet?
CLEOPATRA. Celerity is never more admir'd
Than by the negligent.
ANTONY. A good rebuke,

Which might have well becom'd the best of men,
To taunt at slackness. Canidius, we
Will fight with him by sea.
CLEOPATRA. By sea! What else?
CANIDIUS. Why will my lord do so?
ANTONY. For that he dares us to 't.
ENOBARBUS. So hath my lord dar'd him to single fight.
CANIDIUS. Ay, and to wage his battle at Pharsalia,
Where Caesar fought with Pompey; but these offers,
Which serve not for his vantage, he shakes off;
And so should you.
ENOBARBUS. Your ships are not well mann'd;
Your mariners are muleters, reapers, people
Ingross'd by swift impress; in Caesar's fleet
Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought:
Their ships are yare; yours, heavy. No disgrace
Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,
Being prepar'd for land.
ANTONY. By sea, by sea.
ENOBARBUS. Most worthy sir, you therein throw away
The absolute soldiership you have by land;
Distract your army, which doth most consist
Of war-mark'd footmen; leave unexecuted
Your own renowned knowledge; quite forego
The way which promises assurance; and
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard
From firm security.
ANTONY. I'll fight at sea.
CLEOPATRA. I have sixty sails, Caesar none better.
ANTONY. Our overplus of shipping will we burn;
And with the rest, full-mann'd, from the head of Actium
Beat the approaching Caesar. But if we fail,
We then can do 't at land
[*Enter a* Messenger.]
Thy business?
MESSENGER. The news is true, my lord; he is descried;
Caesar has taken Toryne.
ANTONY. Can he be there in person? 'tis impossible;
Strange that his power should be. Canidius,
Our nineteen legions thou shalt hold by land,
And our twelve thousand horse. We'll to our ship:
Away, my Thetis!
[*Enter a* Soldier.]
How now, worthy soldier!
SOLDIER. O noble emperor! do not fight by sea;
Trust not to rotten planks: do you misdoubt
This sword and these my wounds? Let the Egyptians
And the Phoenicians go a-ducking; we
Have used to conquer, standing on the earth,
And fighting foot to foot.
ANTONY. Well, well: away!
[*Exeunt* ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, *and* ENOBARBUS.]
SOLDIER. By Hercules, I think I am i' the right.
CANIDIUS. Soldier, thou art; but his whole action grows
Not in the power on 't: so our leader 's led,
And we are women's men.
SOLDIER. You keep by land
The legions and the horse whole, do you not?
CANIDIUS. Marcus Octavius, Marcus Justeius,
Publicola, and Caelius, are for sea;
But we keep whole by land. This speed of Caesar's
Carries beyond belief.
SOLDIER. While he was yet in Rome
His power went out in such distractions as
Beguil'd all spies.
CANIDIUS. Who 's his lieutenant, hear you?
SOLDIER. They say, one Taurus.
CANIDIUS. Well I know the man.
[*Enter a* Messenger.]
MESSENGER. The emperor calls Canidius.
CAN. With news the time 's with labour, and throes forth
Each minute some [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VIII.—A plain near Actium.

[*Enter* CAESAR, TAURUS, Officers, *and others.*]
CAESAR. Taurus!
TAURUS. My lord?
CAESAR. Strike not by land, keep whole: provoke not battle,
Till we have done at sea. Do not exceed
The prescript of this scroll: our fortune lies
Upon this jump. [*Exeunt.*]
[*Enter* ANTONY *and* ENOBARBUS.]
ANTONY. Set we our squadrons on yond side o' the hill,
In eye of Caesar's battle, from which place
We may the number of the ships behold,
And so proceed accordingly. [*Exeunt.*]
[*Enter* CANIDIUS, *marching with his land army one way over the stage: and* TAURUS, *the lieutenant of* CAESAR, *the other way. After them going in is heard the noise of a sea-fight.*]
[*Alarum. Re-enter* ENOBARBUS.]
ENO. Naught, naught, all naught! I can behold no longer.
The Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,
With all their sixty, fly, and turn the rudder;
To see 't mine eyes are blasted.
[*Enter* SCARUS.]
SCARUS. Gods and goddesses,
All the whole synod of them!
ENOBARBUS. What 's thy passion?
SCARUS. The greater cantle of the world is lost
With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away
Kingdoms and provinces.
ENOBARBUS. How appears the fight?
SCARUS. On our side like the token'd pestilence,
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag of Egypt,
Whom leprosy o'ertake! i' the midst o' the fight,
When vantage like a pair of twins appear'd,
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder,
The breese upon her, like a cow in June,
Hoists sails and flies.
ENOBARBUS. That I beheld:
Mine eyes did sicken at the sight, and could not
Endure a further view.
SCARUS. She once being loof'd,
The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,
Claps on his sea-wing, and like a doting mallard,
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her.

I never saw an action of such shame;
Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before
Did violate so itself.
ENOBARBUS. Alack, alack!
[*Enter* CANIDIUS.]
CANIDIUS. Our fortune on the sea is out of breath,
And sinks most lamentably. Had our general
Been what he knew himself, it had gone well:
O! he has given example for our flight
Most grossly by his own.
ENOBARBUS. Ay, are you thereabouts?
Why, then, good night, indeed.
CANIDIUS. Towards Peloponnesus are they fled.
SCARUS. 'Tis easy to 't; and there I will attend
What further comes.
CANIDIUS. To Caesar will I render
My legions and my horse; six kings already
Show me the way of yielding.
ENOBARBUS. I'll yet follow
The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason
Sits in the wind against me. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IX.—Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* Attendants.]
ANTONY. Hark! the land bids me tread no more upon 't;
It is ashamed to bear me. Friends, come hither:
I am so lated in the world that I
Have lost my way for ever. I have a ship
Laden with gold; take that, divide it; fly,
And make your peace with Caesar.
ATTENDANTS. Fly! not we.
ANTONY. I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards
To run and show their shoulders. Friends, be gone;
I have myself resolv'd upon a course
Which has no need of you; be gone:
My treasure 's in the harbour, take it. O!
I follow'd that I blush to look upon:
My very hairs do mutiny, for the white
Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them
For fear and doting. Friends, be gone; you shall
Have letters from me to some friends that will
Sweep your way for you. Pray you, look not sad,
Nor make replies of loathness; take the hint
Which my despair proclaims; let that be left
Which leaves itself; to the sea-side straightway;
I will possess you of that ship and treasure.
Leave me, I pray, a little; pray you now:
Nay, do so; for, indeed, I have lost command,
Therefore I pray you. I'll see you by and by. [*Sits down.*]
[*Enter* EROS *following* CLEOPATRA, *led by* CHARMIAN *and* IRAS.]
EROS. Nay, gentle madam, to him, comfort him.
IRAS. Do, most dear queen.
CHARMIAN. Do! Why, what else?
CLEOPATRA. Let me sit down. O Juno!
ANTONY. No, no, no, no, no.
EROS. See you here, sir?
ANTONY. O fie, fie, fie!
CHARMIAN. Madam!
IRAS. Madam; O good empress!
EROS. Sir, sir!
ANTONY. Yes, my lord, yes. He, at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I
That the mad Brutus ended: he alone
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had
In the brave squares of war: yet now—No matter.
CLEOPATRA. Ah! stand by.
EROS. The queen, my lord, the queen.
IRAS. Go to him, madam, speak to him;
He is unqualitied with very shame.
CLEOPATRA. Well then, sustain me: O!
EROS. Most noble sir, arise; the queen approaches:
Her head 's declin'd, and death will seize her, but
Your comfort makes the rescue.
ANTONY. I have offended reputation,
A most unnoble swerving.
EROS. Sir, the queen.
ANTONY. O! whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See,
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes
By looking back what I have left behind
'Stroy'd in dishonour.
CLEOPATRA. O my lord, my lord!
Forgive my fearful sails: I little thought
You would have follow'd.
ANTONY. Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me.
CLEOPATRA. O! my pardon.
ANTONY. Now I must
To the young man send humble treaties, dodge
And palter in the shifts of lowness, who
With half the bulk o' the world play'd as I pleas'd,
Making and marring fortunes. You did know
How much you were my conqueror, and that
My sword, made weak by my affection, would
Obey it on all cause.
CLEOPATRA. Pardon, pardon!
ANTONY. Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates
All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss;
Even this repays me. We sent our schoolmaster;
Is he come back? Love, I am full of lead.
Some wine, within there, and our viands! Fortune knows,
We scorn her most when most she offers blows. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene X.—Egypt. CAESAR'S *camp.*

[*Enter* CAESAR, DOLABELLA, THYREUS, *and others.*]
CAESAR. Let him appear that 's come from Antony.
Know you him?
DOLABELLA. Caesar, 'tis his schoolmaster:
An argument that he is pluck'd, when hither
He sends so poor a pinion of his wing,
Which had superfluous kings for messengers
Not many moons gone by.
[*Enter* EUPHRONIUS.]

CAESAR. Approach, and speak.
EUPHRONIUS. Such as I am, I come from Antony:
I was of late as petty to his ends
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf
To his grand sea.
CAESAR. Be 't so. Declare thine office.
EUPHRONIUS. Lord of his fortunes he salutes thee, and
Requires to live in Egypt; which not granted,
He lessens his requests, and to thee sues
To let him breathe between the heavens and earth,
A private man in Athens; this for him.
Next, Cleopatra does confess thy greatness,
Submits her to thy might, and of thee craves
The circle of the Ptolemies for her heirs,
Now hazarded to thy grace.
CAESAR. For Antony,
I have no ears to his request. The queen
Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she
From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend,
Or take his life there; this if she perform,
She shall not sue unheard. So to them both.
EUPHRONIUS. Fortune pursue thee!
CAESAR. Bring him through the bands.
[*Exit* EUPHRONIUS.]
[*To* THYREUS.] To try thy eloquence, now 'tis time; dispatch.
From Antony win Cleopatra; promise,
And in our name, what she requires; add more,
From thine invention, offers. Women are not
In their best fortunes strong, but want will perjure
The ne'er-touch'd vestal. Try thy cunning, Thyreus;
Make thine own edict for thy pains, which we
Will answer as a law.
THYREUS. Caesar, I go.
CAESAR. Observe how Antony becomes his flaw,
And what thou think'st his very action speaks
In every power that moves.
THYREUS. Caesar, I shall. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene XI.—Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, *and* IRAS.]
CLEOPATRA. What shall we do, Enobarbus?
ENOBARBUS. Think, and die.
CLEOPATRA. Is Antony or we, in fault for this?
ENOBARBUS. Antony only, that would make his will
Lord of his reason. What though you fled
From that great face of war, whose several ranges
Frighted each other, why should he follow?
The itch of his affection should not then
Have nick'd his captainship; at such a point,
When half to half the world oppos'd, he being
The mered question. 'Twas a shame no less
Than was his loss, to course your flying flags,
And leave his navy gazing.
CLEOPATRA. Prithee, peace.
[*Enter* ANTONY, *with* EUPHRONIUS.]
ANTONY. Is that his answer?
EUPHRONIUS. Ay, my lord.
ANTONY. The queen shall then have courtesy, so she
Will yield us up?
EUPHRONIUS. He says so.
ANTONY. Let her know 't.
To the boy Caesar send this grizzled head,
And he will fill thy wishes to the brim
With principalities.
CLEOPATRA. That head, my lord?
ANTONY. To him again. Tell him he wears the rose
Of youth upon him, from which the world should note
Something particular; his coin, ships, legions,
May be a coward's, whose ministers would prevail
Under the service of a child as soon
As i' the command of Caesar: I dare him therefore
To lay his gay comparisons apart,
And answer me declin'd, sword against sword,
Ourselves alone. I'll write it: follow me.
[*Exeunt* ANTONY *and* EUPHRONIUS.]
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside.*] Yes, like enough, high-battled Caesar will
Unstate his happiness, and be stag'd to the show
Against a sworder! I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,
To suffer all alike. That he should dream,
Knowing all measures, the full Caesar will
Answer his emptiness! Caesar, thou hast subdu'd
His judgment too.
[*Enter an* Attendant.]
ATTENDANT. A messenger from Caesar.
CLEO. What! no more ceremony? See! my women;
Against the blown rose may they stop their nose,
That kneel'd unto the buds Admit him, sir.
[*Exit* Attendant.]
ENOBARBUS [*Aside.*] Mine honesty and I begin to square.
The loyalty well held to fools does make
Our faith mere folly; yet he that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord,
Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i' the story.
[*Enter* THYREUS.]
CLEOPATRA. Caesar's will?
THYREUS. Hear it apart.
CLEOPATRA. None but friends; say boldly
THYREUS. So, haply, are they friends to Antony.
ENOBARBUS. He needs as many, sir, as Caesar has,
Or needs not us. If Caesar please, our master
Will leap to be his friend; for us, you know
Whose he is we are, and that is Caesar's.
THYREUS. So.
Thus then, thou most renown'd: Caesar entreats,
Not to consider in what case thou stand'st,
Further than he is Caesar.
CLEOPATRA Go on; right royal.
THYREUS. He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.
CLEOPATRA. O!
THYREUS. The scars upon your honour therefore he
Does pity, as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserv'd.

CLEOPATRA. He is a god, and knows
What is most right. Mine honour was not yielded,
But conquer'd merely.
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside.*] To be sure of that,
I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou'rt so leaky,
That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for
Thy dearest quit thee. [*Exit.*]
THYREUS. Shall I say to Caesar
What you require of him? for he partly begs
To be desir'd to give. It much would please him,
That of his fortunes you should make a staff
To lean upon; but it would warm his spirits
To hear from me you had left Antony,
And put yourself under his shroud,
The universal landlord.
CLEOPATRA. What 's your name?
THYREUS. My name is Thyreus.
CLEOPATRA. Most kind messenger,
Say to great Caesar this· in deputation
I kiss his conqu'ring hand; tell him, I am prompt
To lay my crown at 's feet, and there to kneel;
Tell him, from his all-obeying breath I hear
The doom of Egypt.
THYREUS. 'Tis your noblest course.
Wisdom and fortune combating together,
If that the former dare but what it can,
No chance may shake it. Give me grace to lay
My duty on your hand.
CLEOPATRA. Your Caesar's father oft,
When he hath mus'd of taking kingdoms in,
Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,
As it rain'd kisses.
[*Re-enter* ANTONY *and* ENOBARBUS.]
ANTONY. Favours, by Jove that thunders!
What art thou, fellow?
THYREUS. One that but performs
The bidding of the fullest man, and worthiest
To have command obey'd.
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside.*] You will be whipp'd.
ANTONY Approach there! Ah, you kite! Now, gods and devils!
Authority melts from me: of late, when I cried 'Ho!'
Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth,
And cry, 'Your will?' Have you no ears? I am
Antony yet.
[*Enter* Attendants.]
Take hence this Jack and whip him.
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside.*] 'Tis better playing with a lion's whelp
Than with an old one dying.
ANTONY. Moon and stars!
Whip him. Were 't twenty of the greatest tributaries
That do acknowledge Caesar, should I find them
So saucy with the hand of—she here, what 's her name,
Since she was Cleopatra? Whip him, fellows,
Till, like a boy, you see him cringe his face
And whine aloud for mercy; take him hence.
THYREUS. Mark Antony,—
ANTONY. Tug him away; being whipp'd,
Bring him again; this Jack of Caesar's shall
Bear us an errand to him.
[*Exeunt* Attendants *with* THYREUS.]
You were half blasted ere I knew you: ha!
Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,
And by a gem of women, to be abus'd
By one that looks on feeders?
CLEOPATRA. Good my lord,—
ANTONY. You have been a boggler ever:
But when we in our viciousness grow hard,—
O misery on 't!—the wise gods seel our eyes;
In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
Adore our errors; laugh at 's while we strut
To our confusion.
CLEOPATRA. O! is 't come to this?
ANTONY. I found you as a morsel, cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
Of Cneius Pompey's; for, I am sure,
Though you can guess what temperance should be,
You know not what it is.
CLEOPATRA. Wherefore is this?
ANTONY. To let a fellow that will take rewards
And say 'God quit you!' be familiar with
My playfellow, your hand; this kingly seal
And plighter of high hearts O! that I were
Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar
The horned herd; for I have savage cause;
And to proclaim it civilly were like
A halter'd neck, which does the hangman thank
For being yare about him.
[*Re-enter* Attendants, *with* THYREUS.]
Is he whipp'd?
FIRST ATTENDANT. Soundly, my lord.
ANTONY. · Cried he? and begg'd a' pardon?
FIRST ATTENDANT. He did ask favour.
ANTONY. If that thy father live, let him repent
Thou wast not made his daughter; and be thou sorry
To follow Caesar in his triumph, since
Thou hast been whipp'd for following him: henceforth,
The white hand of a lady fever thee,
Shake thou to look on 't. Get thee back to Caesar,
Tell him thy entertainment; look, thou say
He makes me angry with him; for he seems
Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am,
Not what he knew I was: he makes me angry;
And at this time most easy 'tis to do 't,
When my good stars, that were my former guides,
Have empty left their orbs, and shot their fires
Into the abysm of hell. If he mislike
My speech and what is done, tell him he has
Hipparchus, my enfranched bondman, whom
He may at pleasure whip, or hang, or torture,
As he shall like, to quit me: urge it thou:
Hence with thy stripes; be gone! [*Exit* THYREUS.]
CLEOPATRA. Have you done yet?
ANTONY. Alack! our terrene moon
Is now eclips'd; and it portends alone
The fall of Antony.

CLEOPATRA. I must stay his time.
ANTONY. To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes
With one that ties his points?
CLEOPATRA. Not know me yet?
ANTONY. Cold-hearted toward me?
CLEOPATRA. Ah! dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source; and the first stone
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so
Dissolve my life. The next Caesarion smite,
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
Together with my brave Egyptians all,
By the discandying of this pelleted storm,
Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
Have buried them for prey!
ANTONY. I am satisfied.
Caesar sits down in Alexandria, where
I will oppose his fate. Our force by land
Hath nobly held; our sever'd navy too
Have knit again, and fleet, threat'ning most sea-like.
Where hast thou been, my heart? Dost thou hear, lady?
If from the field I shall return once more
To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood;
I and my sword will earn our chronicle:
There 's hope in 't yet.
CLEOPATRA. That 's my brave lord!
ANTONY. I will be treble-sinew'd, hearted, breath'd,
And fight maliciously; for when mine hours
Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives
Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth,
And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,
Let 's have one other gaudy night: call to me
All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more;
Let 's mock the midnight bell.
CLEOPATRA. It is my birth-day:
I had thought to have held it poor; but, since my lord
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.
ANTONY. We will yet do well.
CLEOPATRA. Call all his noble captains to my lord.
ANTONY. Do so, we'll speak to them; and to-night I'll force
The wine peep through their scars. Come on, my queen;
There 's sap in 't yet. The next time I do fight
I'll make death love me, for I will contend
Even with his pestilent scythe.
[*Exeunt all but* ENOBARBUS.]
ENOBARBUS. Now he'll outstare the lightning. To be furious
Is to be frighted out of fear, and in that mood
The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still,
A diminution in our captain's brain
Restores his heart. When valour preys on reason
It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
Some way to leave him. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV

Scene I.—Before Alexandria. CAESAR'S *camp.*

[*Enter* CAESAR, *reading a letter;* AGRIPPA, MECAENAS, *and others.*]

CAESAR. He calls me boy, and chides as he had power
To beat me out of Egypt; my messenger
He hath whipp'd with rods; dares me to personal combat,
Caesar to Antony. Let the old ruffian know
I have many other ways to die, meantime
Laugh at his challenge.
MECAENAS. Caesar must think,
When one so great begins to rage, he 's hunted
Even to falling. Give him no breath, but now
Make boot of his distraction: never anger
Made good guard for itself.
CAESAR. Let our best heads
Know that to-morrow the last of many battles
We mean to fight. Within our files there are,
Of those that serv'd Mark Antony but late,
Enough to fetch him in See it done;
And feast the army; we have store to do 't,
And they have earn'd the waste Poor Antony! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, *and others.*]

ANTONY He will not fight with me, Domitius.
ENOBARBUS. No.
ANTONY Why should he not?
ENOBARBUS. He thinks, being twenty times of better fortune,
He is twenty men to one.
ANTONY. To-morrow, soldier,
By sea and land I'll fight: or I will live,
Or bathe my dying honour in the blood
Shall make it live again. Woo 't thou fight well?
ENOBARBUS I'll strike, and cry, 'Take all.'
ANTONY. Well said, come on.
Call forth my household servants; let 's to-night
Be bounteous at our meal
[*Enter three or four* Servitors.]
Give me thy hand,
Thou hast been rightly honest, so hast thou;
Thou, and thou, and thou; you have serv'd me well,
And kings have been your fellows.
CLEOPATRA. What means this?
ENOBARBUS. [*Aside to* CLEOPATRA.] 'Tis one of those odd tricks which sorrow shoots
Out of the mind.
ANTONY. And thou art honest too.
I wish I could be made so many men,
And all of you clapp'd up together in
An Antony, that I might do you service
So good as you have done.
SERVANTS. The gods forbid!
ANTONY. Well, my good fellows, wait on me to-night,
Scant not my cups, and make as much of me
As when mine empire was your fellow too,
And suffer'd my command.
CLEOPATRA. [*Aside to* ENOBARBUS.] What does he mean?
ENO. [*Aside to* CLEOPATRA.] To make his followers weep.
ANTONY. Tend me to-night;
May be it is the period of your duty:

Haply, you shall not see me more; or if,
A mangled shadow: perchance to-morrow
You'll serve another master. I look on you
As one that takes his leave. Mine honest friends,
I turn you not away; but, like a master
Married to your good service, stay till death.
Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,
And the gods yield you for 't!

ENOBARBUS. What mean you, sir,
To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep;
And I, an ass, am onion-ey'd: for shame,
Transform us not to women.

ANTONY. Ho, ho, ho!
Now, the witch take me, if I meant it thus!
Grace grow where those drops fall! My hearty friends,
You take me in too dolorous a sense,
For I spake to you for your comfort; did desire you
To burn this night with torches. Know, my hearts,
I hope well of to-morrow; and will lead you
Where rather I'll expect victorious life
Than death and honour Let 's to supper, come,
And drown consideration. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III.—The same. Before the palace.

[*Enter two* Soldiers *to their guard.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. Brother, good night; to-morrow is the day.

SECOND SOLDIER. It will determine one way; fare you well
Heard you of nothing strange about the streets?

FIRST SOLDIER. Nothing. What news?

SECOND SOLDIER. Belike, 'tis but a rumour. Good night to you.

FIRST SOLDIER. Well, sir, good night.

[*Enter two other* Soldiers.]

SECOND SOLDIER. Soldiers, have careful watch.

THIRD SOLDIER. And you. Good night, good night.

[*The first two place themselves at their posts.*]

FOURTH SOLDIER. Here we: [*They take their posts.*]
And if to-morrow
Our navy thrive, I have an absolute hope
Our landmen will stand up.

THIRD SOLDIER. 'Tis a brave army,
And full of purpose. [*Music of hautboys under the stage.*]

FOURTH SOLDIER. Peace! what noise?

FIRST SOLDIER. List, list!

SECOND SOLDIER. Hark!

FIRST SOLDIER. Music i' the air.

THIRD SOLDIER. Under the earth.

FOURTH SOLDIER. It signs well, does it not?

THIRD SOLDIER. No.

FIRST SOLDIER. Peace, I say!
What should this mean?

SECOND SOLDIER. 'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd,
Now leaves him.

FIRST SOLDIER. Walk; let 's see if other watchmen
Do hear what we do. [*They advance to another post.*]

SECOND SOLDIER. How now, masters!

SOLDIERS. How now!—
How now!—do you hear this?

FIRST SOLDIER. Ay; is 't not strange?

THIRD SOLDIER. Do you hear, masters? do you hear?

FIRST SOLDIER. Follow the noise so far as we have quarter;
Let 's see how 't will give off.

SOLDIERS. [*Speaking together.*] Content.—'Tis strange.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV.—The same. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* CLEOPATRA; CHARMIAN, *and others, attending.*]

ANTONY. Eros! mine armour, Eros!

CLEOPATRA. Sleep a little.

ANTONY. No, my chuck. Eros, come; mine armour, Eros!

[*Enter* EROS, *with armour.*]
Come, good fellow, put mine iron on:
If Fortune be not ours to-day, it is
Because we brave her. Come.

CLEOPATRA. Nay, I'll help too.
What 's this for?

ANTONY. Ah! let be, let be; thou art
The armourer of my heart: false, false; this, this.

CLEOPATRA. Sooth, la! I'll help: thus it must be.

ANTONY. Well, well;
We shall thrive now. Seest thou, my good fellow?
Go put on thy defences.

EROS. Briefly, sir.

CLEOPATRA. Is not this buckled well?

ANTONY. Rarely, rarely:
He that unbuckles this, till we do please
To daff 't for our repose, shall hear a storm.
Thou fumblest, Eros; and my queen 's a squire
More tight at this than thou: dispatch. O love!
That thou couldst see my wars to-day, and knew'st
The royal occupation, thou shouldst see
A workman in 't.

[*Enter an armed* Soldier.]
Good morrow to thee; welcome;
Thou look'st like him that knows a war-like charge:
To business that we love we rise betime,
And go to 't with delight.

SOLDIER. A thousand, sir,
Early though 't be, have on their riveted trim,
And at the port expect you.

[*Shout. Trumpets flourish.*]

[*Enter* Captains *and* Soldiers.]

CAPTAIN The morn is fair. Good morrow, general.

ALL. Good morrow, general.

ANTONY. 'Tis well blown, lads.
This morning, like the spirit of a youth
That means to be of note, begins betimes.
So, so; come, give me that: this way; well said.
Fare thee well, dame, whate'er becomes of me;
This is a soldier's kiss. [*Kisses her.*] Rebukeable
And worthy shameful check it were, to stand
On more mechanic compliment; I'll leave thee
Now, like a man of steel. You that will fight,
Follow me close; I'll bring you to 't. Adieu.

[*Exeunt* ANTONY, EROS, Captains, *and* Soldiers.]

CHARMIAN. Please you, retire to your chamber.

CLEOPATRA. Lead me.
He goes forth gallantly. That he and Caesar might
Determine this great war in single fight!
Then, Antony,—but now.—Well, on. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V.—Alexandria. ANTONY'S *camp.*

[*Trumpets sound. Enter* ANTONY *and* EROS; *a* Soldier *meeting them.*]

SOLDIER. The gods make this a happy day to Antony!
ANTONY. Would thou and those thy scars had once prevail'd
To make me fight at land!
SOLDIER. Hadst thou done so,
The kings that have revolted, and the soldier
That has this morning left thee, would have still
Follow'd thy heels.
ANTONY. Who 's gone this morning?
SOLDIER. Who!
One ever near thee: call for Enobarbus,
He shall not hear thee; or from Caesar's camp
Say, 'I am none of thine.'
ANTONY. What sayst thou?
SOLDIER. Sir,
He is with Caesar.
EROS. Sir, his chests and treasure
He has not with him.
ANTONY. Is he gone?
SOLDIER. Most certain.
ANTONY. Go, Eros, send his treasure after; do it;
Detain no jot, I charge thee. Write to him—
I will subscribe—gentle adieus and greetings;
Say that I wish he never find more cause
To change a master. O! my fortunes have
Corrupted honest men. Dispatch. Enobarbus! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VI.—Before Alexandria. CAESAR'S *camp.*

[*Flourish. Enter* CAESAR, *with* AGRIPPA, ENOBARBUS, *and others.*]

CAESAR. Go forth, Agrippa, and begin the fight:
Our will is Antony be took alive;
Make it so known.
AGRIPPA. Caesar, I shall. [*Exit.*]
CAESAR. The time of universal peace is near:
Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nook'd world
Shall bear the olive freely.

[*Enter a* Messenger.]

MESSENGER. Antony
Is come into the field.
CAESAR. Go charge Agrippa
Plant those that have revolted in the van,
That Antony may seem to spend his fury
Upon himself. [*Exeunt* CAESAR *and his Train.*]
ENOBARBUS. Alexas did revolt, and went to Jewry on
Affairs of Antony; there did persuade
Great Herod to incline himself to Caesar,
And leave his master Antony: for this pains
Caesar hath hang'd him. Canidius and the rest
That fell away have entertainment, but
No honourable trust. I have done ill,
Of which I do accuse myself so sorely
That I will joy no more.

[*Enter a* Soldier *of* CAESAR'S.]

SOLDIER. Enobarbus, Antony
Hath after thee sent all thy treasure, with
His bounty overplus: the messenger
Came on my guard; and at thy tent is now
Unloading of his mules
ENOBARBUS. I give it you.
SOLDIER. Mock not, Enobarbus.
I tell you true: best you saf'd the bringer
Out of the host; I must attend mine office
Or would have done 't myself. Your emperor
Continues still a Jove. [*Exit.*]
ENOBARBUS. I am alone the villain of the earth,
And feel I am so most O Antony!
Thou mine of bounty, how wouldst thou have paid
My better service, when my turpitude
Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows my heart:
If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean
Shall outstrike thought; but thought will do 't, I feel.
I fight against thee! No I will go seek
Some ditch, wherein to die; the foul'st best fits
My latter part of life [*Exit.*]

Scene VII.—Field of battle between the camps.

[*Alarum. Drums and trumpets. Enter* AGRIPPA *and others.*]

AGRIPPA. Retire, we have engag'd ourselves too far.
Caesar himself has work, and our oppression
Exceeds what we expected. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Alarum. Enter* ANTONY, *and* SCARUS *wounded.*]

SCARUS. O my brave emperor, this is fought indeed!
Had we done so at first, we had droven them home
With clouts about their heads
ANTONY. Thou bleed'st apace.
SCARUS I had a wound here that was like a T,
But now 'tis made an H.
ANTONY They do retire.
SCARUS. We'll beat 'em into bench-holes: I have yet
Room for six scotches more.

[*Enter* EROS.]

EROS. They are beaten, sir; and our advantage serves
For a fair victory.
SCARUS. Let us score their backs,
And snatch 'em up, as we take hares, behind:
'Tis sport to maul a runner.
ANTONY. I will reward thee
Once for thy sprightly comfort, and ten-fold
For thy good valour. Come thee on.
SCARUS. I'll halt after. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene VIII.—Under the walls of Alexandria.

[*Alarum. Enter* ANTONY, *marching;* SCARUS, *and Forces.*]

ANTONY. We have beat him to his camp; run one before
And let the queen know of our gests. To-morrow,
Before the sun shall see 's, we'll spill the blood
That has to-day escap'd. I thank you all;

For doughty-handed are you, and have fought
Not as you serv'd the cause, but as 't had been
Each man's like mine; you have shown all Hectors.
Enter the city, clip your wives, your friends,
Tell them your feats; whilst they with joyful tears
Wash the congealment from your wounds, and kiss
The honour'd gashes whole. [*To* SCARUS.] Give me thy hand.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, *attended.*]

To this great fairy I'll commend thy acts,
Make her thanks bless thee. O thou day o' the world!
Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all,
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing.

CLEOPATRA. Lord of lords!
O infinite virtue! com'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught?

ANTONY. My nightingale,
We have beat them to their beds. What, girl! though grey
Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha' we
A brain that nourishes our nerves, and can
Get goal for goal of youth. Behold this man;
Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand:
Kiss it, my warrior: he hath fought to-day
As if a god, in hate of mankind, had
Destroy'd in such a shape.

CLEOPATRA. I'll give thee, friend,
An armour all of gold; it was a king's.

ANTONY. He has deserv'd it, were it carbuncled
Like holy Phoebus' car. Give me thy hand:
Through Alexandria make a jolly march;
Bear our hack'd targets like the men that owe them:
Had our great palace the capacity
To camp this host, we all would sup together
And drink carouses to the next day's fate,
Which promises royal peril. Trumpeters,
With brazen din blast you the city's ear,
Make mingle with our rattling tabourines,
That heaven and earth may strike their sounds together,
Applauding our approach. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IX.—CAESAR'S *camp.*

[Sentinels *on their post.*]

FIRST SOLDIER. If we be not reliev'd within this hour,
We must return to the court of guard. the night
Is shiny, and they say we shall embattle
By the second hour i' the morn.

SECOND SOLDIER. This last day was
A shrewd one to 's.

[*Enter* ENOBARBUS.]

ENOBARBUS. O! bear me witness, night,—

THIRD SOLDIER. What man is this?

SECOND SOLDIER. Stand close and list him.

ENOBARBUS. Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,
When men revolted shall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent!

FIRST SOLDIER. Enobarbus!

THIRD SOLDIER. Peace!
Hark further.

ENOBARBUS. O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me; throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault,
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony!
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular;
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver and a fugitive.
O Antony! O Antony! [*Dies.*]

SECOND SOLDIER. Let 's speak to him.

FIRST SOLDIER. Let 's hear him, for the things he speaks
May concern Caesar.

THIRD SOLDIER. Let 's do so. But he sleeps.

FIRST SOLDIER. Swounds rather; for so bad a prayer as his
Was never yet for sleep.

SECOND SOLDIER. Go we to him.

THIRD SOLDIER. Awake, sir, awake! speak to us.

SECOND SOLDIER. Hear you, sir?

FIRST SOLDIER. The hand of death hath raught him.

[*Drums afar off.*]

Hark! the drums
Demurely wake the sleepers. Let us bear him
To the court of guard, he is of note: our hour
Is fully out.

THIRD SOLDIER. Come on, then;
He may recover yet. [*Exeunt with the body.*]

Scene X. Between the two camps.

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* SCARUS, *with forces, marching.*]

ANTONY. Their preparation is to-day by sea;
We please them not by land.

SCARUS. For both, my lord.

ANTONY. I would they'd fight i' the fire or i' the air;
We'd fight there too. But this it is; our foot
Upon the hills adjoining to the city
Shall stay with us; order for sea is given,
They have put forth the haven,
Where their appointment we may best discover
And look on their endeavour. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* CAESAR, *and his forces, marching.*]

CAESAR. But being charg'd, we will be still by land,
Which, as I take 't, we shall; for his best force
Is forth to man his galleys. To the vales,
And hold our best advantage! [*Exeunt.*]

[*Re-enter* ANTONY *and* SCARUS.]

ANTONY. Yet they are not join'd. Where yond pine does stand
I shall discover all; I'll bring thee word
Straight how 'tis like to go. [*Exit.*]

SCARUS. Swallows have built
In Cleopatra's sails their nests; the augurers
Say they know not, they cannot tell; look grimly,
And dare not speak their knowledge. Antony
Is valiant, and dejected; and, by starts,
His fretted fortunes give him hope and fear

Of what he has and has not.

[*Alarum afar off, as at a sea-fight.*]

[*Re-enter* ANTONY.]

ANTONY. All is lost!
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me;
My fleet hath yielded to the foe, and yonder
They cast their caps up and carouse together
Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd wanton, thou
Hast sold me to this novice, and my heart
Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly;
For when I am reveng'd upon my charm,
I have done all. Bid them all fly; be gone. [*Exit* SCARUS.]
O sun! thy uprise shall I see no more;
Fortune and Antony part here; even here
Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd,
That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am.
O this false soul of Egypt; this grave charm,
Whose eyes beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home,
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,
Like a right gipsy, hath, at fast and loose,
Beguil'd me to the very heart of loss.
What, Eros! Eros!

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA.]

Ah! thou spell Avaunt!

CLEOPATRA. Why is my lord enrag'd against his love?

ANTONY. Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving,
And blemish Caesar's triumph Let him take thee,
And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians;
Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot
Of all thy sex; most monster-like, be shown
For poor'st diminutives, for doits; and let
Patient Octavia plough thy visage up
With her prepared nails.

[*Exit* CLEOPATRA.]

'Tis well thou'rt gone,
If it be well to live; but better 'twere
Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death
Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!
The shirt of Nessus is upon me; teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage;
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon;
And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club,
Subdue my worthiest self. The witch shall die:
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall
Under this plot; she dies for 't. Eros, ho! [*Exit.*]

Scene XI.—Alexandria. A room in the palace.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, *and* MARDIAN.]

CLEOPATRA. Help me, my women! O! he is more mad
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly
Was never so emboss'd.

CHARMIAN. To the monument!
There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.
The soul and body rive not more in parting
Than greatness going off.

CLEOPATRA. To the monument!
Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;
Say that the last I spoke was 'Antony,'
And word it, prithee, piteously. Hence,
Mardian, and bring me how he takes my death.
To the monument! [*Exeunt.*]

Scene XII.—The same. Another room.

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* EROS.]

ANTONY. Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

EROS. Ay, noble lord.

ANTONY. Sometimes we see a cloud that 's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't, that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.

EROS Ay, my lord

ANTONY. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water.

EROS. It does, my lord.

ANTONY. My good knave, Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body: here I am Antony;
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.
I made these wars for Egypt; and the queen,
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which whilst it was mine had annex'd unto 't
A million more, now lost; she, Eros, has
Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false-play'd my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph.
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us
Ourselves to end ourselves.

[*Enter* MARDIAN.]

O! thy vile lady;
She has robb'd me of my sword.

MARDIAN. No, Antony;
My mistress lov'd thee, and her fortunes mingled
With thine entirely.

ANTONY. Hence, saucy eunuch; peace!
She hath betray'd me and shall die the death.

MARDIAN. Death of one person can be paid but once,
And that she has discharg'd. What thou wouldst do
Is done unto thy hand; the last she spake
Was, 'Antony! most noble Antony!'
Then in the midst a tearing groan did break
The name of Antony; it was divided
Between her heart and lips. She render'd life,
Thy name so buried in her.

ANTONY. Dead, then?

MARDIAN. Dead.

ANTONY. Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep. [*To* MARDIAN.] That thou depart'st hence safe,
Does pay thy labour richly; go. [*Exit* MARDIAN.]
Off, pluck off:
The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep
The battery from my heart. O! cleave, my sides;
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,

Crack thy frail case! Apace, Eros, apace.
No more a soldier; bruised pieces, go;
You have been nobly borne. From me awhile. [*Exit* EROS.]
I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now
All length is torture; since the torch is out,
Lie down, and stray no further. Now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with strength; seal then, and all is done.
Eros!—I come, my queen.—Eros!—Stay for me:
Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze;
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours. Come, Eros! Eros!
[*Re enter* EROS.]
EROS. What would my lord?
ANTONY. Since Cleopatra died,
I have liv'd in such dishonour, that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she, which by her death our Caesar tells
'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,
That, when the exigent should come,—which now
Is come indeed,—when I should see behind me
The inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,
Thou then wouldst kill me: do 't; the time is come.
Thou strik'st not me, 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.
EROS. The gods withhold me!
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
Though enemy, lost aim and could not?
ANTONY. Eros,
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome, and see
Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
His corrigible neck, his face subdu'd
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensu'd?
EROS. I would not see 't.
ANTONY. Come, then; for with a wound I must be cur'd.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.
EROS. O, sir! pardon me.
ANTONY. When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then
To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once,
Or thy precedent services are all
But accidents unpurpos'd. Draw, and come.
EROS. Turn from me then that noble countenance,
Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.
ANTONY. Lo thee! [*Turning from him.*]
EROS. My sword is drawn.
ANTONY. Then let it do at once
The thing why thou hast drawn it.
EROS. My dear master,
My captain, and my emperor, let me say,
Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.
ANTONY. 'Tis said, man; and farewell.
EROS. Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?
ANTONY. Now, Eros.
EROS. Why, there then; thus do I escape the sorrow
Of Antony's death. [*Kills himself.*]
ANTONY. Thrice-nobler than myself!
Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
Have by their brave instruction got upon me
A nobleness in record; but I will be
A bridegroom in my death, and run into 't
As to a lover's bed. Come, then; and, Eros,
Thy master dies thy scholar: to do thus [*Falls on his sword.*]
I learn'd of thee. How! not dead? not dead?
The guard, ho! O! dispatch me.
[*Enter* DERCETAS *and* Guard.]
FIRST GUARD. What 's the noise?
ANTONY. I have done my work ill, friends: O! make an end
Of what I have begun.
SECOND GUARD. The star is fallen.
FIRST GUARD. And time is at his period.
ALL. Alas, and woe!
ANTONY. Let him that loves me strike me dead.
FIRST GUARD. Not I.
SECOND GUARD. Nor I.
THIRD GUARD. Nor any one. [*Exeunt* Guard.]
DERCETAS. Thy death and fortunes bid thy followers fly.
This sword but shown to Caesar, with this tidings,
Shall enter me with him.
[*Enter* DIOMEDES.]
DIOMEDES. Where 's Antony?
DERCETAS. There, Diomed, there.
DIOMEDES. Lives he?
Wilt thou not answer, man? [*Exit* DERCETAS.]
ANTONY. Art thou there, Diomed? Draw thy sword, and give me
Sufficing strokes for death.
DIOMEDES. Most absolute lord,
My mistress Cleopatra sent me to thee.
ANTONY. When did she send thee?
DIOMEDES. Now, my lord.
ANTONY. Where is she?
DIOMEDES. Lock'd in her monument. She had a prophesying fear
Of what hath come to pass; for when she saw—
Which never shall be found—you did suspect
She had dispos'd with Caesar, and that your rage
Would not be purg'd, she sent you word she was dead:
But, fearing since how it might work, hath sent
Me to proclaim the truth; and I am come,
I dread, too late.
ANTONY. Too late, good Diomed. Call my guard, I prithee.
DIOMEDES. What, ho! the emperor's guard! The guard, what, ho!
Come, your lord calls!
[*Enter four or five of the Guard of* ANTONY.]

ANTONY. Bear me, good friends, where Cleopatra bides;
'Tis the last service that I shall command you.
FIRST GUARD. Woe, woe are we, sir, you may not live to wear
All your true followers out.
ALL. Most heavy day!
ANTONY. Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp fate
To grace it with your sorrows; bid that welcome
Which comes to punish us, and we punish it
Seeming to bear it lightly. Take me up;
I have led you oft; carry me now, good friends,
And have my thanks for all. [*Exeunt, bearing* ANTONY.]

Scene XIII.—The same. A monument.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA *and her maids aloft, with* CHARMIAN *and* IRAS.]

CLEOPATRA. O Charmian! I will never go from hence.
CHARMIAN. Be comforted, dear madam.
CLEOPATRA. No, I will not.
All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.
[*Enter, below,* DIOMEDES.]
How now! is he dead?
DIOMEDES. His death 's upon him, but not dead.
Look out o' the other side your monument;
His guard have brought him thither.
[*Enter, below,* ANTONY, *borne by the Guard.*]
CLEOPATRA. O sun!
Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in; darkling stand
The varying star o' the world. O Antony,
Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian, help, Iras, help;
Help, friends below! let 's draw him hither.
ANTONY. Peace!
Not Caesar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,
But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.
CLEOPATRA. So it should be, that none but Antony
Should conquer Antony; but woe 'tis so!
ANTONY. I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.
CLEOPATRA. I dare not, dear,—
Dear my lord, pardon,—I dare not,
Lest I be taken: not the imperious show
Of the full-fortun'd Caesar ever shall
Be brooch'd with me; if knife, drugs, serpents, have
Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe:
Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony,—
Help me, my women,—we must draw thee up.
Assist, good friends.
ANTONY. O! quick, or I am gone.
CLEOPATRA. Here 's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord!
Our strength is all gone into heaviness,
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up,
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little,
Wishers were ever fools. O! come, come, come;
[*They heave* ANTONY *aloft to* CLEOPATRA.]
And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast liv'd;
Quicken with kissing; had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.
ALL. A heavy sight!
ANTONY. I am dying, Egypt, dying:
Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.
CLEOPATRA. No, let me speak; and let me rail so high,
That the false housewife Fortune break her wheel,
Provok'd by my offence.
ANTONY. One word, sweet queen.
Of Caesar seek your honour with your safety. O!
CLEOPATRA. They do not go together.
ANTONY. Gentle, hear me:
None about Caesar trust, but Proculeius.
CLEOPATRA. My resolution and my hands I'll trust;
None about Caesar.
ANTONY. The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I liv'd, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest; and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman; a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.
CLEOPATRA. Noblest of men, woo 't die?
Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide
In this dull world, which in thy absence is
No better than a sty? O! see my women, [ANTONY *dies.*]
The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
O! wither'd is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fall'n; young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon. [*Swoons.*]
CHARMIAN. O, quietness, lady!
IRAS. She is dead too, our sovereign.
CHARMIAN. Lady!
IRAS. Madam!
CHARMIAN. O madam, madam, madam!
IRAS. Royal Egypt!
Empress!
CHARMIAN. Peace, peace, Iras!
CLEOPATRA. No more, but e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chares. It were for me
To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods;
To tell them that this world did equal theirs
Till they had stol'n our jewel. All 's but naught;
Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that's mad; then is it sin
To rush into the secret house of death,
Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?
What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!
My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look!

Our lamp is spent, it 's out. Good sirs, take heart;—
We'll bury him; and then, what 's brave, what 's noble,
Let 's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us. Come, away;
This case of that huge spirit now is cold;
Ah! women, women. Come; we have no friend
But resolution, and the briefest end.

[*Exeunt; those above bearing off* ANTONY's *body.*]

ACT V

Scene I.—Alexandria. CAESAR's *camp.*

[*Enter* CAESAR, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, MECAENAS, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, *and others.*]

CAESAR. Go to him, Dolabella, bid him yield;
Being so frustrate, tell him he mocks
The pauses that he makes.

DOLABELLA. Caesar, I shall. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* DERCETAS, *with the sword of* ANTONY.]

CAESAR. Wherefore is that? and what art thou that dar'st
Appear thus to us?

DERCETAS. I am call'd Dercetas;
Mark Antony I serv'd, who best was worthy
Best to be serv'd; whilst he stood up and spoke
He was my master, and I wore my life
To spend upon his haters. If thou please
To take me to thee, as I was to him
I'll be to Caesar; if thou pleasest not,
I yield thee up my life.

CAESAR. What is 't thou sayst?

DERCETAS. I say, O Caesar, Antony is dead.

CAESAR. The breaking of so great a thing should make
A greater crack; the round world
Should have shook lions into civil streets,
And citizens to their dens. The death of Antony
Is not a single doom; in the name lay
A moiety of the world.

DERCETAS. He is dead, Caesar;
Not by a public minister of justice,
Nor by a hired knife; but that self hand,
Which writ his honour in the acts it did,
Hath, with the courage which the heart did lend it,
Splitted the heart. This is his sword;
I robb'd his wound of it; behold it stain'd
With his most noble blood.

CAESAR. Look you sad, friends?
The gods rebuke me, but it is tidings
To wash the eyes of kings.

AGRIPPA. And strange it is,
That nature must compel us to lament
Our most persisted deeds.

MECAENAS. His taints and honours
Wag'd equal with him.

AGRIPPA. A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity; but you, gods, will give us
Some faults to make us men. Caesar is touch'd.

MECAENAS. When such a spacious mirror 's set before him,
He needs must see himself.

CAESAR. O Antony!
I have follow'd thee to this; but we do lance
Diseases in our bodies: I must perforce
Have shown to thee such a declining day,
Or look on thine; we could not stall together
In the whole world. But yet let me lament,
With tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts,
That thou, my brother, my competitor
In top of all design, my mate in empire,
Friend and companion in the front of war,
The arm of mine own body, and the heart
Where mine his thoughts did kindle, that our stars,
Unreconcilable, should divide
Our equalness to this. Hear me, good friends,—

[*Enter an* Egyptian.]

But I will tell you at some meeter season:
The business of this man looks out of him;
We'll hear him what he says. Whence are you?

EGYPTIAN. A poor Egyptian yet. The queen my mistress,
Confin'd in all she has, her monument,
Of thy intents desires instruction,
That she preparedly may frame herself
To the way she 's forc'd to.

CAESAR. Bid her have good heart;
She soon shall know of us, by some of ours,
How honourable and how kindly we
Determine for her; for Caesar cannot live
To be ungentle.

EGYPTIAN. So the gods preserve thee! [*Exit.*]

CAESAR. Come hither, Proculeius. Go and say,
We purpose her no shame; give her what comforts
The quality of her passion shall require,
Lest, in her greatness, by some mortal stroke
She do defeat us; for her life in Rome
Would be eternal in our triumph. Go,
And with your speediest bring us what she says,
And how you find of her.

PROCULEIUS. Caesar, I shall. [*Exit.*]

CAESAR. Gallus, go you along. [*Exit* GALLUS.]
Where 's Dolabella,
To second Proculeius?

AGRIPPA. }
MECAENAS. } Dolabella!

CAESAR. Let him alone, for I remember now
How he 's employ'd, he shall in time be ready.
Go with me to my tent; where you shall see
How hardly I was drawn into this war;
How calm and gentle I proceeded still
In all my writings. Go with me, and see
What I can show in this. [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II.—The same. The monument.

[*Enter aloft,* CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, *and* IRAS.]

CLEOPATRA. My desolation does begin to make
A better life. 'Tis paltry to be Caesar;
Not being Fortune, he 's but Fortune's knave,
A minister of her will; and it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds,
Which shackles accidents, and bolts up change,

Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
The beggar's nurse and Caesar's.

[*Enter, below,* PROCULEIUS, GALLUS, *and* Soldiers.]

PROCULEIUS. Caesar sends greeting to the Queen of Egypt;
And bids thee study on what fair demands
Thou mean'st to have him grant thee.

CLEOPATRA. What 's thy name?

PROCULEIUS. My name is Proculeius.

CLEOPATRA. Antony
Did tell me of you, bade me trust you; but
I do not greatly care to be deceiv'd,
That have no use for trusting. If your master
Would have a queen his beggar, you must tell him,
That majesty, to keep decorum, must
No less beg than a kingdom: if he please
To give me conquer'd Egypt for my son,
He gives me so much of mine own as I
Will kneel to him with thanks.

PROCULEIUS. Be of good cheer;
You're fall'n into a princely hand, fear nothing.
Make your full reference freely to my lord,
Who is so full of grace, that it flows over
On all that need; let me report to him
Your sweet dependancy, and you shall find
A conqueror that will pray in aid for kindness
Where he for grace is kneel'd to.

CLEOPATRA. Pray you, tell him
I am his fortune's vassal, and I send him
The greatness he has got. I hourly learn
A doctrine of obedience, and would gladly
Look him i' the face.

PROCULEIUS. This I'll report, dear lady:
Have comfort, for I know your plight is pitied
Of him that caus'd it.

GALLUS. You see how easily she may be surpris'd.

[PROCULEIUS *and two of the Guard ascend the monument by a ladder, and come behind* CLEOPATRA. *Some of the Guard unbar and open the gates, discovering the lower room of the monument.*]

[*To* PROCULEIUS *and the Guard.*] Guard her till Caesar come. [*Exit.*]

IRAS. Royal queen!

CHARMIAN. O Cleopatra! thou art taken, queen.

CLEOPATRA. Quick, quick, good hands. [*Drawing a dagger.*]

PROCULEIUS. Hold, worthy lady, hold!

[*Seizes and disarms her.*]

Do not yourself such wrong, who are in this
Reliev'd, but not betray'd.

CLEOPATRA. What, of death too,
That rids our dogs of languish?

PROCULEIUS. Cleopatra,
Do not abuse my master's bounty by
The undoing of yourself; let the world see
His nobleness well acted, which your death
Will never let come forth.

CLEOPATRA. Where art thou, death?
Come hither, come! come, come, and take a queen
Worth many babes and beggars!

PROCULEIUS. O! temperance, lady.

CLEOPATRA. Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;
If idle talk will once be necessary,
I'll not sleep neither. This mortal house I'll ruin,
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir, that I
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court,
Nor once be chastis'd with the sober eye
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up
And show me to the shouting varletry
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark nak'd, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

PROCULEIUS. You do extend
These thoughts of horror further than you shall
Find cause in Caesar.

[*Enter* DOLABELLA.]

DOLABELLA. Proculeius,
What thou hast done thy master Caesar knows,
And he hath sent for thee; as for the queen,
I'll take her to my guard.

PROCULEIUS. So, Dolabella,
It shall content me best; be gentle to her.
[*To* CLEOPATRA.] To Caesar I will speak what you shall please,
If you'll employ me to him.

CLEOPATRA Say, I would die.

[*Exeunt* PROCULEIUS *and* Soldiers.]

DOLABELLA. Most noble empress, you have heard of me?

CLEOPATRA. I cannot tell.

DOLABELLA. Assuredly you know me.

CLEOPATRA No matter, sir, what I have heard or known.
You laugh when boys or women tell their dreams;
Is 't not your trick?

DOLABELLA. I understand not, madam.

CLEOPATRA. I dream'd there was an Emperor Antony:
O! such another sleep, that I might see
But such another man.

DOLABELLA. If it might please ye,—

CLEOPATRA. His face was as the heavens, and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course, and lighted,
The little O, the earth.

DOLABELLA. Most sovereign creature,—

CLEOPATRA. His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in 't, an autumn 'twas
That grew the more by reaping; his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they liv'd in; in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets, realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

DOLABELLA. Cleopatra,—

CLEOPATRA. Think you there was, or might be, such a man
As this I dream'd of?
DOLABELLA. Gentle madam, no.
CLEOPATRA. You lie, up to the hearing of the gods.
But, if there be, or ever were, one such,
It 's past the size of dreaming; nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy; yet to imagine
An Antony were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite.
DOLABELLA. Hear me, good madam.
Your loss is as yourself, great; and you bear it
As answering to the weight: would I might never
O'ertake pursu'd success, but I do feel,
By the rebound of yours, a grief that smites
My very heart at root.
CLEOPATRA. I thank you, sir.
Know you what Caesar means to do with me?
DOLABELLA. I am loath to tell you what I would you knew.
CLEOPATRA. Nay, pray you, sir,—
DOLABELLA. Though he be honourable,—
CLEOPATRA. He'll lead me then in triumph?
DOLABELLA. Madam, he will; I know 't.
[*Within*, 'Make way there!—Caesar!']
[*Enter* CAESAR, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, MECAENAS, SELEUCUS, *and* Attendants.]
CAESAR. Which is the Queen of Egypt?
DOLABELLA. It is the emperor, madam.
[CLEOPATRA *kneels*.]
CAESAR. Arise, you shall not kneel.
I pray you, rise; rise, Egypt.
CLEOPATRA. Sir, the gods
Will have it thus; my master and my lord
I must obey.
CAESAR. Take to you no hard thoughts;
The record of what injuries you did us,
Though written in our flesh, we shall remember
As things but done by chance.
CLEOPATRA. Sole sir o' the world,
I cannot project mine own cause so well
To make it clear; but do confess I have
Been laden with like frailties which before
Have often sham'd our sex.
CAESAR. Cleopatra, know,
We will extenuate rather than enforce:
If you apply yourself to our intents,—
Which towards you are most gentle,—you shall find
A benefit in this change; but if you seek
To lay on me a cruelty, by taking
Antony's course, you shall bereave yourself
Of my good purposes, and put your children
To that destruction which I'll guard them from,
If thereon you rely. I'll take my leave.
CLEOPATRA. And may through all the world: 'tis yours; and we,
Your scutcheons, and your signs of conquest, shall
Hang in what place you please. Here, my good lord.
CAESAR. You shall advise me in all for Cleopatra.
CLEOPATRA. [*Giving a scroll.*] This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels,
I am possess'd of: 'tis exactly valued;
Not petty things admitted. Where 's Seleucus?
SELEUCUS. Here, madam.
CLEOPATRA. This is my treasurer; let him speak, my lord,
Upon his peril, that I have reserv'd
To myself nothing. Speak the truth, Seleucus.
SELEUCUS. Madam,
I had rather seal my lips, than, to my peril,
Speak that which is not.
CLEOPATRA. What have I kept back?
SELEUCUS. Enough to purchase what you have made known.
CAESAR. Nay, blush not, Cleopatra; I approve
Your wisdom in the deed.
CLEOPATRA. See! Caesar! O, behold,
How pomp is follow'd; mine will now be yours;
And, should we shift estates, yours would be mine.
The ingratitude of this Seleucus does
Even make me wild. O slave! of no more trust
Than love that 's hir'd. What! goest thou back? thou shalt
Go back, I warrant thee; but I'll catch thine eyes,
Though they had wings: slave, soulless villain, dog!
O rarely base!
CAESAR. Good queen, let us entreat you.
CLEOPATRA. O Caesar! what a wounding shame is this,
That thou, vouchsafing here to visit me,
Doing the honour of thy lordliness
To one so meek, that mine own servant should
Parcel the sum of my disgraces by
Addition of his envy. Say, good Caesar,
That I some lady trifles have reserv'd
Immoment toys, things of such dignity
As we greet modern friends withal; and say,
Some nobler token I have kept apart
For Livia and Octavia, to induce
Their mediation; must I be unfolded
With one that I have bred? The gods! it smites me
Beneath the fall I have. [*To* SELEUCUS.] Prithee, go hence;
Or I shall show the cinders of my spirits
Through the ashes of my chance. Wert thou a man,
Thou wouldst have mercy on me.
CAESAR. Forbear, Seleucus.
[*Exit* SELEUCUS.]
CLEOPATRA. Be it known that we, the greatest, are misthought
For things that others do; and, when we fall,
We answer others' merits in our name,
Are therefore to be pitied.
CAESAR. Cleopatra,
Not what you have reserv'd, nor what acknowledg'd,
Put we i' the roll of conquest: still be 't yours,
Bestow it at your pleasure; and believe,
Caesar 's no merchant, to make prize with you
Of things that merchants sold. Therefore be cheer'd;
Make not your thoughts your prisons: no, dear queen;
For we intend so to dispose you as
Yourself shall give us counsel. Feed, and sleep:

Our care and pity is so much upon you,
That we remain your friend; and so, adieu.
CLEOPATRA. My master, and my lord!
CAESAR. Not so. Adieu.
[*Flourish. Exeunt* CAESAR *and his train.*]
CLEOPATRA. He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not
Be noble to myself: but, hark thee, Charmian.
[*Whispers* CHARMIAN.]
IRAS. Finish, good lady; the bright day is done,
And we are for the dark.
CLEOPATRA. Hie thee again:
I have spoke already, and it is provided;
Go, put it to the haste.
CHARMIAN. Madam, I will.
[*Re-enter* DOLABELLA.]
DOLABELLA. Where is the queen?
CHARMIAN. Behold, sir. [*Exit.*]
CLEOPATRA. Dolabella!
DOLABELLA. Madam, as thereto sworn by your command,
Which my love makes religion to obey,
I tell you this: Caesar through Syria
Intends his journey; and within three days
You with your children will he send before.
Make your best use of this; I have perform'd
Your pleasure and my promise
CLEOPATRA. Dolabella,
I shall remain your debtor.
DOLABELLA. I your servant.
Adieu, good queen; I must attend on Caesar
CLEOPATRA. Farewell, and thanks. [*Exit* DOLABELLA.]
Now, Iras, what think'st thou?
Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shall be shown
In Rome, as well as I; mechanic slaves
With greasy aprons, rules and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,
Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
And forc'd to drink their vapour.
IRAS. The gods forbid!
CLEOPATRA. Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras. Saucy lictors
Will catch at us, like wantons, and scald rimers
Ballad us out o' tune; the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels. Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness.
IRAS. O, the good gods!
CLEOPATRA. Nay, that 's certain.
IRAS. I'll never see it; for, I am sure my nails
Are stronger than mine eyes.
CLEOPATRA. Why, that 's the way
To fool their preparation, and to conquer
Their most absurd intents.
[*Re-enter* CHARMIAN.]
Now, Charmian,
Show me, my women, like a queen; go fetch
My best attires; I am again for Cydnus,
To meet Mark Antony. Sirrah Iras, go.
Now, noble Charmian, we'll dispatch indeed;
And, when thou hast done this chare, I'll give thee leave
To play till doomsday. Bring our crown and all.
[*Exit* IRAS. *A noise heard.*]
Wherefore 's this noise?
[*Enter one of the Guard.*]
GUARD. Here is a rural fellow
That will not be denied your highness' presence:
He brings you figs.
CLEOPATRA. Let him come in. [*Exit Guard.*] What poor an instrument
May do a noble deed! he brings me liberty.
My resolution 's plac'd, and I have nothing
Of woman in me; now from head to foot
I am marble-constant, now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine
[*Re-enter* Guard, *with a* Clown *bringing in a basket.*]
GUARD. This is the man.
CLEOPATRA. Avoid, and leave him. [*Exit* Guard.]
Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?
CLOWN. Truly, I have him; but I would not be the party that should desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or never recover.
CLEOPATRA. Remember'st thou any that have died on 't?
CLOWN. Very many, men and women too. I heard of one of them no longer than yesterday; a very honest woman, but something given to lie, as a woman should not do but in the way of honesty, how she died of the biting of it, what pain she felt. Truly, she makes a very good report o' the worm; but he that will believe all that they say shall never be saved by half that they do. But this is most fallible, the worm 's an odd worm.
CLEOPATRA. Get thee hence; farewell.
CLOWN. I wish you all joy of the worm.
[*Sets down the basket.*]
CLEOPATRA. Farewell.
CLOWN. You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kind.
CLEOPATRA. Ay, ay; farewell.
CLOWN Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people; for indeed there is no goodness in the worm.
CLEOPATRA. Take thou no care; it shall be heeded.
CLOWN. Very good. Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.
CLEOPATRA. Will it eat me?
CLOWN. You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman; I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But, truly, these same devils do the gods great harm in their women, for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five.
CLEOPATRA. Well, get thee gone; farewell.
CLOWN. Yes, forsooth; I wish you joy of the worm
[*Exit.*]
[*Re-enter* IRAS, *with a robe, crown, &c.*]
CLEOPATRA. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me; now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear

Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath: husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire, and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.
[*Kisses them.* IRAS *falls and dies.*]
Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desir'd. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.
CHARMIAN. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say,
The gods themselves do weep.
CLEOPATRA. This proves me base:
If she first meet the curled Antony,
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch,
[*To the asp, which she applies to her breast.*]
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie, poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch O! couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass
Unpolicied.
CHARMIAN. O eastern star!
CLEOPATRA. Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?
CHARMIAN. O, break! O, break!
CLEOPATRA As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—
O Antony!—Nay, I will take thee too.
[*Applying another asp to her arm.*]
What should I stay— [*Dies.*]
CHARMIAN. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phoebus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown 's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play
[*Enter the* Guard, *rushing in.*]
FIRST GUARD. Where is the queen?
CHARMIAN. Speak softly, wake her not.
FIRST GUARD. Caesar hath sent—
CHARMIAN. Too slow a messenger.
[*Applies an asp.*]
O! come apace, dispatch; I partly feel thee.
FIRST GUARD. Approach, ho! All 's not well; Caesar 's beguil'd.
SECOND GUARD. There 's Dolabella sent from Caesar; call him.
FIRST GUARD. What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?
CHARMIAN. It is well done, and fitting for a princess
Descended of so many royal kings.
Ah! soldier. [*Dies.*]
[*Re-enter* DOLABELLA.]
DOLABELLA. How goes it here?
SECOND GUARD. All dead.
DOLABELLA. Caesar, thy thoughts
Touch their effects in this; thyself art coming
To see perform'd the dreaded act which thou
So sought'st to hinder.
[*Within.* 'A way there!—a way for Caesar!']
[*Re-enter* CAESAR *and all his train.*]
DOLABELLA. O! sir, you are too sure an augurer;
That you did fear is done.
CAESAR. Bravest at the last,
She levell'd at our purposes, and, being royal,
Took her own way. The manner of their deaths?
I do not see them bleed.
DOLABELLA. Who was last with them?
FIRST GUARD. A simple countryman that brought her figs:
This was his basket.
CAESAR. Poison'd then.
FIRST GUARD. O Caesar!
This Charmian liv'd but now; she stood, and spake:
I found her trimming up the diadem
On her dead mistress, tremblingly she stood,
And on the sudden dropp'd.
CAESAR. O noble weakness!
If they had swallow'd poison 'twould appear
By external swelling; but she looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.
DOLABELLA. Here, on her breast,
There is a vent of blood, and something blown;
The like is on her arm.
FIRST GUARD. This is an aspic's trail; and these fig-leaves
Have slime upon them, such as the aspic leaves
Upon the caves of Nile.
CAESAR. Most probable
That so she died; for her physician tells me
She hath pursu'd conclusions infinite
Of easy ways to die. Take up her bed;
And bear her women from the monument.
She shall be buried by her Antony:
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous. High events as these
Strike those that make them; and their story is
No less in pity than his glory which
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall,
In solemn show, attend this funeral,
And then to Rome. Come, Dolabella, see
High order in this great solemnity. [*Exeunt.*]

The obvious conflict in this play, emphasized by all commentators, lies between love and honor, or love and ambition, between Antony's "Roman thought" and the attraction of the "Egyptian spirit." But there are other [illegible] of which may help to illuminate the characters of the two central figures. Antony is a man with vast natural capacities for many different activities: politics, generalship, love, friendship, pleasure.

Indeed, his very versatility prevents his finding any meaningful center for his life, and his problem, in one sense, is to find some basic principle by which he may realize his essential self In the end, he comes closest to achieving this in his love of Cleopatra; but, ironically enough, this is, in a sense, forced upon him by the collapse of everything else in his life. Almost in desperation, then, he seizes upon this. Cleopatra's situation is, to a degree, parallel. The things by which she has lived—pleasure and the gratification of her appetite for personal power over men —collapse, too; and after Antony's death she begins to move forward, though fumblingly, toward an ideal in terms of which her life can have a deeper meaning.

In other words, this play, in contrast with a play like *Hedda Gabler*, has a very complex structure, for there are really two stories which interact to create a unity. For example, though the two stories share the same climax (Actium), the dénouement of one story (Antony's suicide) constitutes an important stage in the development of the other story (Cleopatra's "regeneration").

If one accepts the interpretation of the characters indicated above, then a great deal of material which may otherwise seem superfluous assumes an integral relationship to the central impulse of the play. All of this material works to define the nature of the world in which the story of Antony and Cleopatra occurs, and, finally, their story is not really comprehensible without an understanding of that world. It is a world which has fallen into almost complete disorder. The Roman virtues and the Roman social and personal discipline have decayed. It has become a world in which the strong compete with each other for mastery without reference to any social idea—such as the Roman patriotism which had subordinated the individual to the general good If Antony had lived in the great days of the Roman Republic, the social values dictated by the Republic might have directed his vast talents and energies according to some principle, and he would, in that case, not have been the brilliant but purposeless man who appears in the play. In other words, it may be said that Antony epitomizes his world

If this interpretation is acceptable, then an incident such as that on Pompey's galley (Act II, Scene vii) is seen to have a fundamental relationship to the central fact of the play. The scene gives us a glimpse of the condition of this world; it is a piece of exposition, but exposition which is presented in terms of action. Pompey is a pirate, a freebooter, but we see that he is in reality no different from the triumvirs. (In effect, they acknowledge this by their dealing with him.) Pompey owes no obligations to anyone except himself, but he cannot bring himself to become the pure opportunist, and murder the triumvirs while they are in his power. In other words, in this world in which all general values have collapsed, Pompey clings to a rag of personal honor, an ideal beyond mere practical success. But not only does this scene serve to define the world in which the story of Antony and Cleopatra occurs; in addition, Pompey's story is a dramatic foreshadowing of the attempt of both Antony and Cleopatra to achieve some ideal interpretation of their own lives. Further, this scene offers a parallel situation in regard to Menas and Enobarbus: Menas, as we learn from his advice to Pompey, has thoroughly accepted his world and is a pure opportunist; Enobarbus attempts to achieve such an acceptance and deserts Antony, but dies of a broken heart. These illustrations drawn from one scene will indicate the elaborate structure and, at the same time, the closely wrought unity of the play.

Questions:

1. What material does Shakespeare select from Plutarch's account? Compare Shakespeare's interpretation with that of Plutarch. (For further comparisons the student may read *All for Love*, by John Dryden.)
2. Define the character of Enobarbus. What is his relation to Antony? To Cleopatra? What is his general function in the play?
3. Define the character of Octavius. What forces does he represent in the play? How does he differ from Menas in his attitude toward the world? Why does Octavius refuse Antony's challenge to personal combat? How do you relate this refusal to the general theme of the play?
4. What is the significance of Cleopatra's words, "Husband, I come" (Act V, Scene ii)? Of the image concerning the asp. "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep" (Act V, Scene ii)?
5. Analyze the imagery in the passage beginning: "I dreamed there was an Emperor Antony" (Act V, Scene ii).
6. Discuss the various kinds of irony to be found in this play.
7. The play *Hedda Gabler* contrasts with this play in theme. Hedda, surrounded by a world "ordered" to the point of dull routine, wishes for something dashing and heroic. She asks that Lovborg come from the banquet "with vine-leaves in his hair,"—somewhat, perhaps, like Antony in the scene on Pompey's galley. How far may this contrast between the two plays be carried?

Glossary

This Glossary does not attempt to give full or exhaustive definitions of the terms listed below. It does attempt to give a brief definition of the special sense or senses which the term has in literary criticism. In most cases, the term is treated rather fully in one of the "Introductions." References to these "Introductions" are abbreviated as follows "Introduction to Poetry," as "Poetry"; "Introduction to Fiction," as "Fiction"; etc.

ABSTRACT: See CONCRETE.

ACTION STORY: Fiction in which the principal element is plot suspense; i.e., adventure or detective fiction. See "Fiction," pp. 9–10.

ALLEGORY: An allegory is a kind of story in which the characters, objects, and events are not to be taken as real, but as standing for something else. For instance, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory. The character Christian, who in that story leaves his home to go to the Celestial City, is not to be taken as a real individual, but as the type of all people who try to lead the Christian's life. In an allegory there are frequently PERSONIFICATIONS A personification is the giving of the qualities of a person to an inanimate object or to an idea. For instance, Keats in the poem "To Autumn" presents the season as a beautiful woman drowsing in a half-reaped field. The chief danger in the use of allegory is that the system of equivalents may seem too complicated or may seem forced. See "Novel," pp. 215–16. See also SYMBOL. The chief distinction between allegory and symbol is this: the term allegory usually implies a thoroughgoing and mutually related set of symbols, a *system* of equivalents.

ATMOSPHERE: The general pervasive feeling aroused by the various factors such as setting, character, theme, etc., in a piece of literature; the general effect on the reader of the handling of the total work. To be distinguished from SETTING. See "Fiction," pp. 14–15.

ALLITERATION: Identity of initial consonants in a group of words. See "Poetry," p. 427.

ANAPAEST: A foot of two unaccented and one accented syllables. See "Poetry," p. 425.

ASSONANCE: Identity of vowel sounds in accented syllables without the identity of the following consonants. See "Poetry," pp. 427–28.

BALLAD: A ballad is a song that tells a story. A ballad such as "Sir Patrick Spens" was originally sung, though now it is read like other poems. There are two general classes of ballads: (1) Popular, or Folk, Ballad, and (2) Literary Ballad. "Sir Patrick Spens" is a folk ballad, for instance. Nobody knows who originally made up the poem or exactly what the original version was. But we do know how it was preserved. It was passed down by word of mouth (oral tradition) constantly being changed by the bad memory or the power of imagination of different people A poem preserved in such a fashion would necessarily be simple in form. It would also tend to employ repetition and refrain, which are the helps to memory. There would be little or no comment or moralizing on the story, for the treatment would be objective and dramatic. The materials treated would be of a kind to appeal to a large number of rather simple people: a shipwreck in "Sir Patrick Spens," the murder of Johnny by his sweetheart in "Frankie and Johnny," etc A literary ballad is an imitation of the method and the effect of the folk ballad by a professional poet, such as John Keats, who wrote "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." The literary ballad is preserved in the ordinary way, that is, by writing it down or by printing it.

BLANK VERSE: Unrhymed iambic pentameter verse. See "Poetry," p. 429.

CHRONICLE: An account of events arranged in the order of the time of happening; sometimes applies to a story which has relatively light emphasis on the central situation.

CLICHÉ. A phrase that has lost its force because of continued use. See the analysis of "To Ianthe," p. 463. See also for a justifiable use of the cliché the analysis of "That the Night Come," on p. 469. The cliché is one kind of appeal to a STOCK RESPONSE on the part of the reader. See SENTIMENTALITY.

CLIMAX: The highest point in an ascending series; in fiction or drama, for example, the point where the forces reach their moment of highest concentration. See "Fiction," p. 23.

COMEDY: See "Drama," p. 515.

COMPLICATION: See "Fiction," p. 23.

CONCRETE: Literature, especially poetry, fiction, and drama, aims, in a large part at being concrete and not abstract, particular and not general. It appeals to sensation, direct observation, perception, and experience. A novelist may wish to express an idea in his novel, but he does not give it to us in a series of general statements or in an argument; instead, he writes a novel, a long story which makes us feel the force of

his idea. A poet, Robert Burns for instance, does not say merely, "I am in love." That would be a general, or an abstract, statement. Instead, he tries to convey to the reader the quality of his love by a set of particular comparisons. He says, "My love is like a red, red rose." Then he proceeds to give other comparisons, each of which adds to the concreteness of the poem. See IMAGERY. Literature does treat of general ideas and abstractions, but it aims to express those ideas so that they can be felt concretely. The idea in literature is interesting just in so far as it finds an expression that will appeal to emotion.

CONNOTATION: See DENOTATION

CONSONANCE. Identity of consonants of words without identity of vowels. See "Poetry," p. 428.

CONVENTIONAL: A thing is said to be conventional when it is usual or expected; the term in particular carries the association of use in the past. For example, the fleetingness of beauty is a conventional theme in poetry, for poets in all ages have used it. So also certain forms, like the sonnet for instance, are said to be conventional forms. To say that a theme or a form or a choice of words is conventional, however, is not necessarily to condemn it. Writers of literature have to work in terms of *conventions,* accepted ways of doing things. Most fine literature is to some extent conventional, but it uses its conventions for its purpose, freshening them and relating them to what is new. It does not, like poor poetry, depend entirely upon them.

COUPLET: Two lines rhyming or unrhyming. See "Poetry," p. 428.

DACTYL: A foot composed of one accented and two unaccented syllables. See "Poetry," p. 425.

DENOTATION: The exact thing indicated by a word. It is opposed to CONNOTATION which means the thing or things suggested by a word, or *associated* with it. In Coleridge's lines

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree

the word Xanadu *denotes* a special place on the map presumably, but it *connotes* something of remoteness, historical glamor, and Oriental splendor. The same applies to the name of the ruler, Kubla Khan. By rewriting the line to give a new set of meanings the thing becomes comic nonsense:

> In Iowa did Otto Kahn
> A stately pleasure-dome decree.

A word like *rose* carries a different connotation as well as denotation from a word like *dog fennel.* The same applies to *o'er* and *over, thou* and *you, bark* and *boat,* and numerous other pairs of words. It is a mistake to think that the word of the more remote, romantic, or fanciful connotation is better for poetry; generally it is poetical in a bad sense when used in modern poetry because it does not belong to our living language. (There are, however, no absolute rules on this point.)

DÉNOUEMENT: The untying of the plot; the final resolution of the complications of the plot. It sometimes, but not always, coincides with the climax. See CLIMAX.

DRAMATIC: This term is used with two meanings. The first implies the presence of a sharp struggle or conflict, or tension. The second refers to the way in which a scene, in a short story, for instance, is presented when action and dialogue is given without interpretation or comment by the author in a direct form. See "Drama," p. 513.

END-STOPPED: A line of verse in which there is a definite pause at the end of the line. See "Poetry," p. 426.

ENJAMBEMENT: See RUN-ON.

EPISODE. A separate incident in a larger piece of action. The term *EPISODIC* is used to describe a plot, for example, which is characterized by a rather loose linking together of separate incidents without much regard for cause and effect. In such cases one incident does not occur as a logical consequence of a previous incident, but merely follows it in time.

EXPOSITION: The process of getting over necessary information to the reader. See "Fiction," pp. 21–22; also "Drama," p. 517.

FAMILIAR ESSAY: An essay characterized by a familiar or informal or personal tone. See "Essay," pp. 114–15.

FICTION: The term used to distinguish an unhistorical account from a historical; with special reference to literature, see "Fiction," p. 9.

FIGURE OF SPEECH: See IMAGERY.

FOCUS: The center around which the material or an imaginative work is organized. See "Fiction," pp. 17–19.

FOOT: The smallest combination of unaccented and accented syllables occuring in verse. See "Poetry," p. 424.

FORESHADOWING: The process of giving the reader an intimation of some event which is to follow later. See "Drama," p. 518.

FORM: The arrangement of the various elements in a work of literature; organization of various materials (ideas, images, characters, setting, rhythm, etc.) to give a single effect. For metrical form see "Poetry," pp. 424–29.

IMAGERY: The calling to mind of something perceived by the senses. A poem, for example, is strong in imagery when it provokes a picture or sensation of touch, taste, sound, or odor. *Visual imagery* (picture) is most common and effective, with *aural imagery* (imagery of sound) probably next in importance. But a poet may sometimes give imagery of a sort more unusual

than those mentioned above. Observe the following lines:

> The singular screech-owl's tight
> Invisible lyric . . .

The word *tight,* used to describe the sound of a screech-owl, provokes another kind of imagery, what might be called *muscular imagery. Tight* describes the way the throat would feel if one were trying to imitate the call of the screech-owl. Furthermore, a writer may sometimes use imagery belonging properly to one sense to describe something belonging to another sense. For instance, one poet, in describing a dull, rainy morning, has written:

> The morning light creaks down again.

Light, we know, does not creak, for it is soundless. But the poet is trying to convey the impression that the dawn is slow and difficult as though the light were old and worn out.

The literary artist is interested in the physical nature of the world as it appears to his senses, just as the painter or sculptor is. Poetry especially depends upon *concreteness;* it attempts to present the qualities of things. The writer, especially the poet, tries to make the reader see, feel, hear, touch, and even taste, because it is by appealing to the senses that he can convince the reader of the reality of what he is saying. But he does not do this merely by direct description. He is constantly employing FIGURES OF SPEECH, or figurative language as it may be called, to do this and to express his ideas. The most common forms of such language are called SIMILES and METAPHORS. A SIMILE is a direct comparison of two things. For instance: "He runs like a deer," or "Her eyes are like stars." But a poet is always trying to make his similes more fresh and accurate than the old comparisons given above:

> But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
> He was *as* rattling thunder . . .
>
> How *like* a winter hath my absence been . . .

The comparison of a simile is announced by *like* or *as.* The METAPHOR, on the contrary, does not announce that comparison, but apparently declares an identification of the two things. A plumber speaks of the *elbow* of a pipe, not saying that the bend of the pipe is *like* an elbow; or a carpenter speaks of the *tongue* of a board. Such words represent originally metaphorical identifications, but now *elbow* or *tongue* has come by long use to be the actual name of the thing. As metaphors they have been conventionalized. The following metaphors are different in that they have not been adopted into the language but retain their poetic force:

> For his *bounty*
> There was no winter in it; an autumn 'twas
> That grew the more by reaping.
>
> Was it the proud full *sail* of his great *verse.*
>
> Lift up your *heads,* O ye *gates.*

In each of these instances an identification is given: the *gates* are supposed to have *heads,* that is, to be living beings; a fine poet's verse is given a sail, that is, is identified with a ship in motion; Antony's bounty, according to Cleopatra's statement, is an autumn, the season of harvest.

This kind of language is at the very center of poetry or poetic observation; it is what people usually mean when they say something sounds poetic.

Observe the ascending intensity, or edge, of the following expressions:

> The night is dark.
> The night is black as pitch.
> The night is black as the inside of a wolf's belly.

The first is a pure statement, the second a thoroughly conventional comparison, the third an expression that still retains a good deal of poetic force and violence. The third still possesses an appeal to the imagination and a kind of novelty, or surprise; the second does not.

The poet is constantly regarding the items in the world about him as related by such connections. He gives these connections in his poetry for various purposes or combinations of various purposes:

(a) *Illustration:* This is the ordinary use of such language in prose, but it also appears in poetry. A writer of a handbook on physiology might say, in explaining the nervous system, that *a nerve is like a telegraphic wire.* His only purpose in using this *simile* is to make clear to the reader the function of the nerve.

(b) *Ornament* or *Decoration* This is the use that appears often in poetry, or in the kind of prose called "flowery." When it is used badly it distracts from what is said, or the ornament is admired because it is pretty or interesting in itself and not because it makes clearer the thing to which it is applied. When it is used well the appropriateness of the tone of the comparison, or the grandeur of the thing suggested lifts and dignifies the original object. Such a use as (b) generally implies also a certain illustrative aspect. This passage from Milton shows a fine use of the *ornamental simile* in describing the appearance of Delilah:

> But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?
> Female of sex it seems,
> That so bedeckt, ornate, and gay,
> Comes this way sailing
> Like a stately Ship
> Of Tarsus, bound for th' Isles
> Of Javan or Gadier
> With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
> Sails filled, and streamers waving,
> Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
> An Amber scent of odorous perfume
> Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;

Here the ship itself is described at length in a romantic and magnificent way from lines 6 to 11, more emphasis being given to the ship than to the woman to whom it is compared and who is, after all, the important object for the purpose of the action. Artistically, however, the poet reintroduces the woman by reference to a "damsel train" at the last of the passage so that the reader may not be taken too far away from the main point. But the emphasis of the passage is ornamental; its purpose is primarily to enrich and ennoble the appearance of the woman, Delilah.

(c) *Necessary Communication:* This is the most complicated and most effective use. By it the poet says something that otherwise could not be said at all or, at least, could not be said with anything near the same economy. (And poetic expression for many poets has as its ideal economical statement.) Housman writes about Death:

> Until this fire of sense decay
> This smoke of thought blow clean away,
> And leave to ancient night alone
> The steadfast and enduring bone,

The metaphors in the first two lines (1) convey a very complicated idea (not necessarily scientific) about the relation of *sense* to *thought*—which without the metaphors, would require an elaborate explanation; (2) give a feeling of the violence of physical life and appetite and the frailty or accidental quality of *thought,* which we usually regard as the directing factor in life; (3) define the pathos of the short tenure of both; (4) and by implication direct the reader to an attitude of stoicism or acceptance. This inadequate prose summary may show what a range and variety of material may be communicated by a single metaphor. This use of metaphor demands, like the *illustrative* use, a basis of comparison which holds the reader by its apparent accuracy, but unlike the accuracy of the *illustrative* use, this is a *new-discovered accuracy.* Further, unlike the *ornamental use,* this use does not demand a comparison that lifts, ennobles, or dignifies the objects.

NEVITABILITY: The sense that the result presented is the only possible result of the situation already presented. See "Fiction," p. 23.

NFORMAL ESSAY: See FAMILIAR ESSAY.

RONY: A speaker uses irony when he deliberately says something he doesn't mean, but indicates at the same time by tone or gesture what he does mean. When a person says, "Oh, yeah," in a certain tone, we know that he means quite the contrary of what he says. In a poem on the Jubilee celebration of Queen Victoria the poet Housman addresses the soldiers who have fought all over the world for the British Empire. He tells them that God will save the Queen:

> Oh, God will save her, fear you not;
> Be you the men you've been,
> Get you the sons your fathers got,
> And God will save the Queen.

But the stanza is ironical, because he is saying more than the usual patriotic statement that God will save the Queen. He is really saying that God will save the Queen only if English manhood remains as strong as before and is as freely sacrificed. Understatement has an ironical quality. See the analysis of "The True Lover," pp. 442–43. But there are other types of irony. Irony always implies a kind of contrast. In Hardy's poem, "The Convergence of the Twain," p. 490, the contrast between the hopes and intentions of the men who built the *Titanic* and the fate that destroyed the ship is treated ironically by the poet. A PARADOX is often employed for ironical effect. See PARADOX.

LOGIC: The relation of cause and effect which exists between character and character, or character and setting, in fiction or drama. See "Fiction," pp. 11–12.

LYRIC: The term is used in two senses: (1) A short musical poem. This use is descriptive of the technique. (2) A poem (or other literary work) directly expressing the personality of the writer; that is, SUBJECTIVE rather than OBJECTIVE in emphasis, giving the personal vision of, or reaction to, the world. This use describes the subject matter or philosophy of a literary work.

MELODRAMA: A play which depends largely on the plot suspense rather than on character. Compare the adventure story in fiction. See "Drama," pp. 517–18.

METAPHOR: See IMAGERY.

METER: The pattern on which rhythm is systematized in verse. See "Poetry," pp 424–26.

MOTIVATION: By *motive* we understand the purpose of a person's act. Motivation, therefore, is understood in fiction or drama as the purpose, or mixture of purposes, that determines a character's behavior. See "Fiction," p. 10.

OBJECTIVE: This adjective, as applied to literature, indicates an attitude of detachment on the part of the author toward the facts he is presenting. He refrains from giving his personal interpretation or commentary; therefore, the term *personal* in this connection is often used as synonymous with *objective.* The method of a dramatist who merely presents his characters in dialogue is an objective method. A SUBJECTIVE description on the other hand is one which is highly colored by the author's personal feelings. Obviously, one will not find a completely objective attitude in literature, for that attitude belongs properly to science. One does find, however, relative degrees of objectivity in literature. See also LYRIC.

ONOMATOPOEIA: Imitation of sense by sound. See "Poetry," pp. 426–27.

PARADOX: A statement, apparently untrue, which on

closer examination is seen to be true in reality. For example, the poet Lovelace writes:

> I could not love thee dear so much
> Loved I not honor more.

The poem from which these lines are taken is concerned with the poet's statement to his mistress that she is his dearest love. Apparently he is contradicting himself here, for how can he love her most, if he loves honor more than her? But the contradiction is only in the form of the statement. His love for her is as great as it is because he is very sensitive to the claims of honor—honor is an ingredient of his love. The paradox also is often used for ironical effect. See IRONY.

PERSONIFICATION: See ALLEGORY.

PLOT: The structure of the action in fiction or drama. See "Fiction," pp. 10–11.

POINT OF VIEW: Since the phrase means literally the place from which something is observed, it means, when applied to fiction, the mind through which the material of the story is presented. Obviously a story does not exist without a point of view, for the action would have no structure or meaning; there would be no story at all in such a case. A writer of fiction may let a character speak in the first person and therefore serve as the teller of the story. Or he may present his story through the mind of a character indirectly. For example, he might write only such things as could be experienced by a special selected character and then add his own comments and interpretations. Or he might present the experiences and thoughts of a number of different people, that is, he might present his story from the omniscient, or all-knowing, point of view. But even in this case he does not present everything, for he selects the material for presentation in accordance with some plan in his own mind. There are other variations of the point of view possible to a writer of fiction. Each piece of fiction raises anew the problem of the point of view. In general, however, it is important to remember that by adopting a point of view the author is enabled to select and organize his material for fiction. See "Fiction," pp. 19–20.

PROPAGANDA: Literature which tends to state the theme abstractly, which tends to insist on the "message" at the expense of other qualities, is called propaganda literature. See "Fiction," p. 13.

QUATRAIN: A stanza of four lines. See "Poetry," p. 428.

REALISTIC: Having a strong sense of fact or of actuality. The term is sometimes used as the opposite of ROMANTIC. A romantic attitude may be described very summarily here as being an attitude in which the sense of fact is weakened in favor of ideality or in which the object in question is suffused with emotion, particularly with warmth of emotion. (No attempt is made in this text to go into the distinction between *romantic* and *classic*.)

RHYME: Correspondence in two or more words between the sound of the last accented syllable and whatever comes after. See "Poetry," pp. 427–28.

ROMANTIC: See REALISTIC.

RUN-ON: A line of verse in which there is not a definite pause at the end of a line. See "Poetry," p. 426.

SELECTIVITY: The choosing of the necessary and expressive elements and details which a writer thinks will best serve his purpose. See "Fiction," pp. 16–17.

SENTIMENTALITY: Excess of emotion or emotion which has not been adequately prepared for by the work in question. See "General Introduction," p. 5.

SETTING: The physical background, the element of place, in literature. See "Fiction," pp. 14–15.

SHORT STORY: See "Short Story," pp. 25–26.

SIMILE. See IMAGERY.

SONNET: A stanza of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. For the rhyme scheme, see "Poetry," pp. 428–29.

SPECULATIVE ESSAY: An essay which attempts to arrive at general principles and interpretations as opposed to emphasis on the mere exposition of facts. See "Essay," p. 114.

SPONDEE: A type of metrical foot. See "Poetry," p. 425.

STANZA: A pattern of lines usually repeated as a unit of composition in a poem. See "Poetry," pp. 428–29.

STOCK RESPONSE. The automatic or conventionalized response of a reader to some word, phrase, situation, or subject in literature. See "General Introduction," pp. 5–6.

STYLE: Style is in the largest sense the arrangement of material which the writer makes. More particularly, the term is used to indicate the arrangement of his words for expressing special tone, attitude, manner, etc. For comment on style in fiction see "Fiction," pp. 20–21.

SUBJECTIVE: See OBJECTIVE.

SUSPENSE: Uncertainty and excitement at the outcome of a series of events. See "Fiction," pp. 9–10.

SYMBOL: A symbol is a sign that stands for, or suggests, something else. There are many symbols that appear in ordinary life, for the use of symbol is by no means limited to art and literature. For instance, the flag is the symbol of a country, and the cross is the symbol of the Christian religion. These are symbols adopted by a whole society and are recognized by all members of such society. There are other kinds of symbols, such as the figure *4*, which may be called *abstract symbols*. But the poetic symbol is different from either of the other types. Generally speaking, it does not have a common social acceptance, as does the flag, for instance; it is, rather, a symbol that the poet adopts for the purpose of the poem, and that is to be understood only in the context of the poem. In the second place, it differs from the symbol such as the figure *4* by being concrete and special. The poet

uses symbols for the same reason that he uses similes and metaphors: they help him to express his meaning in a way that will appeal to the senses and to the emotions of his reader. See IMAGERY and CONCRETE; the analysis of "Neutral Tones," p. 460; and "Novel," pp. 215–16 for a discussion of symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*.

THEME: The special view of life or special feeling about life or special sets of values which constitute the point or basic idea of a piece of literature. See "Fiction," p. 13.

TONE: See discussion in analysis of "Neutral Tones," p. 460.

TROCHEE: A metrical foot of one accented and one unaccented syllable. See "Poetry," p. 425.

TRAGEDY: See "Drama," pp. 515–16.

UNITY. See "Fiction," p. 11.

VARIATION: The departure from the strict metrical pattern. See "Poetry," p. 425.

VERSE-TEXTURE: The structure or relation of the vowel and consonant sounds in verse. For an example, see analysis of "Neutral Tones," p. 460.