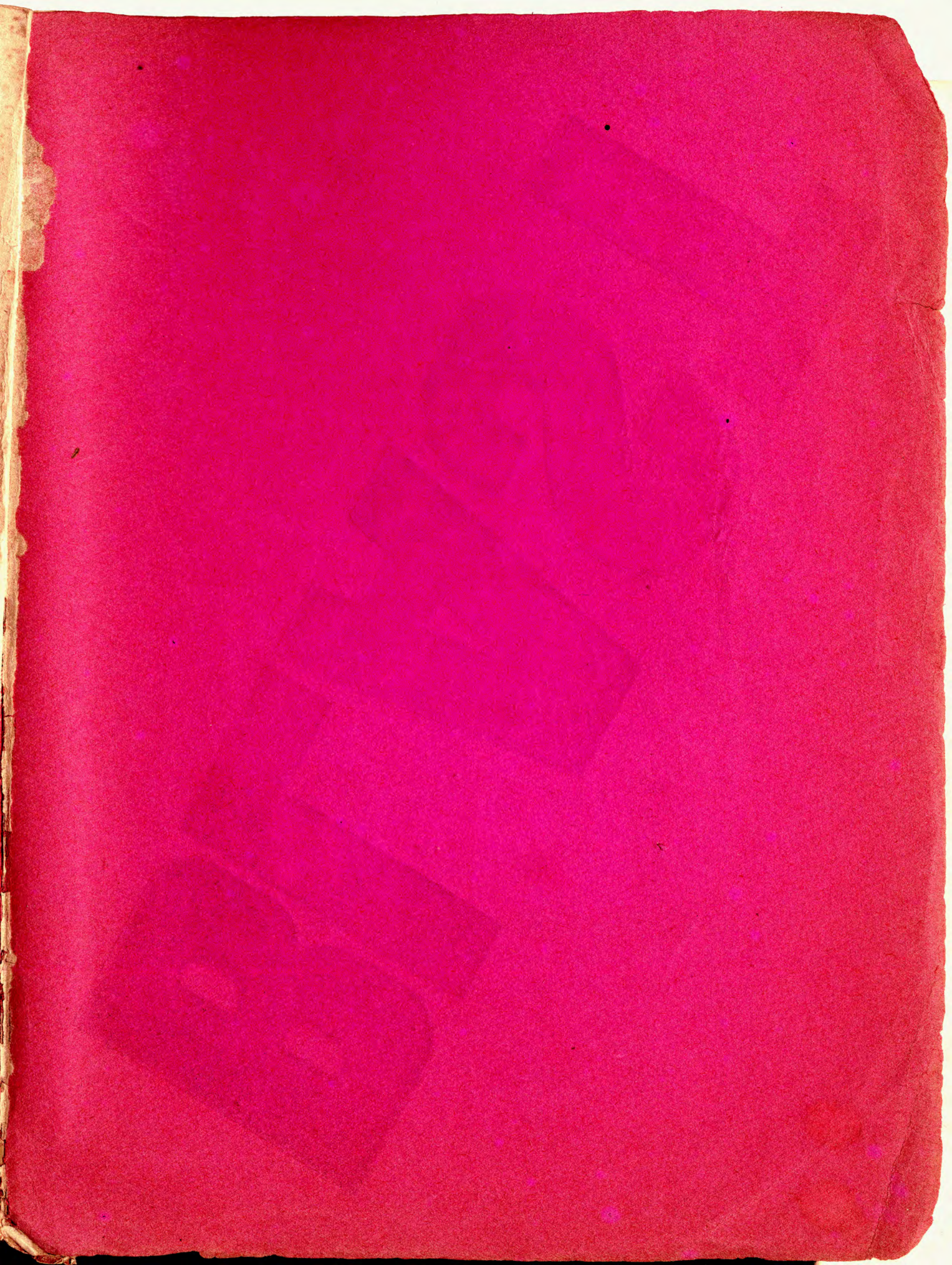


1897
243

BRITISH



No. 1. June 20th, 1914.

BLAST

Edited by **WYNDHAM LEWIS.**

REVIEW OF THE GREAT ENGLISH VORTEX.

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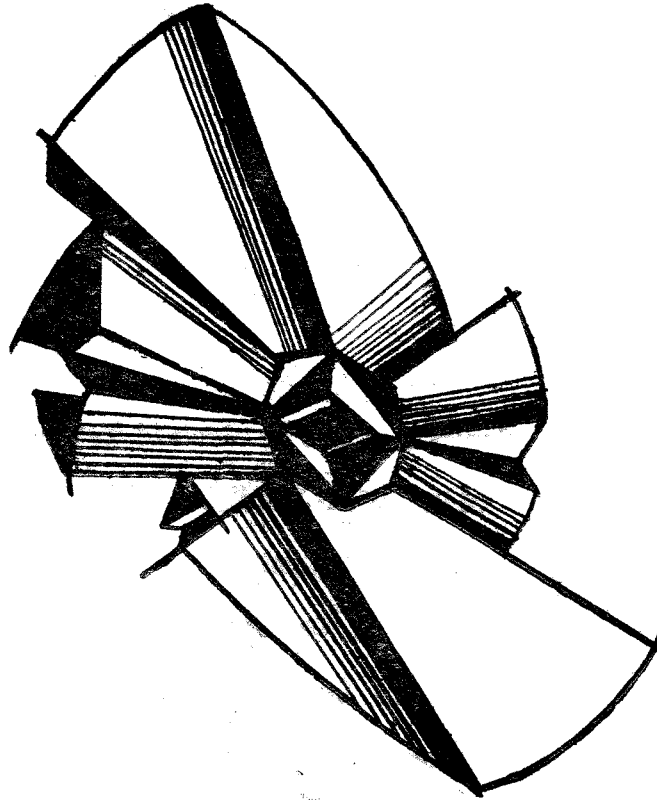
(Hours, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

and at

5, Holland Place Chambers,

Church Street,

Kensington.



ERRATA.

(Mistakes in " ENEMY OF STARS," etc.)

Page 60.—MIMES (instead of mines).

Page 62.—EVENING (instead of coming).

Page 80.—ASCETICISM (instead of asecicism).

Also note the wrong placing of Page " The Play," which should come between Pages 60 and 61.

Page 61.—MAD BLASTS OF SUNLIGHT (instead of blasts sunlight).

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Long Live the Vortex!

Long live the great art vortex sprung up in the centre of this town!

We stand for the Reality of the Present—not for the sentimental Future, or the sacripant Past.

We want to leave Nature and Men alone.

We do not want to make people wear Futurist Patches, or fuss men to take to pink and sky-blue trousers.

We are not their wives or tailors.

The only way Humanity can help artists is to remain independent and work unconsciously.

WE NEED THE UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF HUMANITY—their stupidity, animalism and dreams.

We believe in no perfectibility except our own.

Intrinsic beauty is in the Interpreter and Seer, not in the object or content.

We do not want to change the appearance of the world, because we are not Naturalists, Impressionists or Futurists (the latest form of Impressionism), and do not depend on the appearance of the world for our art.

WE ONLY WANT THE WORLD TO LIVE, and to feel it's crude energy flowing through us.

It may be said that great artists in England are always revolutionary, just as in France any really fine artist had a strong traditional vein.

Blast sets out to be an avenue for all those vivid and violent ideas that could reach the Public in no other way.

Blast will be popular, essentially. It will not appeal to any particular class, but to the fundamental and popular instincts in every class and description of people, TO THE INDIVIDUAL. The moment a man feels or realizes himself as an artist, he ceases to belong to any milieu or time. Blast is created for this timeless, fundamental Artist that exists in everybody.

The Man in the Street and the Gentleman are equally ignored.

Popular art does not mean the art of the poor people, as it is usually supposed to. It means the art of the individuals.

Education (art education and general education) tends to destroy the creative instinct. Therefore it is in times when education has been non-existent that art chiefly flourished.

But it is nothing to do with “the People.”

It is a mere accident that that is the most favourable time for the individual to appear.

To make the rich of the community shed their education skin, to destroy politeness, standardization and academic, that is civilized, vision, is the task we have set ourselves.

We want to make in England not a popular art, not a revival of lost folk art, or a romantic fostering of such unactual conditions, but to make individuals, wherever found.

We will convert the King if possible.

A VORTICIST KING! WHY NOT?

DO YOU THINK LLOYD GEORGE HAS THE VORTEX IN HIM?

MAY WE HOPE FOR ART FROM LADY MOND?

We are against the glorification of "the People," as we are against snobbery. It is not necessary to be an outcast bohemian, to be unkempt or poor, any more than it is necessary to be rich or handsome, to be an artist. Art is nothing to do with the coat you wear. A top-hat can well hold the Sixtine. A cheap cap could hide the image of Kephren.

AUTOMOBILISM (Marinetteism) bores us. We don't want to go about making a hullo-bulloo about motor cars, anymore than about knives and forks, elephants or gas-pipes.

Elephants are VERY BIG. Motor cars go quickly.

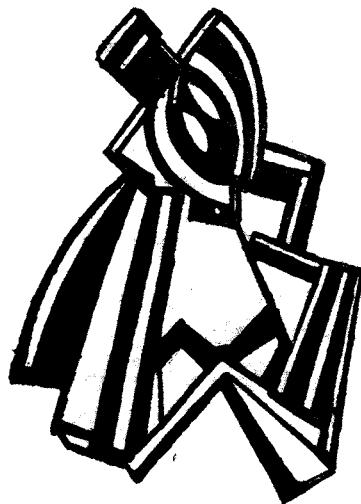
Wilde gushed twenty years ago about the beauty of machinery. Gissing, in his romantic delight with modern lodging houses was futurist in this sense.

The futurist is a sensational and sentimental mixture of the aesthete of 1890 and the realist of 1870.

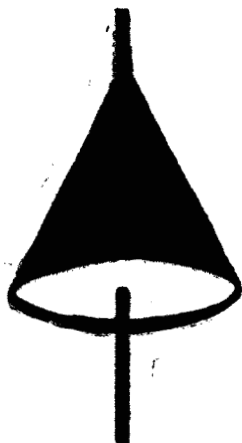
The "Poor" are detestable animals! They are only picturesque and amusing for the sentimentalist or the romantic! The "Rich" are bores without a single exception, *en tant que riches!*

We want those simple and great people found everywhere.

Blast presents an art of Individuals.



MANIFESTO.



1

BLAST First (from politeness) **ENGLAND**

CURSE ITS CLIMATE FOR ITS SINS AND INFECTIONS

**DISMAL SYMBOL, SET round our bodies,
of effeminate lout within.**

**VICTORIAN VAMPIRE, the LONDON cloud sucks
the TOWN'S heart.**

A 1000 MILE LONG, 2 KILOMETER Deep

**BODY OF WATER even, is pushed against us
from the Floridas, TO MAKE US MILD.**

OFFICIOUS MOUNTAINS keep back DRASTIC WINDS

SO MUCH VAST MACHINERY TO PRODUCE

THE CURATE of "Eltham"

BRITANNIC AESTHETE

WILD NATURE CRANK

DOMESTICATED

POLICEMAN

LONDON COLISEUM

SOCIALIST-PLAYWRIGHT

DALY'S MUSICAL COMEDY

GAIETY CHORUS GIRL

TONKS

CURSE

the flabby sky that can manufacture no snow, but
can only drop the sea on us in a drizzle like a poem
by Mr. Robert Bridges.

CURSE

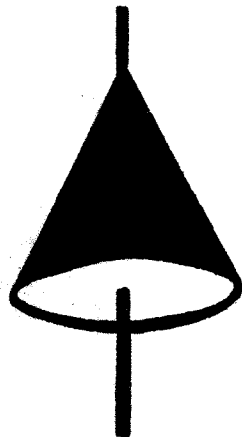
the lazy air that cannot stiffen the back of the SERPENTINE,
or put Aquatic steel half way down the MANCHESTER CANAL.

But ten years ago we saw distinctly both snow and
ice here.

May some vulgarly inventive, but useful person, arise,
and restore to us the necessary BLIZZARDS.

LET US ONCE MORE WEAR THE ERMINE
OF THE NORTH.

WE BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF
THIS USEFUL LITTLE CHEMIST
IN OUR MIDST!



2

OH BLAST FRANCE

pig plagiarism

BELLY

SLIPPERS

POODLE TEMPER

BAD MUSIC

SENTIMENTAL GALLIC GUSH

SENSATIONALISM

FUSSINESS.

PARISIAN PAROCHIALISM.

Complacent young man,
so much respect for Papa
and his son!—Oh!—Papa
is wonderful: but all papas
are!

BLAST

APERITIFS (Pernots, Amers picon)

Bad change

**Naively seductive Houri salon-
picture Cocottes**

**Slouching blue porters (can
carry a pantehnicon)**

**Stupidly rapacious people at
every step**

Economy maniacs

**Bouillon Kub (for being a bad
pun)**

PARIS. Clap-trap Heaven of amative German professor.

Ubiquitous lines of silly little trees.

Arcs de Triomphe.

Imperturbable, endless prettiness.

Large empty cliques, higher up.

Bad air for the individual.

BLAST

MECCA OF THE AMERICAN

because it is not other side of Suez Canal, instead of an afternoon's ride from London.

CURSE

3

WITH EXPLETIVE OF WHIRLWIND
THE BRITANNIC AESTHETE
CREAM OF THE SNOBBISH EARTH
ROSE OF SHARON OF GOD-PRIG
OF SIMIAN VANITY
SNEAK AND SWOT OF THE SCHOOL-
ROOM
IMBERB (or Berbed when in Belsize)-**PEDANT**

PRACTICAL JOKER
DANDY
CURATE

BLAST all products of phlegmatic cold
Life of **LOOKER-ON.**

CURSE

SNOBBERY
(disease of femininity)
FEAR OF RIDIGULE
(arch vice of inactive, sleepy)
PLAY
STYLISM
SINS AND PLAGUES
of this **LYMPHATIC** finished
(we admit in every sense
finished)
VEGETABLE HUMANITY.

4

BLAST

THE SPECIALIST

“ PROFESSIONAL ”

“ GOOD WORKMAN ”

“ GROVE-MAN ”

ONE ORGAN MAN

BLAST THE

AMATEUR

SCIOLAST

ART-PIMP

JOURNALIST

SELF MAN

NO-ORGAN MAN

5

BLAST HUMOUR

Quack ENGLISH drug for stupidity and sleepiness.

Arch enemy of REAL, conventionalizing like

gunshot, freezing supple

**REAL in ferocious chemistry
of laughter.**

BLAST SPORT

HUMOUR'S FIRST COUSIN AND ACCOMPLICE.

**Impossibility for Englishman to be
grave and keep his end up,
psychologically.**

**Impossible for him to use Humour
as well and be persistently
grave.**

**Alas! necessity for big doll's show
in front of mouth.**

**Visitation of Heaven on
English Miss**

gums, canines of **FIXED GRIN
Death's Head symbol of Anti-Life.**

**CURSE those who will hang over this
Manifesto with **SILLY CANINES** exposed.**

6

BLAST

years **1837** to **1900**

Curse abysmal inexcusable middle-class
(also Aristocracy and Proletariat).

BLAST

pasty shadow cast by gigantic **Boehm**

(Imagined at Introduction of **BOURGEOIS VICTORIAN VISTAS**).

WRING THE NECK OF all sick inventions born in
that progressive white wake.

BLAST their weeping whiskers—hirsute
RHETORIC of **EUNUCH** and **STYLIST**—
SENTIMENTAL HYGIENICS
ROUSSEAUISMS (wild Nature cranks)
FRATERNIZING WITH MONKEYS
DIABOLICS—raptures and roses
of the erotic bookshelves
culminating in
PURGATORY OF
PUTNEY.

CHAOS OF ENOCH ARDENS

laughing Jennys
Ladies with Pains
good-for-nothing Guineveres.

SNOBBISH BORROVIAN running after
GIPSY KINGS and **ESPADAS**

bowing the knee to
wild Mother Nature,
her feminine contours,
Unimaginative insult to
MAN.

DAMN

all those to-day who have taken on that Rotten Menagerie,
and still crack their whips and tumble in Piccadilly Circus,
as though London were a provincial town.

**WE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR A GREAT
SECRET.**

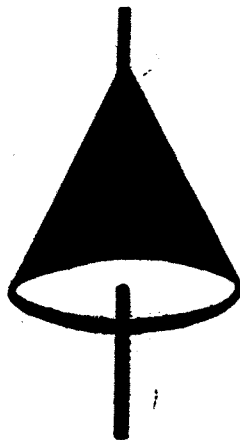
**LONDON IS NOT A PROVINCIAL
TOWN.**

We will allow Wonder Zoos. But we do not want the
GLOOMY VICTORIAN CIRCUS in
Piccadilly Circus.

IT IS PICCADILLY'S CIRCUS !

NOT MEANT FOR MENAGERIES trundling

out of Sixties **DICKENSIAN CLOWNS,
CORELLI LADY RIDERS,
TROUPS OF PERFORMING
GIPSIES** (who complain
besides that 1/6 a night
does not pay fare back to
Clapham).



BLAST

The Post Office Frank Brangwyn Robertson Nicol
Rev. Pennyfeather Galloway Kyle
(Bells) (Cluster of Grapes)
Bishop of London and all his posterity
Galsworthy Dean Inge Croce Matthews
Rev. Meyer Seymour Hicks
Lionel Cust C. B. Fry Bergson Abdul Bahai
Hawtrey Edward Elgar Sardlea
Filson Young Marie Corelli Geddes
Godliver Oil St. Loe Strachey Lyceum Club
Rhabindraneth Tagore Lord Glenconner of Glen
Weiniger Norman Angel Ad. Mahon
Mr. and Mrs. Dearmer Beecham Ella
A. C. Benson (Pills, Opera, Thomas) Sydney Webb
British Academy Messrs. Chapell
Countess of Warwick George Edwards
Willie Ferraro Captain Cook R. J. Campbell
Clan Thesiger Martin Harvey William Archer
George Grossmith R. H. Benson
Annie Besant Chenil Clan Meynell
Father Vaughan Joseph Holbrooke Clan Strachey

1

BLESS ENGLAND !

BLESS ENGLAND

FOR ITS SHIPS

which switchback on **Blue, Green and Red SEAS** all around the **PINK EARTH-BALL,**

BIG BETS ON EACH.

BLESS ALL SEAFARERS.

THEY exchange not one **LAND** for another, but one **ELEMENT** for **ANOTHER.** The **MORE** against the **LESS ABSTRACT.**

BLESS the vast planetary abstraction of the **OCEAN.**

BLESS THE ARABS OF THE **ATLANTIC.**

THIS ISLAND MUST BE CONTRASTED WITH THE BLEAK WAVES.

BLESS ALL PORTS.

PORTS, RESTLESS MACHINES of

scooped out basins
heavy insect dredgers
monotonous cranes
stations
lighthouses, blazing
through the frosty
starlight, cutting the
storm like a cake
beaks of infant boats,
side by side,
heavy chaos of
wharves,
steep walls of
factories
womanly town

BLESS these **MACHINES** that work the little boats across
clean liquid space, in beelines.

BLESS the great **PORTS**

HULL
LIVERPOOL
LONDON
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE
BRISTOL
GLASGOW

BLESS ENGLAND,

Industrial Island machine, pyramidal

workshop, its apex at Shetland, discharging itself on the sea.

BLESS

**cold
magnanimous
delicate
gauche
fanciful
stupid**

ENGLISHMEN.

2

BLESS the **HAIRDRESSER.**

He attacks Mother Nature for a small fee.

Hourly he ploughs heads for sixpence,

Scours chins and lips for threepence.

**He makes systematic mercenary war on this
WILDNESS.**

He trims aimless and retrograde growths

into CLEAN ARCHED SHAPES and

ANGULAR PLOTS.

BLESS this **HESSIAN** (or **SILESIA**N) **EXPERT**

**correcting the grotesque anachronisms
of our physique.**

3

BLESS ENGLISH HUMOUR

It is the great barbarous weapon of
the genius among races.

The wild **MOUNTAIN RAILWAY** from **IDEA**
to **IDEA**, in the ancient Fair of **LIFE**.

BLESS SWIFT for his solemn bleak
wisdom of laughter.

SHAKESPEARE for his bitter Northern
Rhetoric of humour.

BLESS ALL ENGLISH EYES
that grow crows-feet with their
FANCY and **ENERGY**.

BLESS this hysterical **WALL** built round
the **EGO**.

BLESS the solitude of **LAUGHTER**.

BLESS the separating, ungregarious
BRITISH GRIN.



BLESS FRANCE

for its **BUSHELS** of **VITALITY**

to the square inch.

HOME OF MANNERS (the Best, the **WORST** and interesting mixtures).

MASTERLY PORNOGRAPHY (great enemy of progress).

COMBATIVENESS

GREAT HUMAN SCEPTICS

DEPTHS OF ELEGANCE

FEMALE QUALITIES

FEMALES

BALLADS of its **PREHISTORIC APACHE**

Superb hardness and hardiesse of its

Voyou type, rebellious adolescent.

Modesty and humanity of many there.

GREAT FLOOD OF LIFE pouring out

of wound of **1797**.

Also bitterer stream from **1870**.

STAYING POWER, like a cat.

BLESS

Bridget Berrwolf Bearline Cranmer Byng
Frieder Graham The Pope Maria de Tomaso
Captain Kemp Munroe Gaby Jenkins
R. B. Cuninghame Grahame Barker
(not his brother) (John and Granville)
Mrs. Wil Finnimore Madame Strindberg Carson
Salvation Army Lord Howard de Walden
Capt. Craig Charlotte Gorday Cromwell
Mrs. Duval Mary Robertson Lillie Lenton
Frank Rutter Castor Oil James Joyce
Leveridge Lydia Yavorska Preb. Carlyle Jenny
Mon. le compte de Gabulis Smithers Dick Burge
33 Church Street Sievier Gertie Millar
Norman Wallis Miss Fowler Sir Joseph Lyons
Martin Wolff Watt Mrs. Hepburn
Alfree Tommy Captain Kendell Young Ahearn
Wilfred Walter Kate Lechmere Henry Newbolt
Lady Aberconway Frank Harris Hamel
Gilbert Canaan Sir James Mathew Barry
Mrs. Belloc Lowdnes W. L. George Rayner
George Robey George Mozart Harry Weldon
Chaliapine George Hirst Graham White
Hucks Salmet Shirley Kellogg Bandsman Rice
Petty Officer Curran Applegarth Konody
Colin Bell Lewis Hind LEFRANC
Hubert Commercial Process Co.



Newcastle.

Edward Wadsworth.

MANIFESTO.

I.

- 1 Beyond Action and Reaction we would establish ourselves.**
- 2 We start from opposite statements of a chosen world. Set up violent structure of adolescent clearness between two extremes.**
- 3 We discharge ourselves on both sides.**
- 4 We fight first on one side, then on the other, but always for the SAME cause, which is neither side or both sides and ours.**
- 5 Mercenaries were always the best troops.**
- 6 We are Primitive Mercenaries in the Modern World.**

7 Our Cause is NO-MAN'S.

8 We set Humour at Humour's throat.

Stir up Civil War among peaceful apes.

9 We only want Humour if it has fought like
Tragedy.

10 We only want Tragedy if it can clench its side-
muscles like hands on it's belly, and bring to
the surface a laugh like a bomb.

II.

- 1** We hear from America and the Continent all sorts of disagreeable things about England: "the unmusical, anti-artistic, unphilosophic country."
- 2** We quite agree.
- 3** Luxury, sport, the famous English "Humour," the thrilling ascendancy and *idée fixe* of Class, producing the most intense snobbery in the World; heavy stagnant pools of Saxon blood, incapable of anything but the song of a frog, in home-counties:—these phenomena give England a peculiar distinction in the wrong sense, among the nations.
- 4** This is why England produces such good artists from time to time.
- 5** This is also the reason why a movement towards art and imagination could burst up here, from this lump of compressed life, with more force than anywhere else.

- 6** To believe that it is necessary for or conducive to art, to "improve" life, for instance—make architecture, dress, ornament, in "better taste," is absurd.
- 7** The Art-instinct is permanently primitive.
- 8** In a chaos of imperfection, discord, etc., it finds the same stimulus as in Nature.
- 9** The artist of the modern movement is a savage (in no sense an "advanced," perfected, democratic, Futurist individual of Mr. Marinetti's limited imagination): this enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life serves him as Nature did more technically primitive man.
- 10** As the steppes and the rigours of the Russian winter, when the peasant has to lie for weeks in his hut, produces that extraordinary acuity of feeling and intelligence we associate with the Slav; so England is just now the most favourable country for the appearance of a great art.

III.

- 1** We have made it quite clear that there is nothing Chauvinistic or picturesquely patriotic about our contentions.
- 2** But there is violent boredom with that feeble Europeanism, abasement of the miserable "intellectual" before anything coming from Paris, Cosmopolitan sentimentality, which prevails in so many quarters.
- 3** Just as we believe that an Art must be organic with its Time,

So we insist that what is actual and vital for the South, is ineffectual and unactual in the North.
- 4** Fairies have disappeared from Ireland (despite foolish attempts to revive them) and the bull-ring languishes in Spain.
- 5** But mysticism on the one hand, gladiatorial instincts, blood and asceticism on the other,

will be always actual, and springs of Creation for these two peoples.

- 6 The English Character is based on the Sea.**
- 7 The particular qualities and characteristics that the sea always engenders in men are those that are, among the many diagnostics of our race, the most fundamentally English.**
- 8 That unexpected universality as well, found in the completest English artists, is due to this.**

IV.

- 1** We assert that the art for these climates, then, must be a northern flower.
- 2** And we have implied what we believe should be the specific nature of the art destined to grow up in this country, and models of whose flue decorate the pages of this magazine.
- 3** It is not a question of the characterless material climate around us.

Were that so the complication of the Jungle, dramatic Tropic growth, the vastness of American trees, would not be for us.

- 4** But our industries, and the Will that determined, face to face with its needs, the direction of the modern world, has reared up steel trees where the green ones were lacking; has exploded in useful growths, and found wilder intricacies than those of Nature.

V.

- 1** We bring clearly forward the following points, before further defining the character of this necessary native art.
- 2** At the freest and most vigorous period of ENGLAND'S history, her literature, then chief Art, was in many ways identical with that of France.
- 3** Chaucer was very much cousin of Villon as an artist.
- 4** Shakespeare and Montaigne formed one literature.
- 5** But Shakespeare reflected in his imagination a mysticism, madness and delicacy peculiar to the North, and brought equal quantities of Comic and Tragic together.
- 6** Humour is a phenomenon caused by sudden pouring of culture into Barbary.

- 7** It is intelligence electrified by flood of Naivety.
- 8** It is Chaos invading Concept and bursting it like nitrogen.
- 9** It is the Individual masquerading as Humanity like a child in clothes too big for him.
- 10** Tragic Humour is the birthright of the North.
- 11** Any great Northern Art will partake of this insidious and volcanic chaos.
- 12** No great ENGLISH Art need be ashamed to share some glory with France, to-morrow it may be with Germany, where the Elizabethans did before it.
- 13** But it will never be French, any more than Shakespeare was, the most catholic and subtle Englishman.

VI.

- 1** The Modern World is due almost entirely to Anglo-Saxon genius,—its appearance and its spirit.
- 2** Machinery, trains, steam-ships, all that distinguishes externally our time, came far more from here than anywhere else.
- 3** In dress, manners, mechanical inventions, LIFE, that is, ENGLAND, has influenced Europe in the same way that France has in Art.
- 4** But busy with this LIFE-EFFORT, she has been the last to become conscious of the Art that is an organism of this new Order and Will of Man.
- 5** Machinery is the greatest Earth-medium: incidentally it sweeps away the doctrines of a narrow and pedantic Realism at one stroke.
- 6** By mechanical inventiveness, too, just as Englishmen have spread themselves all over the

Earth, they have brought all the hemispheres about them in their original island.

7 It cannot be said that the complication of the Jungle, dramatic tropic growths, the vastness of American trees, is not for us.

8 For, in the forms of machinery, Factories, new and vaster buildings, bridges and works, we have all that, naturally, around us.

VII.

- 1** Once this consciousness towards the new possibilities of expression in present life has come, however, it will be more the legitimate property of Englishmen than of any other people in Europe.
- 2** It should also, as it is by origin theirs, inspire them more forcibly and directly.
- 3** They are the inventors of this bareness and hardness, and should be the great enemies of Romance.
- 4** The Romance peoples will always be, at bottom, its defenders.
- 5** The Latins are at present, for instance, in their "discovery" of sport, their Futuristic gush over machines, aeroplanes, etc., the most romantic and sentimental "moderns" to be found.
- 6** It is only the second-rate people in France or Italy who are thorough revolutionaries.

- 7** In England, on the other hand, there is no vulgarity in revolt.
- 8** Or, rather, there is no revolt, it is the normal state.
- 9** So often rebels of the North and the South are diametrically opposed species.
- 10** The nearest thing in England to a great traditional French artist, is a great revolutionary English one.

Signatures for Manifesto

R. Aldington

Arbuthnot

L. Atkinson

Gaudier Brzeska

J. Dismorr

C. Hamilton

E. Pound

W. Roberts

H. Sanders

E. Wadsworth

Wyndham Lewis

POEMS

BY

EZRA POUND.

SALUTATION THE THIRD.

Let us deride the smugness of "The Times":
GUFFAW!

So much the gagged reviewers,
It will pay them when the worms are wriggling in their vitals;
These were they who objected to newness,
HERE are their **TOMB-STONES**.

They supported the gag and the ring:
A little black **BOX** contains them.

SO shall you be also,
You slut-bellied obstructionist,
You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
You fungus, you continuous gangrene.

Come, let us on with the new deal,
Let us be done with Jews and Jobbery,
Let us **SPIT** upon those who fawn on the **JEWS** for their money,
Let us out to the pastures.

PERHAPS I will die at thirty,
Perhaps you will have the pleasure of defiling my pauper's grave,
I wish you **JOY**, I proffer you **ALL** my assistance.
It has been your **HABIT** for long to do away with true poets,
You either drive them mad, or else you blink at their suicides,
Or else you condone their drugs, and talk of insanity and genius,
BUT I will not go mad to please you.

I will not **FLATTER** you with an early death.
OH, NO! I will stick it out,

I will feel your hates wriggling about my feet,
And I will laugh at you and mock you,
And I will offer you consolations in irony,
O fools, detesters of Beauty.

I have seen many who go about with supplications,
Afraid to say how they hate you.
HERE is the taste of my **BOOT**,
CARESS it, lick off the **BLACKING**.

MONUMENTUM AERE, Etc.

**You say that I take a good deal upon myself ;
That I strut in the robes of assumption.**

**In a few years no one will remember the "buffo,"
No one will remember the trival parts of me,
The comic detail will not be present.
As for you, you will lie in the earth,
And it is doubtful if even your manure will be rich enough
To keep grass
Over your grave**

COME MY CANTILATIONS.

**Come my cantilations,
Let us dump our hatreds into one bunch and be done with them,
Hot sun, clear water, fresh wind,
Let me be free of pavements,
Let me be free of the printers.
Let come beautiful people
Wearing raw silk of good colour,
Let come the graceful speakers,
Let come the ready of wit,
Let come the gay of manner, the insolent and the exulting.
We speak of burnished lakes,
And of dry air, as clear as metal.**

BEFORE SLEEP.

I.

The lateral vibrations caress me,
They leap and caress me,
They work pathetically in my favour,
They seek my financial good.

She of the spear, stands present.
The gods of the underworld attend me, O Annuis.
To these are they of thy company.
With a pathetic solicitude, they attend me.
Undulent,
Their realm is the lateral courses.

II.

Light !

I am up to follow thee, Pallas.
Up and out of their caresses.
You were gone up as rocket,
Bending your passages from right to left and from left to right
In the flat projection of a spiral.
The gods of drugged sleep attend me,
Wishing me well.
I am up to follow thee, Pallas.

HIS VISION OF A CERTAIN LADY POST MORTEM.

A brown, fat babe sitting in the lotus,
And you were glad and laughing,
 With a laughter not of this world.
It is good to splash in the water
And laughter is the end of all things.

EPITAPHS.

FU I.*

“Fu I loved the green hills and the white clouds,
Alas, he died of drink.”

LI PO.

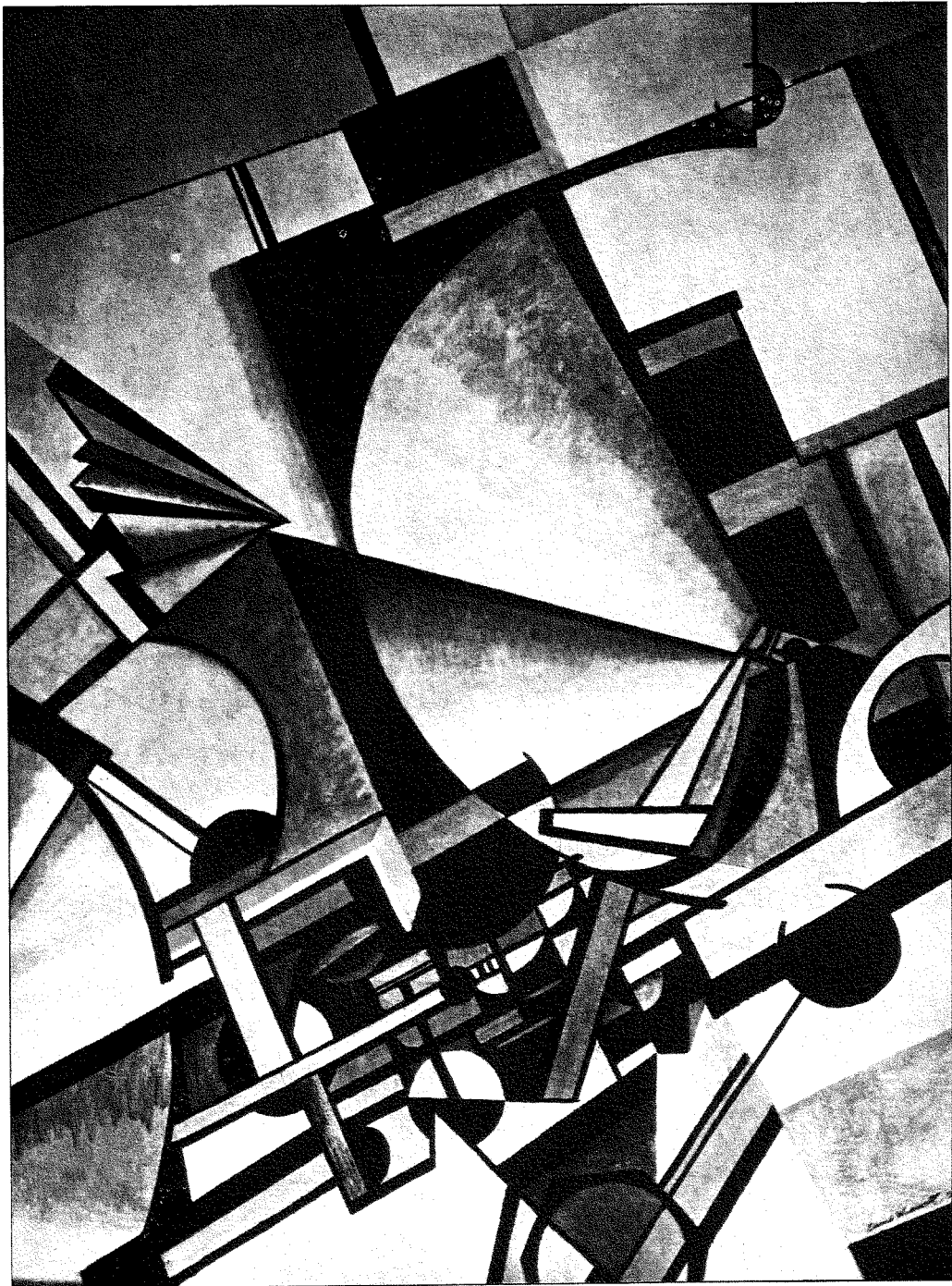
And Li Po also died drunk.
He tried to embrace a moon
In the yellow river.

FRATRES MINORES.

Certain poets here and in France
Still sigh over established and natural fact
Long since fully discussed by Ovid.
They howl. They complain in delicate and exhausted metres

*Fu I was born in 554 A.D. and died in 639. This is his epitaph very much as he wrote it.





A Short Flight.

Edward Wadsworth.



March.

Edward Wadsworth.



Edward Wadsworth.

Radiation.

WOMEN BEFORE A SHOP.

The gew-gaws of false amber and false turquoise attract them.
“ Like to like nature.” These agglutinous yellows !

L'ART.

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries ! Come let us feast our eyes.

THE NEW CAKE OF SOAP.

Lo, how it gleams and glistens in the sun
Like the cheek of a Chesterton.

MEDITATIO.

When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs,
I am compelled to admit
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man,
I confess, my friend, I am puzzled.

PASTORAL.

“The Greenest Growth of Maytime.”—A. C. S.

The young lady opposite
Has such beautiful hands
That I sit enchanted

While she combs her hair in décolleté.

I have no shame whatever
In watching the performance,
The bareness of her delicate

Hands and fingers does not

In the least embarrass me,

BUT God forbid that I should gain further acquaintance,
For her laughter frightens even the street hawker
And the alley cat dies of a migraine.

ENEMY OF THE STARS.

ENEMY OF THE STARS

SYNOPSIS IN PROGRAMME.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE SCENE.

**SOME BLEAK CIRCUS, UNCOVERED,
CAREFULLY-CHOSEN, VIVID NIGHT.
IT IS PACKED WITH POSTERITY,
SILENT AND EXPECTANT.
POSTERITY IS SILENT, LIKE THE
DEAD, AND MORE PATHETIC.**

CHARACTERS.

**TWO HEATHEN CLOWNS, GRAVE BOOTH ANIMALS
CYNICAL ATHLETES.**

DRESS.

**ENORMOUS YOUNGSTERS, BURSTING EVERY-
WHERE THROUGH HEAVY TIGHT CLOTHES,
LABOURED IN BY DULL EXPLOSIVE MUSCLES,
full of fiery dust and sinewy energetic air,
not sap. BLACK CLOTH CUT SOMEWHERE,
NOWADAYS, ON THE UPPER BALTIC.**

VERY WELL ACTED BY YOU AND ME.



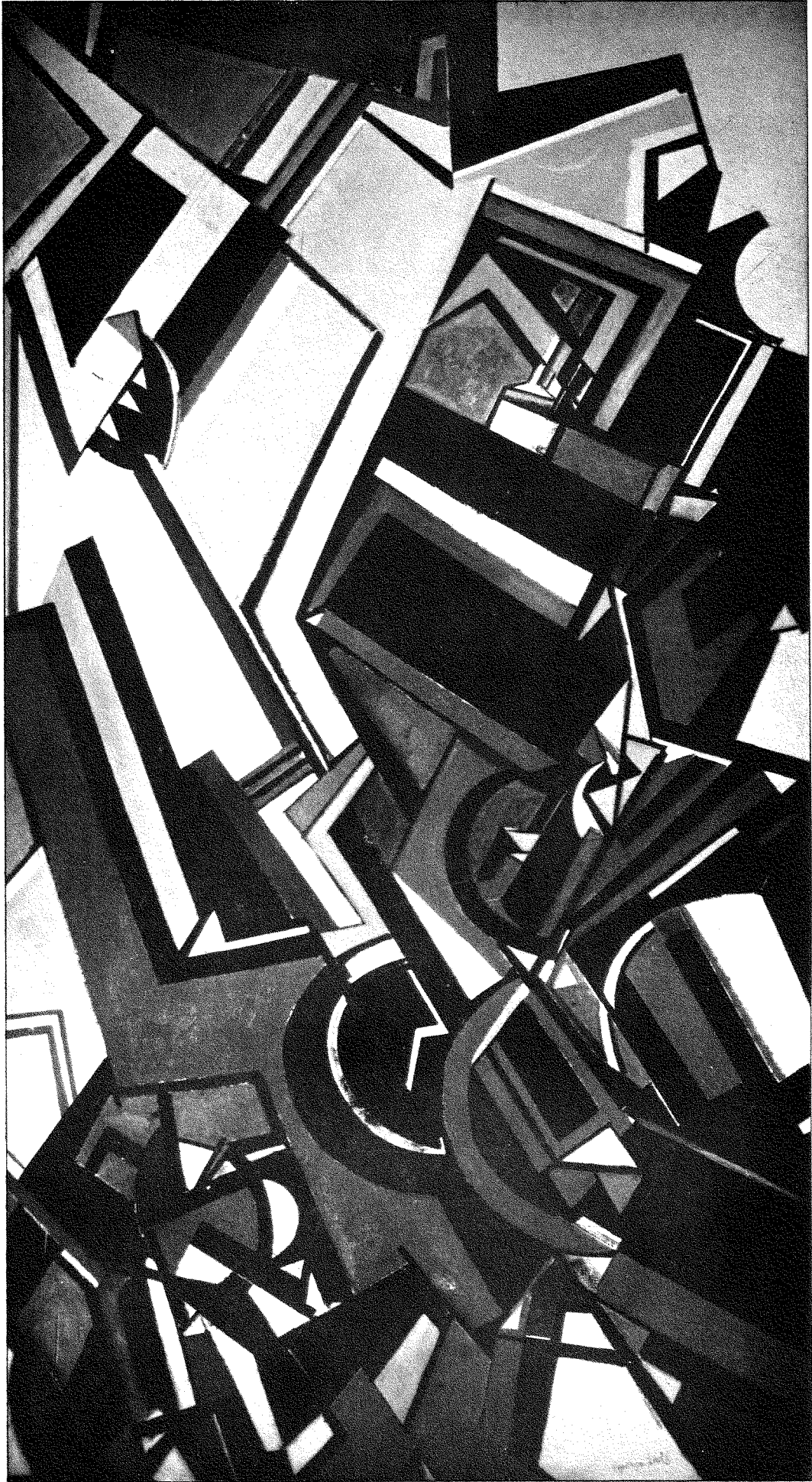
Plan of War.

Wyndham Lewis.



Timon of Athens.

Wyndham Lewis.



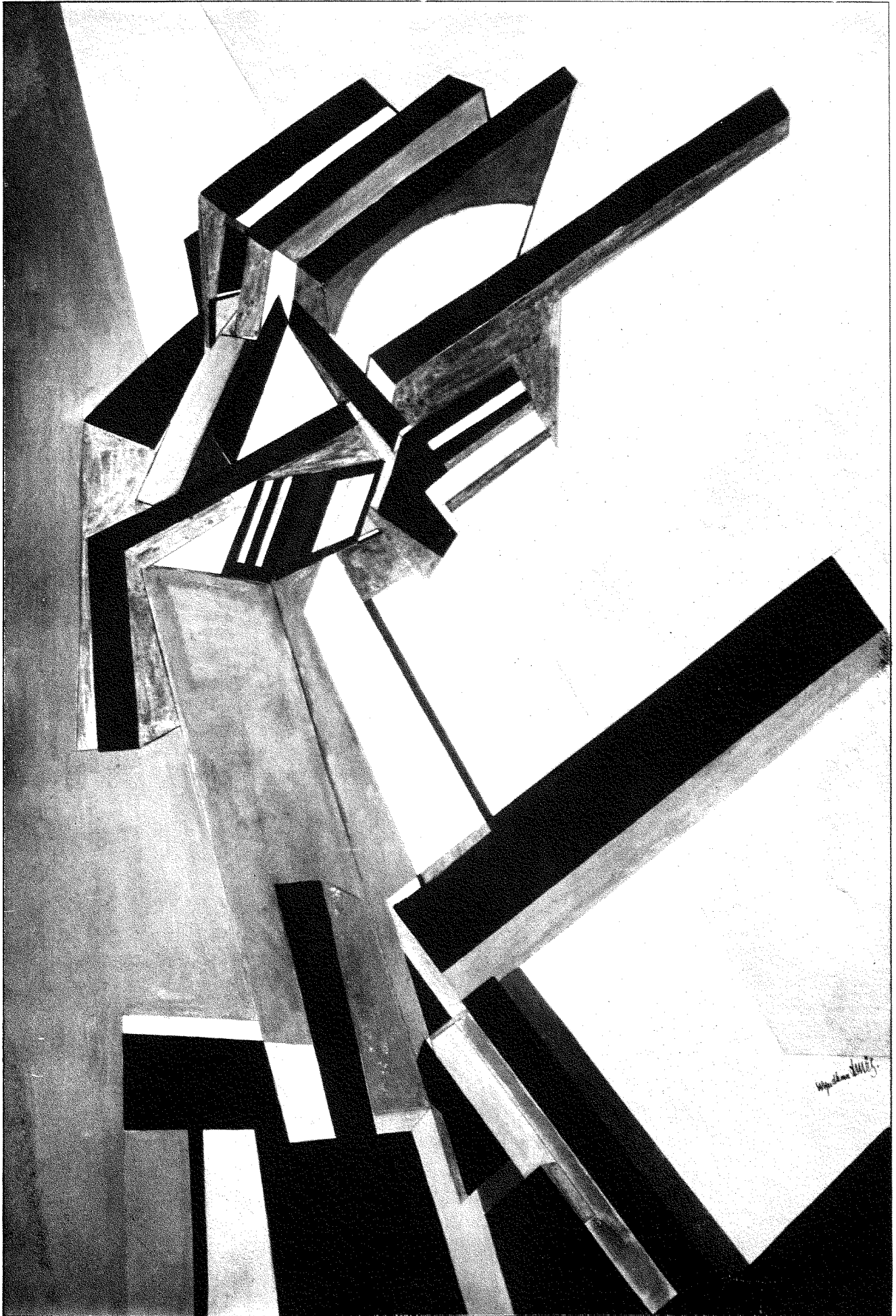
Slow Attack.

Wyndham Lewis.



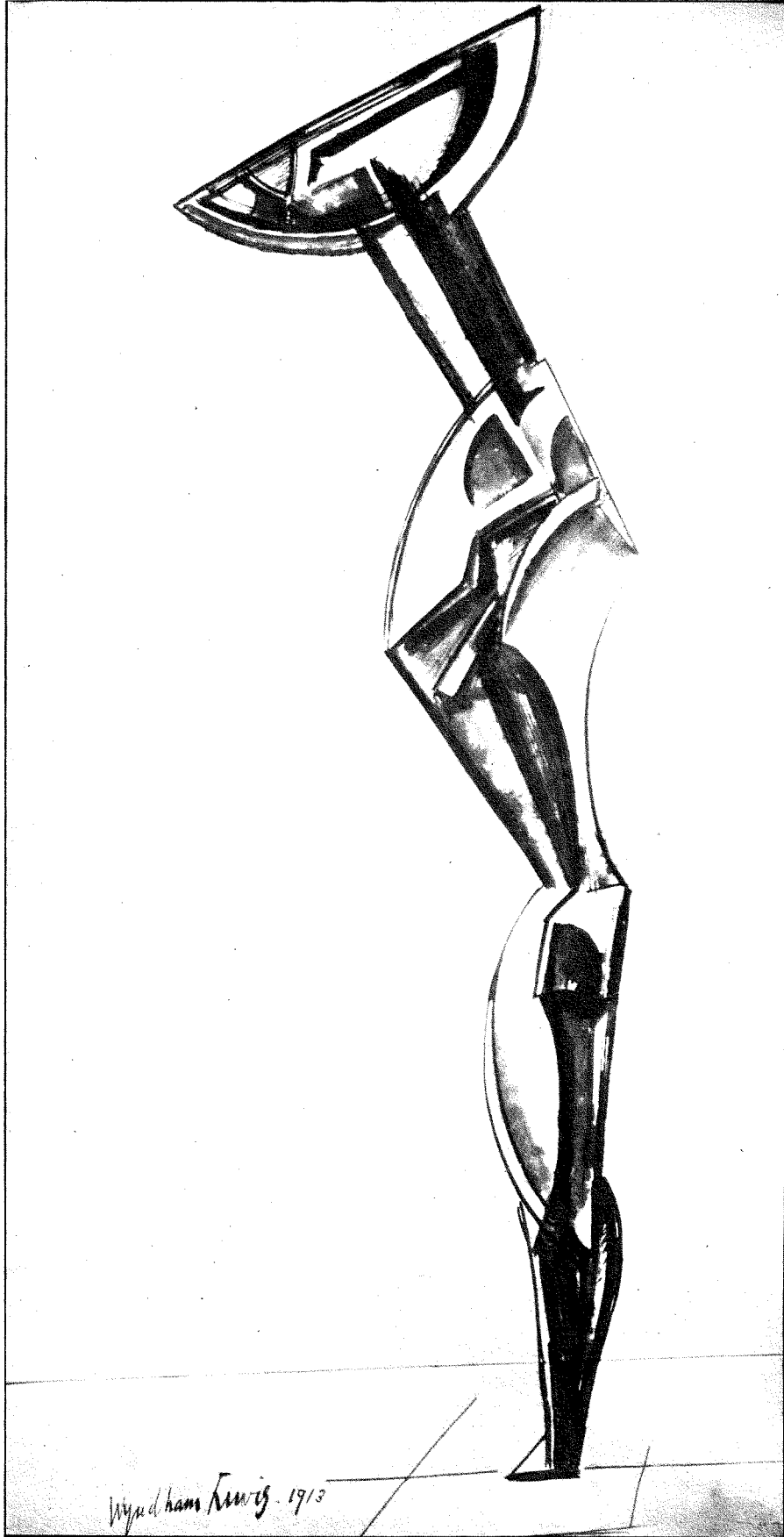
Decoration for the Countess
of Drogheda's House.

Wyndham Lewis.



Portrait of an Englishwoman.

Wyndham Lewis.



The Enemy of the Stars.

Wyndham Lewis.

THE PLAY.

ENEMY OF THE STARS.

ONE IS IN IMMENSE COLLAPSE OF CHRONIC PHILOSOPHY. YET HE BULGES ALL OVER, COMPLEX FRUIT, WITH SIMPLE FIRE OF LIFE. GREAT MASK, VENUSTIC AND VERIDIC, TYPE OF FEMININE BEAUTY CALLED "MANISH."

FIRST HE IS ALONE. A HUMAN BULL RUSHES INTO THE CIRCUS. THIS SUPER IS NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN LOUNGING STAR OVERHEAD. HE IS NOT EVEN A "STAR." HE RUSHES OFF, INTO THE EARTH.

CHARACTERS AND PROPERTIES BOTH EMERGE FROM GANGWAY INTO GROUND AT ONE SIDE.

THEN AGAIN THE PROTAGONIST REMAINS NEGLECTED, AS THOUGH HIS TWO FELLOW ACTORS HAD FORGOTTEN HIM, CAROUSING IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAVERN.

SECOND CHARACTER, APPALLING "GAMIN," BLACK BOURGEOIS ASPIRATIONS UNDERMINING BLATANT VIRTUOSITY OF SELF.

His criminal instinct of intemperate billious heart, put at service of unknown Humanity, our King, to express its violent royal aversion to Protagonist, statue-mirage of Liberty in the great desert.

Mask of discontent, anxious to explode, restrained by qualms of vanity, and professional coyness. Eyes grown venturesome in native temperatures of Pole—indulgent and familiar, blessing with white nights.

Type of characters taken from broad faces where Europe grows arctic, intense, human and universal.

"Yet you and me: why not from the English metropolis?"—Listen: it is our honeymoon. We go abroad for first scene of our drama. Such a strange thing as our coming together requires a strange place for initial stages of our intimate ceremonious acquaintance.

THERE ARE TWO SCENES.

STAGE ARRANGEMENTS.

RED OF STAINED COPPER PREDOMINANT COLOUR. OVERTURNED CASES AND OTHER IMPEDIMENTA HAVE BEEN COVERED, THROUGHOUT ARENA, WITH OLD SAIL-CANVAS.

HUT OF SECOND SCENE IS SUGGESTED BY CHARACTERS TAKING UP THEIR POSITION AT OPENING OF SHAFT LEADING DOWN INTO MINES QUARTERS.

A GUST, SUCH AS IS MET IN THE CORRIDORS OF THE TUBE, MAKES THEIR CLOTHES SHIVER OR FLAP, AND BLARES UP THEIR VOICES. MASKS FITTED WITH TRUMPETS OF ANTIQUE THEATRE, WITH EFFECT OF TWO CHILDREN BLOWING AT EACH OTHER WITH TIN TRUMPETS.

AUDIENCE LOOKS DOWN INTO SCENE, AS THOUGH IT WERE A HUT ROLLED HALF ON ITS BACK, DOOR UPWARDS, CHARACTERS GIDDILY MOUNTING IN ITS OPENING.

ARGOL.

INVESTMENT OF RED UNIVERSE.

EACH FORCE ATTEMPTS TO SHAKE HIM.

**CENTRAL AS STONE. POISED MAGNET OF SUBTLE,
VAST, SELFISH THINGS.**

**HE LIES LIKE HUMAN STRATA OF INFERNAL BIOLOGIES.
WALKS LIKE WARY SHIFTING OF BODIES IN DISTANT
EQUIPOISE. SITS LIKE A GOD BUILT BY AN ARCHITECTURAL
STREAM, FECUNDED BY MAD BLASTS SUNLIGHT.**

The first stars appear and Argol comes out of the hut. This is his cue. The stars are his cast. He is rather late and snips into it's place a test button. A noise falls on the cream of Posterity, assembled in silent banks. One hears the gnats' song of the Thirtieth centuries.

They strain to see him, a gladiator who has come to fight a ghost, Humanity—the great Sport of Future Mankind.

He is the prime athlete exponent of this sport in it's palmy days. Posterity slowly sinks into the hypnotic trance of Art, and the Arena is transformed into the necessary scene.

**THE RED WALLS OF THE UNIVERSE NOW SHUT THEM
IN, WITH THIS CONDEMNED PROTAGONIST.**

**THEY BREATHE IN CLOSE ATMOSPHERE OF TERROR
AND NECESSITY TILL THE EXECUTION IS OVER, THE RED
WALLS RECEDE, THE UNIVERSE SATISFIED.**

THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS.

THE ACTION OPENS.

THE YARD.

The Earth has burst, a granite flower, and disclosed the scene.

A wheelwright's yard.

Full of dry, white volcanic light.

Full of emblems of one trade: stacks of pine, iron, wheels stranded.

Rough Eden of one soul, to whom another man, and not EVE, would be mated.

A canal at one side, the night pouring into it like blood from a butcher's pail.

Rouge mask in alluminum mirror, sunset's grimace through the night.

A leaden gob, slipped at zenith, first drop of violent night, spreads cataclysmically in harsh water of coming. Caustic Reckett's stain.

Three trees, above canal, sentimental, black and conventional in number, drive leaf flocks, with jeering cry.

Or they slightly bend their joints, impassible acrobats ; step rapidly forward, faintly incline their heads.

Across the mud in pod of the canal their shadows are gauky toy crocodiles, sawed up and down by infant giant?

Gollywog of Arabian symmetry, several tons, Arghol drags them in blank nervous hatred.

THE SUPER.

Arghol crosses yard to the banks of the canal : sits down.

“ Arghol ! ”

“ I am here. ”

His voice raucous and disfigured with a catarrh of lies in the fetid bankrupt atmosphere of life's swamp : clear and splendid among Truth's balsamic hills, shepherding his agile thoughts.

“ Arghol ! ”

It was like a child's voice hunting it's mother.

A note of primitive distress edged the thick bellow. The figure rushed without running. Arghol heeled over to the left. A boot battered his right hand ribs. These were the least damaged : it was their turn.

Upper lip shot down, half covering chin, his body reached methodically. At each blow, in muscular spasm, he made the pain pass out. Rolled and jumped, crouched and flung his grovelling Enceladus weight against it, like swimmer with wave.

The boot, and heavy shadow above it, went. The self-centred and elemental shadow, with whistling noise peculiar to it, passed softly and sickly into a doorway's brown light.

The second attack, pain left by first shadow, lashing him, was worse. He lost consciousness.

THE NIGHT.

His eyes woke first, shaken by rough moonbeams. A white, crude volume of brutal light blazed over him. Immense bleak electric advertisement of God, it crushed with wild emptiness of street.

The ice field of the sky swept and crashed silently. Blowing wild organism into the hard splendid clouds, some will cast it's glare, as well, over him.

The canal ran in one direction, his blood, weakly, in the opposite.

The stars shone madly in the archaic blank wilderness of the universe, machines of prey.

Mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere, white rivers of power. They stood in eternal black sunlight.

Tigers are beautiful imperfect brutes.

Throats iron eternities, drinking heavy radiance, limbs towers of blatant light, the stars poised, immensely distant, with their metal sides, pantheistic machines.

The farther, the more violent and vivid, Nature : weakness crushed out of creation ! Hard weakness, a flea's size, pinched to death in a second, could it get so far.

He rose before this cliff of cadaverous beaming force, imprisoned in a messed socket of existence.

Will Energy some day reach Earth like violent civilisation, smashing or hardening all? In his mind a chip of distant hardness, tugged at dully like a tooth, made him ache from top to toe.

But the violences of all things had left him so far intact.

HANP.

I.

Hanp comes out of hut, coughing like a goat, rolling a cigarette. He goes to where Arghol is lying. He stirs him with his foot roughly.

Arghol strains and stretches elegantly, face over shoulder, like a woman.

“Come, you fool, and have supper.” Hanp walks back to hut, leaving him.

Arghol lies, hands clasped round his knees. This new kick has put him into a childish lethargy. He gets to his feet soon, and walks to hut. He puts his hand on Hanp's shoulder, who has been watching him, and kisses him on the cheek.

Hanp shakes him off with fury and passes inside hut.

Bastard violence of his half-disciple, metis of an apache of the icy steppe, sleek citizen, and his own dumbfounding soul.

Fungi of sullen violet thoughts, investing primitive vegetation. Hot words drummed on his ear every evening : abuse : question. Groping hands strummed toppling Byzantine organ of his mind, producing monotonous black fugue.

Harsh bayadere-shepherdess of Pamir, with her Chinese beauty : living on from month to month in utmost tent with wastrel, lean as mandrake root, red and precocious : with heavy black odour of vast Manchurian garden—deserts, and the disreputable muddy gold squandered by the unknown sun of the Amur.

His mind unlocked, free to this violent hand. It was his mind's one cold flirtation, then cold love. Excelling in beauty, marked out for Hindu fate of sovereign prostitution, but clear of the world, with furious vow not to return. The deep female strain succumbed to this ragged spirt of crude manhood, masculine with blunt wilfulness and hideous stupidity of the fecund horde of men, phallic wand-like cataract incessantly poured into God. This pip of icy spray struck him on the mouth. He tasted it with new pleasure, before spitting it out : acrid.

To be spat back among men. The young men foresaw the event.

They ate their supper at the door of the hut. An hour passed in wandering spacious silence.

“Was it bad to-night?” a fierce and railing question often repeated.

Arghol lay silent, his hands a thick shell fitting back of head, his face grey vegetable cave.

“ Can’t you kill him, in the name of God? A man has his hands, little else. Mote and speck, the universe illimitable! ” Hanp gibed. “ It is true he is a speck, but all men are. To you he is immense.”

They sat, two grubby shadows, unvaccinated as yet by the moon’s lymph, sickened by the immense vague infections of night.

“ That is absurd. I have explained to you. Here I get routine, the will of the universe manifested with directness and persistence. Figures of persecution are accidents or adventures for some. Prick the thin near heart, like a pea, and the bubble puffs out. That would not be of the faintest use in my case.”

Two small black flames, wavering, as their tongues moved, drumming out thought, with low earth-draughts and hard sudden winds dropped like slapping birds from climaxes in the clouds.

No Morris-lens would have dragged them from the key of vastness. They must be severe midgets, brain specks of the vertiginous, seismic vertebrae, slowly-living lines, of landscape.

“ Self, sacred act of violence, is like murder on my face and hands. The stain won’t come out. It is the one piece of property all communities have agreed it is illegal to possess. The sweetest-tempered person, once he discovers you are that sort of criminal, changes any opinion of you, and is on his guard. When mankind cannot overcome a personality, it has an immemorial way out of the difficulty. It becomes it. It imitates and assimilates that Ego until it is no longer one.... This is success.

Between Personality and Mankind it is always a question of dog and cat ; they are diametrically opposed species. Self is the ancient race, the rest are the new one. Self is the race that lost. But Mankind still suspects Egotistic plots, and hunts Pretenders.

My uncle is very little of a relation. It would be foolish to kill him. He is an échantillon, acid advertisement slipped in letter-box : space’s store-rooms dense with frivolous originals. I am used to him, as well.”

Arghol’s voice had no modulations of argument. Weak now, it handled words numbly, like tired compositor. His body was quite strong again and vivacious. Words acted on it as rain on a plant. It got a stormy neat brilliance in this soft shower. One flame balanced giddily erect, while other larger one swerved and sang with speech coldly before it.

They lay in a pool of bleak brown shadow, disturbed once by a rats plunging head. It seemed to rattle along, yet slide on oiled planes. Arghol shifted his legs mechanically. It was a hutch with low loft where they slept.

Beyond the canal, brute-lands, shuttered with stoney clouds, lay in heavy angels of sand. They were squirted in by twenty ragged streams ; legions of quails hopped parasitically in the miniature cliffs.

Arghol's uncle was a wheelwright on the edge of the town.

Two hundred miles to north the Arctic circle swept. Sinister tramps, it's winds came wandering down the high road, fatigued and chill, doors shut against them.

"First of all ; lily pollen of Ideal on red badge of your predatory category. Scrape this off and you lose your appetite. Obviously.—But I don't want in any case to eat Smith, because he is tough and distasteful to me. I am too vain to do harm, too superb ever to lift a finger when harmed.

A man eats his mutton chop, forgetting it is his neighbour ; drinks every evening blood of the Christs, and gossips of glory.

Existence ; loud feeble sunset, blaring like lumpish, savage clown, alive with rigid tinsel, before a misty door : announcing events, tricks and a thousand follies, to penniless herds, their eyes red with stupidity.

To leave violently slow monotonous life is to take header into the boiling starry cold. (For with me some guilty fire of friction unspent in solitariness, will reach the stars.)

Hell of those Heavens uncovered, whirling pit, every evening ! You cling to any object, dig your nails in earth, not to drop into it."

The night plunged gleaming nervous arms down into the wood, to wrench it up by the roots. Restless and rythimical, beyond the staring red rimmed doorway, giddy and expanding in drunken walls, its heavy drastic lights shifted.

Arghol could see only ponderous arabesques of red cloud, whose lines did not stop at door's frame, but pressed on into shadows within the hut, in tyrannous continuity. As a cloud drove eastward, out of this frame, its weight passed, with spiritual menace, into the hut. A thunderous atmosphere thickened above their heads.

Arghol, paler, tossed clumsily and swiftly from side to side, as though asleep. He got nearer the door. The clouds had room to waste themselves. The land continued in dull form, one per cent. animal, these immense bird-amoebas. Nerves made the earth pulse up against his side and reverberate. He dragged hot palms along the ground, caressing its explosive harshness.

All merely exterior attack.

His face calm seismograph of eruptions in Heaven.

Head of black, eagerly carved, herculean Venus, of iron tribe, hyper barbarous and ascetic. Lofty tents, sonorous with October rains, swarming from vast bright doll-like Asiatic lakes.

Faces following stars in blue rivers, till sea-struck, thundering engine of red water.

Pink idle brotherhood of little stars, passed over by rough cloud of sea.

Cataclysm of premature decadence.

Extermination of the resounding, sombre, summer tents in a decade, furious mass of images left : no human.

Immense production of barren muscular girl idols, wood verdigris, copper, dull paints, flowers.

Hundred idols to a man, and a race swamped in hurricane of art, falling on big narrow souls of its artists.

Head heavy and bird-like, weighted to strike, living on his body, ungainly red Atlantic wave.

“ To have read all the books of the town, Arghol, and to come back here to take up this life again.”

Coaxing : genuine stupefaction : reproach, a trap.

Arghol once more preceded him through his soul, unbenevolent. Doors opened on noisy blankness, coming through from calm, reeling noon-loudness beyond. Garrets waking like faces. A shout down a passage to show it's depth, horizon as well. Voice coming back with suddenness of expert pugilistics.

Perpetual inspector of himself.

“ I must live, like a tree, where I grow. An inch to left or right would be too much.

In the town I felt unrighteous in escaping blows, home anger, destiny of here.

Selfishness, flouting of destiny, to step so much as an inch out of the bull's eye of your birth. (When it is obviously a bull's eye !)

A visionary tree, not migratory : visions from within.

A man with headache lies in deliberate leaden inanimation. He isolates his body, floods it with phlegm, sucks numbness up to his brain.

A soul wettest dough, doughiest lead: a bullet. To drop down Eternity like a plummet.

Accumulate in myself, day after day, dense concentration of pig life. Nothing spent, stored rather in strong stagnation, till rid at last of evaporation and lightness characteristic of men. So burst Death's membrane through, slog beyond, not float in appalling distances.

Energy has been fixed on me from nowhere—heavy and astonished : resigned. Or is it for remote sin ! I will use it, anyway, as prisoner his bowl or sheet for escape : not as means of idle humiliation.

One night Death left his card. I was not familiar with the name he chose : but the black edge was deep. I flung it back. A thousand awakenings of violence.

Next day I had my knife up my sleeve as my uncle came at me, ready for what you recommend. But a superstition, habit, is there, curbing him mathematically : that of not killing me. I should know an ounce of effort more.—He loads my plate, even. He must have palpable reasons for my being alive.”

A superb urchin watching some centre of angry commotion in the street, his companion kept his puffed slit eyes, generously cruel, fixed on him. God and Fate, constant protagonists, one equivalent to Police, his simple sensationalism was always focussed on. But God was really his champion. He longed to see God fall on Arghol, and wipe the earth with him. He egged God on : then egged on Arghol. His soft rigid face grinned with intensity of attention, propped contemplatively on hand.

Port—proowler, serf of the capital, serving it's tongue and gait within the grasp and aroma of the white, mat, immense sea. Abstract instinct of sullen seafarer, dry-salted in slow acrid airs, acrian flood not stopped by shore, dying in dirty warmth of harbour-boulevards.

His soul like ocean-town ; leant on by two skies. Lower opaque one washes it with noisy clouds : or lies giddily flush with street crevices, wedges of black air, flooding it with red emptiness of dead light.

It sends ships between its unchanging slight rock of houses periodically, slowly to spacious centre. Nineteen big ships, like nineteen nomad souls for its amphibious sluggish body, locked there.

II.

“ What is destiny? Why yours to stay here, more than to live in the town or cross to America ? ”

“ My dear Hanp, your geography is so up-to-date !

Geography doesn't interest me. America is geography.

I've explained to you what the town is like.

Offences against the discipline of the universe are registered by a sort of conscience, prior to the kicks. Blows rain on me. Mine is not a popular post. It is my destiny right enough : an extremely unpleasant one.”

“ It is not the destiny of a man like you to live buried in this cursed hole.”

“ Our soul is wild, with primitiveness of it's own. It's wilderness is anywhere—in a shop, sailing, reading psalms : it's greatest good our destiny.

Anything I possess is drunk up here on the world's brink, by big stars, and returned me in the shape of thought heavy as a meteorite. The stone of the stars will do for my seal and emblem. I practise with it, monotonous “ putting,” that I may hit Death when he comes.”

“ Your thought is buried in yourself.”

“ A thought weighs less in a million brains than in one. No one is conjuror enough to prevent spilling. Rather the bastard form infects the original. Famous men are those who have exchanged themselves against a thousand idiots. When you hear a famous man has died penniless and diseased, you say, “ Well served.” Part of life's arrangement is that the few best become these cheap scarecrows.

The process and condition of life, without any exception, is a grotesque degradation, and “ souillure ” of the original solitude of the soul. There is no help for it, since each gesture and word partakes of it, and the child has already covered himself with mire.

Anything but yourself is dirt. Anybody that is. I do not feel clean enough to die, or to make it worth while killing myself.”

A laugh, packed with hatred, not hoping to carry, snapped like a fiddle-cord.

“ Sour grapes ! That's what it's all about ! And you let yourself be kicked to death here out of spite.

Why do you talk to me, I should like to know? Answer me that? ”

Disrespect or mocking is followed, in spiritualistic seances, with offended silence on part of the spooks. Such silence, not discernedly offended, now followed.

The pseudo-rustic Master, cavernously, hemicycally real, but anomalous sham-ness on him in these circumstances, poudre de riz on face of knights sleeping effigy, lay back indifferent, his feet lying, two heavy closed books, before the disciple.

Arghol was a large open book, full of truths and insults.

He opened his jaws wide once more in egotistic self castigation.

“ The doctoring is often fouler than disease.

Men have a loathsome deformity called Self ; affliction got through indiscriminate rubbing against their fellows : Social excrescence.

Their being is regulated by exigencies of this affliction. Only one operation can cure it : the suicide’s knife.

Or an immense snuffling or taciturn parasite, become necessary to victim, like abortive poodle, all nerves, vice and dissatisfaction.

I have smashed it against me, but it still writhes, turbulent mess.

I have shrunk it in frosty climates, but it has filtered filth inward through me, dispersed till my deepest solitude is impure.

Mire stirred up desperately, without success in subsequent hygiene.”

This focussed disciples’ physical repulsion : nausea of humility added. Perfect tyrannic contempt: but choking respect, curiosity; consciousness of defeat. These two extremes clashed furiously. The contempt claimed it’s security and triumph : the other sentiment baffled it. His hatred of Arghol for perpetually producing this second sentiment grew. This would have been faint without physical repulsion to fascinate him, make his murderous and sick.

He was strong and insolent with consciousness stuffed in him in anonymous form of vastness of Humanity: full of rage at gigantic insolence and superiority, combined with utter uncleanness and despicableness—all back to physical parallel—of his Master.

The more Arghol made him realize his congenital fatuity and cheapness, the more a contemptible matter appeared accumulated in the image of his Master, sunken mirror. The price of this sharp vision of mastery was contamination.

Too many things inhabited together in this spirit for cleanliness or health. Is one soul too narrow an abode for genius?

To have humanity inside you—to keep a doss-house ! At least impossible to organise on such a scale.

People are right who would disperse these impure monopolies ! Let everyone get his little bit, intellectual Ballam rather than Bedlam !

III.

In sluggish but resolute progress towards the City and centre, on part of young man was to be found cause of Arghol's ascendancy in first place. Arghol had returned some months only from the great city of their world.

He showed Hanp picture postcards. He described the character of each scene. Then he had begun describing more closely. At length, systematically he lived again there for his questioner, exhausted the capital, put it completely in his hands. The young man had got there without going there. But instead of satisfying him, this developed a wild desire to start off at once. Then Arghol said :—

“ Wait a moment.”

He whispered something in his ear.

“ Is that true? ”

“ Aye and more.”

He supplemented his description with a whole life of comment and disillusion.—The young man felt now that he had left the city. His life was being lived for him.—But he forgot this and fought for his first city. Then he began taking a pleasure in destruction.

He had got under Arghol's touch.

But when he came to look squarely at his new possession, which he had exchanged for his city, he found it wild, incredibly sad, hateful stuff.

Somehow, however, the City had settled down in Arghol. He must seek it there, and rescue it from that tyrannic abode.—He could not now start off without taking this unreal image city with him. He sat down to invest it, Arghol its walls.

IV.

Arghol had fallen. His Thébaide had been his Waterloo.

He now sat up slowly.

“ Why do I speak to you? ”

It's not to you but myself.—I think it's a physical matter : simply to use one's mouth.

My thoughts to walk abroad and not always be stuffed up in my head : ideas to banjo this resounding body.

You seemed such a contemptible sort of fellow that there was some hope for you. Or to be clear, there was NOTHING to hope from your vile character.

That is better than little painful somethings !

I am amazed to find that you are like me.

I talk to you for an hour and get more disgusted with myself.

I find I wanted to make a naif yapping Poodle-parasite of you.—I shall always be a prostitute.

I wanted to make you my self ; you understand ?

Every man who wants to make another HIMSELF, is seeking a companion for his detached ailment of a self.

You are an unclean little beast, crept gloomily out of my ego. You are the world, brother, with its family objections to me.

Go back to our Mother and spit in her face for me !

I wish to see you no more here ! Leave at once. Here is money. (Take train at once : Berlin is the place for your pestilential little carcass. Get out ! Here ! Go ! ”

Amazement had stretched the disciple's face back like a mouth, then slowly it contracted, the eyes growing smaller, chin more prominent, old and clenched like a fist.

Arghol's voice rang coldly in the hut, a bell beaten by words.

Only the words, not tune of bell, had grown harder. At last they beat virulently.

When he had finished, silence fell like guillotine between them, severing bonds.

The disciple spoke with his own voice, which he had not used for some weeks. It sounded fresh, brisk and strange to him, half live garish salt fish.

His mouth felt different.

“ Is that all? ”

Arghol was relieved at sound of Hanp's voice, no longer borrowed, and felt better disposed towards him. The strain of this mock life, or real life, rather, was tremendous on his underworld of energy and rebellious muscles. This cold outburst was not commensurate with it. It was twitch of loud bound nerve only.

“ Bloody glib-tongued cow ! You think you can treat me that way ! ”

Hanp sprang out of the ground, a handful of furious movements : flung himself on Arghol.

Once more the stars had come down.

Arghol used his fists.

To break vows and spoil continuity of instinctive behaviour, lose a prize that would only be a trophy tankard never drunk from, is always fine.

Arghol would have flung away his hoarding and scraping of thought as well now. But his calm, long instrument of thought, was too heavy. It weighed him down, resisted his swift anarchist effort, and made him giddy.

His fear of death, anti-manhood, words coming out of caverns of belief—synthesis, that is, of ideal life—appalled him with his own strength.

Strike his disciple as he had abused him. Suddenly give way. Incurable self taught you a heroism.

The young man brought his own disgust back to him. Full of disgust : therefore disgusting. He felt himself on him. What a cause of downfall !

V.

The great beer-coloured sky, at the fuss, leapt in fête of green gaiety,

Its immense lines bent like whalebones and sprang back with slight deaf thunder.

The sky, two clouds, their two furious shadows, fought.

The bleak misty hospital of the horizon grew pale with fluid of anger.

The trees were wiped out in a blow.

The hut became a new boat inebriated with electric milky human passion, poured in.

It shrank and struck them ; struck, in its course, in a stirred up unmixed world, by tree, or house-side grown wave.

First they hit each other, both with blows about equal in force—on face and head.

Soul perched like aviator in basin of skull, more alert and smaller than on any other occasion. Mask stoic with energy : thought cleaned off slick—pure and clean with action. Bodies grown brain, black octopi.

Flushes on silk epiderm and fierce card-play of fists between : emptying of " hand " on soft flesh-table.

Arms of grey windmills, grinding anger on stone of the new heart.

Messages from one to another, dropped down anywhere when nobody is looking, reaching brain by telegraph : most desolating and alarming messages possible.

The attacker rushed in drunk with blows. They rolled, swift jagged rut, into one corner of shed : large insect scuttling roughly to hiding.

Stopped astonished.

Fisticuffs again : then rolled kicking air and each other, springs broken, torn from engine.

Hanp's punch wore itself out, soon, on herculean clouds, at mad rudder of boat on Arghol.

Then like a punch-ball, something vague and swift struck him on face, exhausted and white.

Arghol did not hit hard. Like something inanimate, only striking as rebound and as attacked.

He became soft, blunt paw of Nature, taken back to her bosom, mechanically ; slowly and idly winning.

He became part of responsive landscape : his friend's active punch key of the commotion.

Hanp fell somewhere in the shadow : there lay.

Arghol stood rigid.

As the nervous geometry of the world in sight relaxed, and went on with it's perpetual mystic invention, he threw himself down where he had been lying before.

A strong flood of thought passed up to his fatigued head, and at once dazed him. Not his body only, but being was out of training for action : puffed and exhilarated. Thoughts fell on it like punches.

His mind, baying mastiff, he flung off.

In steep struggle he rolled into sleep.

Two clear thoughts had intervened between fight and sleep.

Now a dream began valuing, with it's tentative symbols, preceding events.

A black jacket and shirt hung on nails across window : a gas jet turned low to keep room warm, through the night, sallow chill illumination : dirty pillows, black and thin in middle, worn down by rough head, but congested at each end.

Bed-clothes crawling over bed never-made, like stagant waves and eddies to be crept beneath.—Picture above pillow of Rosa Bonheur horses(trampling up wall like well fed toffyish insects. Books piled on table and chair, open at some page.

Two texts in Finnish. Pipes half smoked, collars : past days not effaced beneath perpetual tidyness, but scraps and souvenirs of their accidents lying in heaps.

His room in the city, nine feet by six, grave big enough for the six corpses that is each living man.

Appalling tabernacle of Self and Unbelief.

He was furious with this room, tore down jacket and shirt, and threw the window open.

The air made him giddy.

He began putting things straight.

The third book, stalely open, which he took up to shut, was the " Einige und Sein Eigenkeit."

Stirnir.

One of seven arrows in his martyr mind.

Poof ! he flung it out of the window.

A few minutes, and there was a knock at his door. It was a young man he had known in the town, but now saw for the first time, seemingly. He had come to bring him the book, fallen into the roadway.

“ I thought I told you to go ! ” he said.

The young man had changed into his present disciple.

Obliquely, though he appeared now to be addressing Stirnir.

“ I thought I told you to go ! ”

His visitor changed a third time.

A middle aged man, red cropped head and dark eyes, self-possessed, loose, free, student—sailor, fingering the book : coming to a decision. Stirnir as he had imagined him.

“ Get out, I say. Here is money. ”

Was the money for the book?

The man flung it at his head ; its cover slapped him sharply.

“ Glib tongued cow! Take that! ”

A scrap ensued, physical experiences of recent fight recurring, ending in eviction of this visitor, and slamming of door.

“ These books are all parasites. Poodles of the mind, Chows and King Charles ; eternal prostitute.

The mind, perverse and gorgeous.

All this Art life, posterity and the rest, is wrong. Begin with these. ”

He tore up his books.

A pile by door ready to sweep out.

He left the room, and went round to Café to find his friends.

“ All companions of parasite Self. No single one a brother.

My dealings with these men is with their parasite composite selves, not with Them. ”

The night had come on suddenly. Stars like clear rain soaked chillily into him.

No one was in the street.

The sickly houses oozed sad human electricity.

He had wished to clean up, spiritually, his room, obliterate or turn into deliberate refuse, accumulations of Self.

Now a similar purging must be undertaken among his companions preparatory to leaving the city.

But he never reached the Café.

His dream changed ; he was walking down the street in his native town, where he now was, and where he knew no one but his school-mates, workmen, clerks in export of hemp, grain and wood.

Ahead of him he saw one of the friends of his years of study in Capital.

He did not question how he had got there, but caught him up. Although brusquely pitched elsewhere, he went on with his plan.

“ Sir, I wish to know you! ”

Provisional smile on face of friend, puzzled.

“ Hallo, Arghol, you seem upset.”

“ I wish to make your acquaintance.”

“ But, my dear Arghol, what’s the matter with you?

We already are very well acquainted.”

“ I am not Arghol.

“ No ? ”

The good-natured smug certitude offended him.

This man would never see anyone but Arghol he knew.—Yet he on his side saw a man, directly beneath his friend, imprisoned, with intolerable need of recognition.

Arghol, that the baffling requirements of society had made, impudent parasite of his solitude, had foregathered too long with men, and borne his name too variously, to be superseded.

He was not sure, if they had been separated surgically, in which self life would have gone out and in which remained.

“ This man has been masquerading as me.”

He repudiated Arghol, nevertheless.

If eyes of his friends-up-till-then could not be opened, he would sweep them, along with Arghol, into rubbish heap.

Arghol was under a dishonouring pact with all of them.

He repudiated it and him.

“ So I am Arghol.”

“ Of course. But if you don't want —— ”

“ That is a lie. Your foolish grin proves you are lying. Good day.”

Walking on, he knew his friend was himself. He had divested himself of something.

The other steps followed, timidly and deliberately : odious invitation.

The sound of the footsteps gradually sent him to sleep.

Next, a Café ; he, alone, writing at table.

He became slowly aware of his friends seated at other end of room, watching him, as it had actually happened before his return to his uncles house. There he was behaving as a complete stranger with a set of men he had been on good terms with two days before.

“ He's gone mad. Leave him alone,” they advised each other.

As an idiot, too, he had come home ; dropped, idle and sullen, on his relative's shoulders.

VI.

Suddenly, through confused struggles and vague successions of scenes, a new state of mind asserted itself.

A riddle had been solved.

What could this be?

He was Arghol once more.

Was that a key to something? He was simply Arghol.

“ I am Arghol.”

He repeated his name—like sinister word invented to launch a new Soap, in gigantic advertisement—toilet-necessity, he, to scrub the soul.

He had ventured in his solitude and failed. Arghol he had imagined left in the city.—Suddenly he had discovered Arghol who had followed him, in Hanp. Always a deux !

Flung back to extremity of hut, Hanp lay for some time recovering. Then he thought. Chattel for rest of mankind, Arghol had brutalised him.

Both eyes were swollen pulp.

Shut in : thought for him hardly possible so cut off from visible world.

Sullen indignation at Arghol ACTING, he who had not the right to act. Violence in him was indecent ; again question of taste.

How loathsome heavy body, so long quiet, flinging itself about : face strained with intimate expression of act of love.

Firm grip still on him ; outrage.

“ Pudeur,” in races accustomed to restraint, is the most violent emotion, in all its developments. Devil redicule, heroism of vice, ideal, god of taste. Why has it not been taken for root of great Northern tragedy ?

Arghols unweildly sensitiveness, physical and mental, made him a monster in his own eyes, among other things. Such illusion, imparted with bullet-like directness to a companion, falling on suitable soil, produced similar conviction.

This humility and perverse aseticism opposed to vigorous animal glorification of self.

He gave men one image with one hand, and at same time a second, its antidote with the other.

He watched results a little puzzled.

The conflict never ended.

Shyness and brutality, chief ingredients of their drama, fought side by side.

Hanp had been "ordered off," knocked about. Now he was going. Why? Because he had been sent off like a belonging.

Arghol had dragged him down : had preached a certain life, and now insolently set an example of the opposite.

Played with, debauched by a mind that could not leave passion in another alone.

Where should he go? Home. Good natured drunken mother, recriminating and savage at night.

Hanp had almost felt she had no right to be violent and resentful, being weak when sober. He caught a resemblance to present experiences in tipsy life stretching to babyhood.

He saw in her face a look of Arghol.

How disgusting she was, his own flesh. Ah! That was the sensation! Arghol, similarly disgusted through this family feeling, his own flesh : though he was not any relation.

Berlin and nearer city was full of Arghol. He was comfortable where he was.

Arghol had lived for him, worked : impaired his will. Even wheel-making had grown difficult, whereas Arghol acquitted himself of duties of trade quite easily.

WHOSE energy did he use?

Just now the blows had leapt in his muscles towards Arghol, but were sickened and did not seem hard. Would he never be able again to hit? Feel himself hard and distinct on somebody else?

That mass, muck, in the corner, that he hated : was it hoarded energy, stolen or grabbed, which he could only partially use, stagnating?

Arghol was brittle, repulsive and formidable through this sentiment.

Had this passivity been holy, with charm of a Saint's?

Arghol was gluttoned with others, in coma of energy.

He had just been feeding on him—Hanp!

He REFUSED to act, almost avowedly to infuriate : prurient contempt.

His physical strength was obnoxious : muscles affecting as flabby fat would in another.

Energetic through self indulgence.

Thick sickly puddle of humanity, lying there by door.

Death, taciturn refrain of his being.

Preparation for Death.

Tip him over into cauldron in which he persistently gazed : see what happened !

This sleepy desire leapt on to young man's mind, after a hundred other thoughts—clown in the circus, springing on horses back, when the elegant riders have hopped, with obsequious dignity down gangway.

VII.

Bluebottle, at first unnoticed, hurtling about, a snore rose quietly on the air.

Drawn out, clumsy, self-centred ! It pressed inflexibly on Hamps nerve of hatred, sending hysteria gyrating in top of diaphragm, flooding neck.

It beckoned, filthy, ogling finger.

The first organ note abated. A second at once was set up : stronger, startling, full of loathsome unconsciousness.

It purred a little now, quick and labial. Then virile and strident again.

It rose and fell up centre of listener's body, and along swollen nerves, peachy, clotted tide, gurgling back in slimy shallows. Snoring of a malodorous, bloody, sink, emptying its water.

More acutely, it plunged into his soul with bestial regularity, intolerable besmirching.

Aching with disgust and fury, he lay dully, head against ground. At each fresh offence the veins puffed faintly in his temples.

All this sonority of the voice that subdued him sometimes : suddenly turned bestial in answer to his vision

“ How can I stand it ! How can I stand it ! ”

His whole being was laid bare : battered on by this noise. His strength was drawn raspily out of him. In a minute he would be a flabby yelling wreck.

Like a sleek shadow passing down his face, the rigour of his discomfort changed, sly volte-face of Nature.

Glee settled thickly on him.

The snore crowed with increased loudness, glad, seemingly, with him ; laughing that he should have at last learnt to appreciate it. A rare proper world if you understand it !

He got up, held by this foul sound of sleep, in dream of action. Rapt beyond all reflection, he would, martyr, relieve the world of this sound.

Cut out this noise like a cancer.

He swayed and groaned a little, peeping through patches of tumified flesh, boozier collecting his senses ; fumbled in pocket.

His knife was not there.

He stood still wiping blood off his face.

Then he stepped across shed to where fight had occurred.

The snore grew again : its sonorous recoveries had amazing and startling strength. Every time it rose he gasped, pressing back a clap of laughter.

With his eyes, it was like looking through goggles.

He peered round carefully, and found knife and two coppers where they had slipped out of his pocket a foot away from Arghol.

He opened the knife, and an ocean of movements poured into his body. He stretched and strained like a toy wound up.

He took deep breaths : his eyes almost closed. He opened one roughly with two fingers, the knife held stiffly at arms length.

He could hardly help plunging it in himself, the nearest flesh to him.

He now saw Arghol clearly : knelt down beside him.

A long stout snore drove his hand back. But the next instant the hand rushed in, and the knife sliced heavily the impious meat. The blood burst out after the knife.

Arghol rose as though on a spring, his eyes glaring down on Hanp, and with an action of the head, as though he were about to sneeze. Hanp shrank back, on his haunches. He over-balanced, and fell on his back.

He scrambled up, and Arghol lay now in the position in which he had been sleeping.

There was something incredible in the dead figure, the blood sinking down, a moist shaft, into the ground. Hanp felt friendly towards it.

There was only flesh there, and all our flesh is the same. Something distant, terrible and eccentric, bathing in that milky snore, had been struck and banished from matter.

Hanp wiped his hands on a rag, and rubbed at his clothes for a few minutes, then went out of the hut.

The night was suddenly absurdly peaceful, trying richly to please him with gracious movements of trees, and gay precessions of arctic clouds.

Relief of grateful universe.

A rapid despair settled down on Hanp, a galloping blackness of mood. He moved quickly to outstrip it, perhaps.

Near the gate of the yard he found an idle figure. It was his master. He ground his teeth almost in this man's face, with an aggressive and furious movement towards him. The face looked shy and pleased, but civil, like a mysterious domestic.

Hanp walked slowly along the canal to a low stone bridge.

His face was wet with tears, his heart beating weakly, a boat slowed down.

A sickly flood of moonlight beat miserably on him, cutting empty shadow he could hardly drag along.

He sprang from the bridge clumsily, too unhappy for instinctive science, and sank like lead, his heart a sagging weight of stagnant hatred.

THE SADDEST STORY

BY

FORD MADDOX HEUFFER.

Beati Immaculati.

I.

We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons, of the town of Nauheim, with an extreme intimacy—or rather, with an acquaintance—ship as loose and easy, and yet as close as a good glove's with your hand. My wife and I knew Captain and Mrs. Ashburnham as well as it was possible to know anybody, and yet, in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them. This is, I believe, a state of things only possible with English people, of whom till to-day, when I sit down to puzzle out what I know of this sad affair, I knew nothing whatever. Six months ago I had never been to England and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an English heart. I had known the shallows.

I don't mean to say that we were not acquainted with many English people. Living, as we perforce lived, in Europe; and being, as we perforce were, leisured Americans, which is as much as to say that were un-American—we were thrown very much into the society of the nicer English.

Paris, you see, was our home. Somewhere between Nice and Bordighera provided yearly winter quarters for us, and Nauheim always received us from July to September. You will gather from this statement that one of us had, as the saying is, a "heart"; and, from the statement that my wife is dead, that she, poor thing, was the sufferer.

Captain Ashburnham also had a heart. But whereas a yearly month or so at Nauheim tuned him up to exactly the right pitch for the rest of the twelve-month, the two months or so were only just enough to keep poor Florence alive from year to year. The reason for his heart was approximately polo, or too much hard sportsmanship in his youth. The reason for poor Florence's broken years may have been in the first instance congenital, but the immediate occasion was a storm at sea upon our first crossing to Europe, and the immediate reasons for our imprisonment in that continent were doctors' orders. They said that even the short Channel crossing might well kill the poor thing.

When we all first met, Captain Ashburnham, home on sick leave from India, to which he was never to return, was thirty-six and poor Florence thirty. Thus to-day, Florence would have been thirty-nine and Captain Ashburnham forty-two; whereas I am forty-five and Leonora thirty-seven. You will perceive therefore that our friendship has been a young middleaged affair, more particularly since we were all of us of quiet dispositions, the Ashburnhams being more particularly what in England it is the custom to call quite good people.

They were descended, as you will probably expect, from the Ashburnham who accompanied Charles I. to the scaffold, and, as you must also expect with this class of English people, you would never have noticed it. Mrs. Ashburnham was a Powys; Florence was a Huribirl of Stamford, Connecticut, where, as you know, they are more old-fashioned than ever the inhabitants of Cranford, England, could have been. I myself am a Lowell, of Philadelphia, Pa., where, it is historically true, there are more old English families than you would find in any six English counties taken together. I carry about with me indeed—as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored me to any spot upon the globe—the title deeds of my farm which once covered the blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets and Sixteen to Twenty-sixth. These title deeds are upon wampum, the grant of an Indian chief to the first Dowell, who left Farnham in Surrey in company with William Penn. Florence's people as is often the case with the inhabitants of Connecticut, came from the neighbourhood of Fordingbridge, where the Ashburnham's place is. From there, at this moment, I am actually writing.

You may well ask why I write. And yet my reasons are quite many. For it is not unusual in human beings who have witnessed the sack of a city or the falling to pieces of a people, to desire to set down what they have witnessed for the benefit of unknown heirs or of generations infinitely

remote; or, if you please just to get the sight out of their heads.

Someone has said that the death of a mouse from cancer is the whole sack of Rome by the Goths, and I swear to you that the breaking-up of our little four-square coterie was such another unthinkable event. Supposing that you should come upon us, all four sitting together at one of the little tables in front of the club house, let us say at Homburg, taking tea of an afternoon and watching the miniature golf, you would have said, that as human affairs go we were an extraordinarily safe castle. We were, if you will, one of those things that seem the proudest and the safest of all the beautiful and safe things that God has permitted the mind of men to frame. Where better could one take refuge? Where better?

Permanence? Stability! I can't believe it's gone. I can't believe that that long tranquil life, which was just stepping a minuet, vanished in four crushing days at the end of nine years and six weeks. Upon my word, yes, our intimacy was like a minuet, simply because on every possible occasion and in every possible circumstance we knew where to go, which table we unanimously should choose and we could rise and go, all four together, without a signal from any one of us, always to the music of the Kur orchestra, always in the temperate sunshine, or if it rained, in discreet shelters. No indeed, it can't be gone. You can't kill a minuet de la cour. You may shut up the music-book; close the harpsichord; in the cupboard and presses the rats may destroy the white satin favours.

The mob may sack Versailles; the Trianon may fall, but surely the minuet—the minuet itself is dancing itself away into the furthest stars, even as our minuet of the Hessian bathing-places must be stepping itself still. Isn't there any heaven where old beautiful dances, old beautiful intimacies, prolong themselves? Isn't there any Nirvana pervaded by the faint thrilling of instruments that have fallen into the dust of wormwood, but that yet had frail, remulous, and everlasting souls?

No, by God it is false! It wasn't a minuet that we stepped; it was a prison—a prison full of screaming hysterics, tied down so that they might not outsound the rolling of our carriage-wheels as we went along the shaded avenues of the Taunus Wald.

And yet, I swear by the sacred name of my creator that it was true. It was true sunshine; the true music; the true plash of the fountains from the mouth of stone dolphins. For, if for me we were four people with the same tastes, with the same desires acting—or no not acting—sitting here and there unanimously, isn't that the truth? If for nine years I have possessed a goodly apple that is rotten at the core, and discover its rottenness only in nine years and six

months less four days, isn't it true to say that for nine years I possessed a goodly apple?

So it may well be with Edward Ashburnham, with Leonora, his wife, and with poor dear Florence. And, if you come to think of it, isn't it a little odd that the physical rottenness of at least two pillars of our four-square house never presented itself to my mind as a menace to its security? It doesn't so present itself now though the two of them are actually dead. I don't know. . . .

I know nothing—nothing in the world—of the hearts of men. I only know that I am alone—horribly alone. No hearthstones will ever again witness, for me, friendly intercourse. No smoking-room will ever be other than peopled with incalculable simulacra amidst smoke-wreathes. Yet, in the name of God, what should I know if I don't know the life of the hearth and of the smoking-room, since my whole life has been passed in those places? The warm hearthside!—Well, there was Florence: I believe that for the twelve years her life lasted after the storm that irretrievably weakened her heart—I don't believe that for one minute she was out of my sight, except when she was safely tucked up in bed and I should be downstairs, talking to some good fellow or other in some lounge or smoking-room, or taking my final turn with a cigar before going to bed. I don't, you understand, blame Florence. But how can she have known what she knew all the time? How could she have got to know it? To know it so fully. Heavens! There doesn't seem to have been the actual time. It must have been when I was taking my baths, and my Swedish exercises, being manicured.

Leading the life I did, of the sedulous, strained nurse, I had to do something to keep myself fit. It must have been then! Yet even that can't have been enough time to get the tremendously long conversations full of worldly wisdom that Leonora has reported to me since their deaths. And is it possible to imagine that during our prescribed walks in Nauheim and the neighbourhood she found time to carry on the protracted negotiations which she did carry on between Edward Ashburnham and his wife? And isn't it incredible that during all that time Edward and Leonora never spoke a word to each other in private. What is one to think of humanity?

For I swear to you that they were the model couple. He was as devoted as it was possible to be without appearing fatuous. So well set up, with such honest blue eyes, such a touch of stupidity, such a warm good-heartedness! And she—so tall, so splendid in the saddle, so fair! Yes, Leonora was extraordinarily fair, and so extraordinarily the real thing that she seemed too good to be true. You don't, I mean, as a rule, get it all so superlatively together. To be the county family, to look the county family, to be so appropriately and perfectly wealthy; to be so perfect in manner—even just to the saving touch of insolence that seems



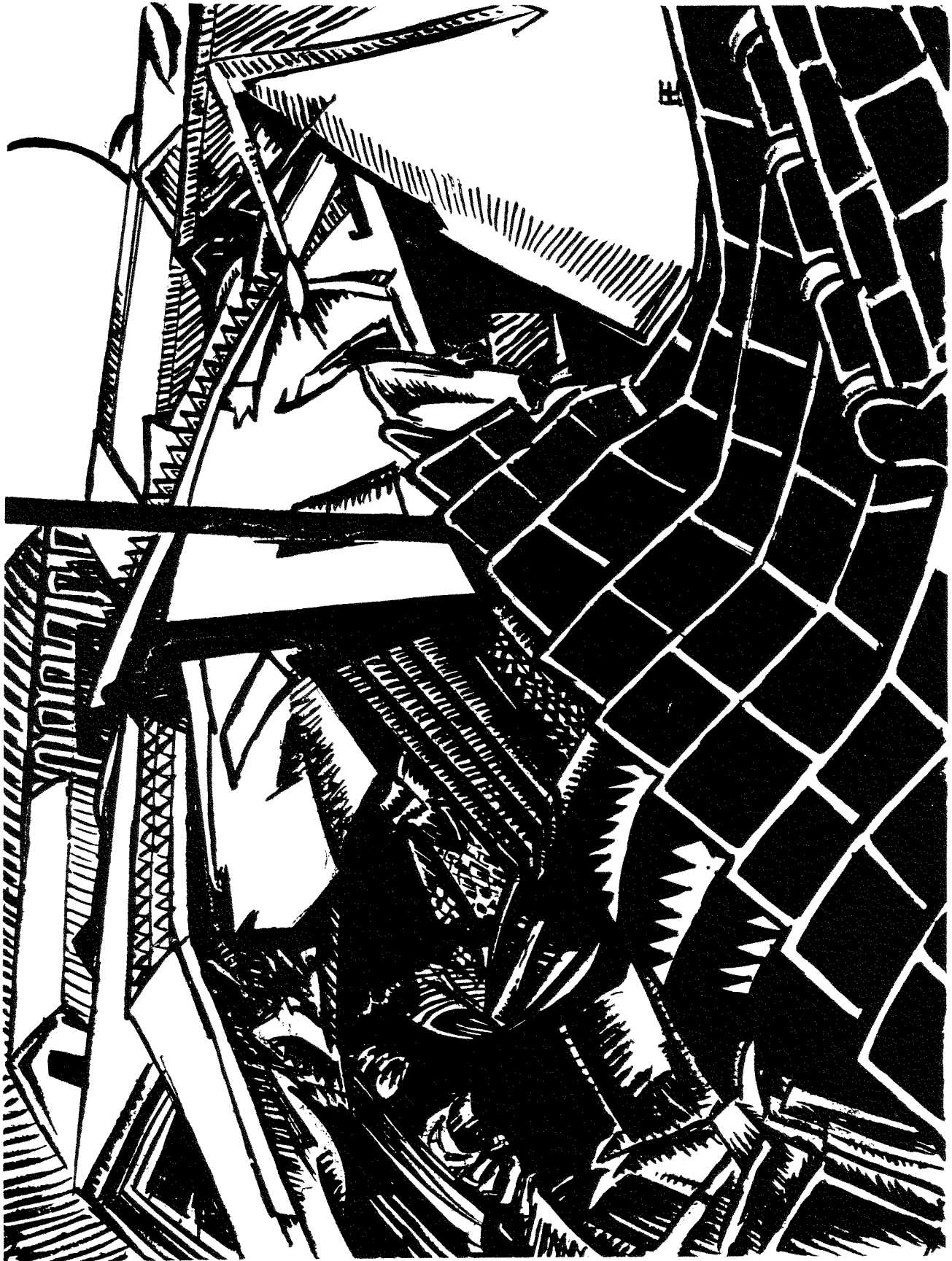
Head.

Frederick Echells.



Head.

Frederick Etchells.



Patchopolis.

Frederick Etchells.



Frederick Etchells.

Dieppe

to be necessary. To have all that and to be all that! No, it was too good to be true. And yet, only this afternoon, talking over the whole matter she said to me:—"Once I tried to have a lover but I was so sick at the heart, so utterly worn out that I had to send him away."

That struck me as the most amazing thing I had ever heard. She said "I was actually in a man's arms. Such a nice chap! Such a dear fellow! And I was saying to myself, fiercely, hissing it between my teeth as they say in novels—and really clenching them together: I was saying to myself; 'Now I'm in for it, and I'll really have a good time for once in my life; for once in my life!' It was in the dark, in a carriage, coming back from a hunt ball. Eleven miles we had to drive! And then suddenly the bitterness of the endless poverty, of the endless acting—it fell on me like a blight, it spoilt everything. Yes, I had to realise that I had been spoilt even for the good time when it came. And I burst out crying, and I cried and I cried for the whole eleven miles. Just imagine ME crying! And just imagine me making a fool of the poor dear chap like that. It certainly wasn't playing the game, was it now?"

I don't know; I don't know; was that last remark of hers the remark of a harlot, or is it what every decent woman, county family or not county family, thinks at the bottom of her heart? Or thinks all the time for the matter of that? Who knows?

Yet, if one doesn't know that at this hour and day, at this pitch of civilisation to which we have attained, after all the preachings of all the moralists, and all the teachings of all the mothers to all the daughters in saeculum saeculorum . . . but perhaps that is what all mothers teach all daughters, not with lips, but with the eyes, or with heart whispering to heart. And, if one doesn't know as much as that about the first thing in the world, what does one know and why is one here?

I asked Mrs. Ashburnham whether she had told Florence that and what Florence had said, and she answered:—"Florence didn't offer any comment at all. What could she say? There wasn't anything to be said. With the grinding poverty we had to put up with to keep up appearances, and the way the poverty came about—YOU know what I mean—any woman would have been justified in taking a lover and presents, too. Florence once said about a very similar position—she was a little too well-bred, too American, to talk about mine—that it was a case of perfectly open riding, and the woman could just act on the spur of the moment. She said it in American, of course, but that was the sense of it. I think her actual words were:—"That it was up to her to take it or leave it . . ."

I don't want you to think that I am writing Teddy Ashburnham down a brute. I don't believe he was. God knows, perhaps all men are like that. For as I've said, what do I know

even of the smoking-room? Fellows come in and tell the most extraordinarily gross stories—so gross that they will positively give you a pain. And yet they'd be offended if you suggested that they weren't the sort of person you would trust your wife alone with. And very likely they'd be quite properly offended—that is, if you can trust anybody alone with anybody. But that sort of fellow obviously takes more delight in listening to or in telling gross stories—more delight than in anything else in the world.

They'll hunt languidly and dress languidly and dine languidly, and work without enthusiasm, and find it a bore to carry on three minutes conversation about anything whatever, and yet, when the other sort of conversation begins they'll laugh, and wake up and throw themselves about in their chairs. Then, if they so delight in the narration, how is it possible that they can be offended—and properly offended at the suggestion that they might make attempts upon your wife's honour? Or again: Edward Ashburnham was the cleanest looking sort of chap; an excellent magistrate, a first rate soldier, one of the best landlords, so they said in Hampshire, England. To the poor and to hopeless drunkards, as I myself have witnessed, he was like a pains-taking guardian. And he never told a story that couldn't have gone into the columns of the "Field," more than once or twice in all the nine years of my knowing him. He didn't even like hearing them, he would fidget and get up and go out to buy a cigar or something of that sort. You would have said that he was just exactly the sort of chap that you could have trusted your wife with. And I trusted mine, and it was madness.

And yet again you have me. If poor Edward was dangerous because of the chastity of his expressions—and they say that that is always the hall-mark of a libertine—what about myself? For I solemnly avow that not only have I never so much as hinted at an impropriety in my conversation in the whole course of my life, and more than that, I will vouch for the cleanness of my thoughts and the absolute chastity of my life.

At what then does it all work out? Is the whole thing a folly and a mockery? Am I no better than a eunuch, or is the proper man—the man with the right to existence—a raging stallion forever, neighing after his neighbour's womenkind?

I don't know. And there is nothing to guide us. And if everything is so nebulous about a matter so elementary as the morals of sex, what is there to guide us in the more subtle morality of all other personal contacts, associations and activities? Or are we meant to act on impulse alone? It is all a darkness.

II.

I don't know how it is best to put this thing down—whether it would be better to try and tell the story from the

beginning, as if it were a story, or whether to tell it from this distance of time, as it reached me from the lips of Leonora, or from those of Edward himself.

So I shall just imagine myself for a fortnight or so at one side of the fireplace of a country cottage, with a sympathetic soul opposite me. And I shall go on talking, in a low voice while the sea sounds in the distance, and overhead the great black flood of wind polishes the bright stars. From time to time we shall get up and go to the door and look out at the bright moon and say:—"Why it is nearly as bright as in Provence!" And then we shall come back to the fireside, with just the touch of a sigh because we are not in that Provence where even the saddest stories are gay.

Consider the lamentable history of Peire Vidal. Two years ago Florence and I motored from Biarritz to Las Tours, which is in the Black Mountains. In the middle of a tortuous valley there rises up a pinnacle, and on the pinnacle are four castles—Las Tours, the Towers. And the immense mistral blew down that valley which was the way from France into Provence so that the silver grey olive leaves appeared like hair flying in the wind, and the tufts of rosemary crept into the iron rocks that they might not be torn up by the roots.

It was, of course, poor dear Florence who wanted to go to Las Tours. You are to imagine that, however, much her bright personality came from Stamford Connecticut, she was yet a graduate of Poughkeepsie. I never could imagine how she did it—the queer, chattering person that she was. With the faraway look in her eyes—which wasn't, however, in the least romantic—I mean that she didn't look as if she were seeing poetic dreams, or looking through you, for she hardly ever did look at you!—holding up one hand as if she wished to silence any objection—or any comment for the matter of that—she would talk. She would talk about William the Silent, about Gustave the Loquacious, about Paris frocks, about how the poor dressed in 1337, about Fantin Latour, about the Paris-Lyons-Mediterranean train-de-luxe, about whether it would be worth while to get off at Tarascon and go across the windswept suspension-bridge, over the Rhone, to take another look at Beaucaire.

We never did take another look at Beaucaire, of course—beautiful Beaucaire with the high, triangular white tower, that looked as thin as a needle and as tall as the Flatiron between Fifth and Broadway—Beaucaire with the grey walls on the top of the pinnacle surrounding an acre and a half of blue irises, beneath the tallness of the stone pines. What a beautiful thing the stone pine is . . .

No we never did go back anywhere. Not to Heidelberg, not to Hamblin, not to Verona, not to Mount Magnus—not so much as to Carassone itself. We talked of it, of course, but I guess Florence got all she wanted out of one look at a place. She had the seeing eye.

I haven't, unfortunately, so that the world is full of places to which I want to return—towns with the white sun upon them; stone pines against the blinking blue of the sky; corners of gables, all carved and painted with stags and scarlet flowers, and crowstepped gables with the little saint at the top; and grey and pink pallazzi and walled towns a mile or so back from the sea, on the Mediterranean, between Leghorn and Naples. Not one of them did we see more than once, so that the whole world for me is like spots of colour in an immense canvas. Perhaps if it weren't so I should have something to catch hold of now.

Is all this digression or isn't it digression? Again I don't know. You, the listener, sit opposite me. But you are so silent. You don't tell me anything. I am at any rate trying to get you to see what sort of life it was I led with Florence, and what Florence was like.

Well, she was bright; and she danced. She seemed to dance over the floors of castles and over seas, and over the salons of modistes, and over the plages of the Riviera—like a gay tremulous beam, reflected from water upon a ceiling. And my function in life was to keep that bright thing in existence. And it was almost as difficult as trying to catch with your hand that dancing reflection, and the task lasted for years.

Florence's aunts used to say that I must be the laziest man in Philadelphia. They had never been to Philadelphia and they had the New England conscience. You see, the first thing they said to me when I called in on Florence in the little ancient, colonial, wooden house beneath the high thin-leaved elms—the first question they asked me was, not how I did, but what did I do. And I did nothing. I suppose I ought to have done something, but I didn't see any call to do it. Why does one do things? I just drifted in and wanted Florence. First I had drifted in on Florence at a Browning tea, or something of the sort in Fourteenth Street, which was then still residential. I don't know why I had gone to New York; I don't know why I had gone to the tea. I don't see why Florence should have gone to that sort of spelling bee. It wasn't the place at which, even then, you expected to find a Poughkeepsie graduate. I guess Florence wanted to raise the culture of the Stuyvesant crowd, and did it as she might have gone in slumming. Intellectual slumming, that was what it was. She always wanted to leave the world a little more elevated than she found it. Poor dear thing, I have heard her lecture Teddy Ashburnham by the hour on the difference between a Franz Hals and a Wouwermans, and why the Pre-Mycenaean statues were cubical with knobs on the top. I wonder what he made of it? Perhaps he was thankful.

I know I was. For do you understand my whole attentions, my whole endeavours were to keep poor dear Florence on to the topics like the finds at Gnosso and the mental

spirituality of Walter Pater. I had to keep her at it you understand or she might die. For I was solemnly informed that if she became excited over anything, or if her emotions were really stirred, her little heart might cease to beat. For twelve years I had to watch every word that any person uttered in any conversation, and I had to head it off what the English call "things"—off, love, poverty, crime, religion, and the rest of it. Yes, the first doctor that we had when she was carried off the ship at Havre assured me that this must be done. Good God, are all these fellows monstrous idiots, or is there a free-masonry between all of them from end to end of the earth? . . . That is what makes me think of that fellow Peire Vidal.

Because, of course, his story is culture, and I had to head her towards culture, and at the same time it's so funny and she hadn't got to laugh, and it's so full of love and she wasn't to think of love. Do you know the story? Las Tours of the Four Castles had for chatelaine Blanche Somebody-or-other who was called as a term of commendation, La Louve—the She-Wolf. And Peire Vidal, the Troubadour, paid his court to La Louve. And she wouldn't have anything to do with him. So, out of compliment to her—the things people do when they're in love!—he dressed himself up in wolf-skins and went up into the Black Mountains. And the shepherds of the Montagne Noire and their dogs mistook him for a wolf, and he was torn with the fangs and beaten with clubs. So they carried him back to Las Tours and La Louve wasn't at all impressed. They polished him up, and her husband remonstrated seriously with her. Vidal was, you see, a great poet, and it was not proper to treat a great poet with indifference.

So Peire Vidal declared himself Emperor of Jerusalem or somewhere, and the husband had to kneel down and kiss his feet though La Louve wouldn't. And Peire set sail in a rowing boat with four companions to redeem the Holy Sepulchre. And they struck on a rock somewhere, and, at great expense, the husband had to fit out an expedition to fetch him back. And Peire Vidal fell all over the lady's bed, while the husband, who was a most ferocious warrior, remonstrated some more about the courtesy that is due to great poets. But I suppose La Louve was the more ferocious of the two. Anyhow that is all that came of it. Isn't that a story?

You haven't an idea of the queer old fashionedness of Florence's aunts—the Misses Hurlbird, nor yet of her uncle. An extraordinarily lovable man, that Uncle John. Thin, gentle, and with a "heart" that made his life very much what Florence's afterwards became.

He didn't reside at Stamford; his home was in Waterbury, where the watches come from. He had a factory there which, in our queer American way, would change its

functions almost from year to year. For nine months or so it would manufacture buttons out of bone. Then it would suddenly produce brass buttons for coachman's liveries. Then it would take a turn at embossed tin lids for candy boxes. The fact is that the poor old gentleman, with his weak and fluttering heart didn't want his factory to manufacture anything at all. He wanted to retire. And he did retire when he was seventy. But he was so worried at having all the street boys in the town point after him and exclaim: "There goes the laziest man in Waterbury!" that he tried taking a tour round the world. And Florence and a young man called Jimmy went with him. It appears from what Florence told me that Jimmy's function with Mr. Hurlbird was to avoid exciting topics for him. He had to keep him, for instance, out of political discussions. For the poor old man was a violent Democrat in days when you might travel the world over without finding anything but a Republican. Anyhow they went round the world.

I think an anecdote is about the best way to give you an idea of what the old gentleman was like. For it is perhaps important that you should know what the old gentleman was since, of course, he had a great deal of influence in forming the character of my poor dear wife.

Just before they set out from San Francisco for the South Seas old Mr. Hurlbird said he must take something with him to make little presents to people he met on the voyage. And it struck him that the things to take for that purpose were oranges—because California is the orange country—and comfortable folding chairs. So he bought I don't know how many cases of oranges—the great cool Californian oranges and half-a-dozen folding chairs in a special case that he always kept in his cabin. There must have been half a cargo of fruit.

For, to every person on board the several steamers that they employed—to every person with whom he had so much as a nodding acquaintance, he gave an orange every morning. And they lasted him right round the girdle of this mighty globe of ours. When they were at North Cape, even, he saw on the horizon, poor dear thin man that he was, a lighthouse. "Hallo," he says, to himself, "these poor fellows must be very lonely. Let's take them some oranges." So he had a boatload of his fruit out and had himself rowed to the lighthouse on the horizon. The folding-chairs he lent to any lady that he came across and liked, or who seemed tired and invalidish on the ship. And so, guarded against his heart and, having his niece with him, he went round the world. . . .

He wasn't obtrusive about his heart. You wouldn't have known he had one. He only left it to the physical laboratory at Waterbury for the benefit of science, since he considered it to be quite an extraordinary kind of heart. And the joke of the matter was that, when at the age of eighty-four, just

five days after poor Florence, he died of bronchitis, there was found to be absolutely nothing the matter with that organ. It had certainly jumped or squeaked or something, just sufficiently to take in the doctors, but it appears that that was because of an odd formation of the lungs. I don't much understand about these matters.

I inherited his money because Florence died five days before him. I wish I hadn't. It was a great worry. I had to go out to Waterbury just after Florence's death, because the poor dear old fellow had left a good many charitable bequests and I had to appoint trustees. I didn't like the idea of their not being properly handled.

Yes, it was a great worry. And just as I had got things roughly settled I received the extraordinary cable from Ashburnham begging me to come back and have a talk with him. And immediately afterwards came one from Leonora saying, "Yes, please do come. You could be so helpful." It was as if he had sent the cable without consulting her and had afterwards told her. Indeed that was pretty much what had happened, except that he had told the girl, and the girl told the wife. I arrived, however, too late to be of any good, if I could have been of any good. And then I had my first taste of English life. It was amazing. It was overwhelming. I never shall forget the polished cob that Edward, beside me, drove, the animal's action, its high-stepping, its skin that was like satin. And the peace! And the red cheeks! And the beautiful old house.

Just near Branshaw Teleragh it was, and we descended on it from the high, clear, windswept waste of the New Forest. I tell you it was amazing to arrive there from Waterbury. And it came into my head—for Teddy Ashburnham, you remember had cabled to me to "come and have a talk" with him—that it was unbelievable that anything essentially calamitous could happen to that place and those people. I tell you it was the very spirit of peace. And Leonora, beautiful and smiling, with her coils of yellow hair stood on the top doorstep, with a butler and footman and a maid or so behind her. And she just said: "So glad you've come," as if I'd run down to lunch from a town ten miles away, instead of having come half the world over at the call of two urgent telegrams.

The girl was out with the hounds I think.

And that poor devil beside me was in an agony. Absolute, hopeless, dumb agony such as passes the mind of man to imagine.

III.

It was a very hot summer, in August, 1904, and Florence had already been taking the baths for a month. I don't know how it feels to be a patient at one of those places. I never

was a patient anywhere. I daresay the patients get a home feeling and some sort of anchorage in the spot. They seem to like the bath attendants, with their cheerful faces, their air of authority, their white linen. But, for myself, to be at Nauheim gave me a sense—what shall I say?—a sense almost of nakedness—the nakedness that one feels on the sea-shore or in any great open space. I had no attachments, no accumulations. In one's own home it is as if little, innate sympathies draw one to particular chairs that seem to enfold one in an embrace, or take one along particular streets that seem friendly when others may be hostile. And, believe me, that feeling is a very important part of life. I know it well, that have been for so long a wanderer upon the face of public resorts.

And one is too polished up. Heaven knows I was never an untidy man. But the feeling that I had when, whilst poor Florence was taking her morning bath, I stood upon the carefully swept steps of the Englisher Hof, looking at the carefully arranged trees in tubs upon the carefully arranged gravel, whilst carefully arranged people walked past in carefully calculated gaiety, at the carefully calculated hour; the reddish stone of the baths—or were they white half-timber chalets? Upon my word I have forgotten, I who was there so often. That will give you the measure of how much I was in the landscape. I could find my way blind-folded to the hot rooms, to the douche rooms, to the fountain in the centre of the quadrangle where the rusty waer gushes out. Yes, I could find my way blind-fold. I know the exact distances. From the Hotel Regina you took one hundred and eighty-seven paces, then, turning sharp, left-handed, four hundred and twenty took you straight down to the fountain. From the Englisher Hof, starting on the side walk, it was ninety-seven paces, and the same four hundred and twenty, but turning left-handed this time.

And now you understand that, having nothing in the world to do—but nothing whatever! I fell into the habit of counting my footsteps. I would walk with Florence to the baths. And, of course, she entertained me with her conversation. It was, as I have said, wonderful what she could make conversation out of.

She walked very lightly, and her hair was very nicely done, and she dressed beautifully and very costily. Of course, she had money of her own, but I shouldn't have minded. And yet you know I can't remember a single one of her dresses. Or I can remember just one, a very simple one of blue figured silk—a Chinese pattern—very full in the skirts and broadening out over the shoulders. And her hair was copper coloured, and the heels of her shoes were exceedingly high, so that she tripped upon the points of her toes. And when she came to the door of the bathing place and, when it opened to receive her, she would look back at me with a little coquettish smile, so that her cheek appeared to be caressing her shoulder.

I seem to remember that, with that dress, she wore an immensely broad Leghorn hat—like the Chapeau de Paille of Rubens, only very white. The hat would be tied with a lightly knotted scarf of the same stuff as her dress. She knew how to give value to her blue eyes. And round her neck would be some simple pink, coral beads. And her complexion had a perfect clearness, a perfect smoothness. . . .

And, what the devil! For whose benefit did she do it? For that of the bath attendant? of the passers-by? I don't know. Anyhow it can't have been for me, for never, in all the years of her life, never on any possible occasion, or in any other place did she so smile to me, mockingly, invitingly. Ah, she was a riddle; but then, all other women are riddles. And it occurs to me that some way back I began a sentence that I have never finished . . . It was about the feeling that I had when I stood on the steps of my hotel every morning before starting out to fetch Florence back from the bath. Natty, precise, well brushed, conscious of being rather small amongst the long English, the lank Americans, the rotund Germans, and the obese Russian Jewesses. I should stand there tapping a cigarette on the outside of my case, surveying for a moment the world in the sunlight. But a day was to come when I was never to do it again alone. You can imagine, therefore, what the coming of the Ashburnhams meant for me.

I have forgotten the aspect of many things, but I shall never forget the aspect of the dining-room of the Hotel Excelsion on that evening—and on so many other evenings. Whole castles have vanished from my memory, whole cities that I have never visited again, but that white room, festooned with paper-maché fruits and flowers; the fall windows; the many tables; the black screen round the door with three golden cranes flying upward on each panel; the palm-tree in the centre of the room; the swish of the waiter's feet; the cold expensive elegance; the mien of the diners as they came in every evening—their air of earnestness as if they must go through a meal prescribed by the Kur authorities, and their air of sobriety as if they must seek not by any means to enjoy their meals—those things I shall not easily forget.

And then, one evening, in the twilight, I saw Edward Ashburnham lounge round the screen into the room. The head waiter, a man with a face all grey—in what subterranean nooks or corners do people cultivate those absolutely grey complexions?—went with the timorous deference of these creatures towards him and held out a grey ear to be whispered into. It was generally a disagreeable ordeal for newcomers, but Edward Ashburnham bore it like an Englishman and a gentleman. I could see his lips form a word of three syllables—remember I had nothing in the world to do but to notice these nicities—and immediately I knew that he must

be Edward Ashburnham, Captain, Fourteenth Hussars, of Branshaw House, Branshaw Teleragh. I knew it because every evening just before dinner, whilst I waited in the hall I used by the courtesy of Monsieur Schontz, the proprietor, to inspect the little police reports that each guest was expected to sign upon taking a room.

The head waiter piloted him immediately to a vacant table, three away from my own—the table that the Grenfalls of Falls River N. J. had just vacated. It struck me that that was not a very nice table for the newcomers, since the sunlight, low though it was, shone straight down upon it, and the same idea seemed to come at the same moment into Captain Ashburnham's head. His face hitherto had in the wonderful English fashion, expressed nothing whatever. Nothing. There was in it neither joy nor despair; neither hope nor fear; neither boredom nor satisfaction. He seemed to perceive no soul in that crowded room; he might have been walking in a jungle. I never came across such a perfect expression before, and I never shall again. It was insolence and not insolence; it was modesty and not modesty. His hair was fair, extraordinarily, ordered in a wave, running from the left temple to the right; his face was a light brick-red, perfectly uniform in tint, his yellow moustache was as stiff as a tooth brush, and I verily believe that he had had his black smoking jacket thickened a little over the shoulder-blades so as to give himself the air of the slightest possible stoop. It would be like him to do that; that was the sort of thing he thought about. Martingales, Chiffney bits, boots; where you got the best soap, the best brandy, the name of the chap who road a plater down the Khyber cliffs; the spreading power of number three shot before a charge of number four powder . . . by heavens, I never heard him talk of anything else. Not in all the years that I knew him did I hear him talk of anything but these subjects. Oh yes, once he told me that I could buy my special shade of blue ties cheaper from a firm in Burlington Arcade than from my own people in New York. And I have brought my ties from that firm ever since. Otherwise I should not remember the name of the Burlington Arcade. I wonder what it looks like. I have never seen it. I imagine it to be two immense rows of pillars, like those of the Forum at Rome, with Edward Ashburnham striding down between them. But it probably isn't in the least like that. Once also he advised me to buy Caledonian Deferred, since they were due to rise. And I did buy them and they did rise. But of how he got the knowledge I haven't the faintest idea. It seemed to drop out of the blue sky.

And that was absolutely all that I knew of him until a month ago—that and the profusion of his cases, all of pigskin and stamped with his initials E. F. A. There were gun cases, and collar cases, and shirt cases, and letter cases, and cases each containing four bottles of medicine; and hat cases and helmet cases. It must have needed a whole herd of the

Gadrene Swine to make up his outfit. And, if I ever penetrated into his private room it would be to see him standing with his coat and waistcoat off and the immensely long line of his perfectly elegant trousers from waist to boot heel. And he would have a slightly reflective air, and he would be just opening one kind of case and just closing another.

Good God, what did they all see in him; for what there was of him, inside and outside; though they said he was a good soldier. Yet Leonora adored him with a passion that was like an agony, and hated him with an agony that was as bitter as the sea. How could he rouse anything like a sentiment, in anybody?

What did he even talk to them about—when they were under four eyes?—Ah, well, suddenly, as if by a flash of inspiration, I know. For all good soldiers are sentimentalists—all good soldiers of that type. Their profession for one thing is full of the big words, courage, loyalty, honour, constancy. And I have given a wrong impression of Edward Ashburnham if I have made you think that literally never in the course of our nine years of intimacy did he discuss what he would have called “the graver things.”

Even before his final outburst to me, at times, very late at night, say, he has blurted out something that gave an insight into the sentimental view of the cosmos that was his. He would say how much the society of a good woman could do towards redeeming you, and he would say that constancy was the finest of the virtues. He said it very shily, of course, but still as if the statement admitted of no doubt.

Constancy! Isn't that the queer thought? And yet, I must add that poor dear Edward was a great reader—he would pass hours lost in novels of a sentimental type—novels in which typewriter girls married Marquises, and governesses, Earls. And in his books, as a rule, the course of true love ran as smooth as buttered honey. And he was fond of poetry, of a certain type—and he could even read a hopelessly sad love story. I have seen his eyes filled with tears at reading of a hopeless parting. And he loved, with a sentimental yearning, all children, puppies, and the feeble generally.

So, you see, he would have plenty to gurgle about to a woman—with that and his sound common-sense about martingales and his—still sentimental—experiences as a county magistrate, and with his intense, optimistic belief that the woman he was making love to at the moment was the one he was destined, at last, to be eternally constant to . . . Well, I fancy he could put up a pretty good deal of talk when there was no man around to make him feel shy.

And I was quite astonished, during his final burst out to me—at the very end of things, when the poor girl was on her way to that fatal Brindisi, and he was trying to persuade himself and me that he had never really cared for her—I was quite astonished to observe how literary and how just his expres-

sions were. He talked like quite a good book—a book not in the least cheaply sentimental. You see, I suppose he regarded me not so much as a man. I had to be regarded as a woman or a solicitor. Anyhow, it burst out of him on that horrible night. And then, next morning he took me over to the Assizes and I saw how, in a perfectly calm and business-like way he set to work to secure a verdict of not guilty for a poor girl, the daughter of one of his tenants, who had been accused of murdering her baby. He spent two hundred pounds on her defence . . . Well, that was Edward Ashburnham.

I had forgotten about his eyes. They were as blue as the sides of a certain type of box of matches. When you looked at them carefully you saw that they were perfectly honest, perfectly straight-forward, perfectly, perfectly stupid. But the brick pink of his complexion, running perfectly level to the brick pink of his inner eye-lids gave them a curious, sinister expression—like a mosaic of blue porcelain set in pink china. And that chap, coming into a room snapped up the gaze of every woman in it, as dexterously as a conjuror pockets billiard balls. It was most amazing.

You know the man on the stage who throws up sixteen balls at once and they all drop into pockets all over his person, on his shoulders, on his heels, on the inner side of his sleeves; and he stands perfectly still and does nothing. Well it was like that. He had rather a rough, hoarse voice.

And, there he was, standing by the table. I was looking at him, with my back to the screen. And, suddenly, I saw two distinct expressions flicker across his immobile eyes. How the deuce did they do it, those unflinching blue eyes with the direct gaze? For the eyes themselves never moved, gazing over my shoulder towards the screen. And the gaze was perfectly level and perfectly direct, and perfectly unchanging. I suppose that the lids really must have rounded themselves a little, and perhaps the lips moved a little too, as if he should be saying:—“There you are my dear.” At any rate the expression was that of pride, the satisfaction of the possessor. I saw him once afterwards, for a moment, gaze upon the sunny fields of Branshaw and say:—“All this is my land!”

And then again, the gaze was perhaps more direct, harder if possible—hardy, too. It was a measuring look; a challenging look. Once when we were at Wiesbaden watching him play in a polo match against the Bonner Hussaren, I saw the same look come into his eyes, balancing the possibilities, looking over the ground.

The German Captain, Count Idigon von Lelöffel was right up by their goal posts, coming with the ball in an easy canter in that tricky German fashion. The rest of the field were just anywhere. It was only a scratch sort of affair. Ashburnham was quite close to the rails, not five yards from us,

and I heard him saying to himself: "Might just be done!" And he did it. Goodness! he swung that pony round with all its four legs spread out, like a cat dropping off a roof . . .

Well, it was just that look that I noticed in his eyes: "It might," I seem even now to hear him muttering to himself, "just be done."

I looked round over my shoulder, and saw tall, smiling brilliantly and buoyant—Leonora. And, little and fair, and as radiant as the track of sunlight along the sea—my wife.

That poor wretch! to think that he was at that moment in a perfect devil of a fix, and there he was, saying at the back of his mind: "It might just be done." It was like a chap in the middle of the eruption of a volcano, saying that he might just manage to bolt into the tumult and set fire to a haystack. Madness? Predistination? Who the devil knows?

Mrs. Ashburnham exhibited at that moment more gaiety than I have ever since known her to show. There are certain classes of English people—the nicer ones when they have been to many spas who seem to make a point of becoming much more than usually animated when they are introduced to my compatriots. I have noticed this after. Of course, they must first have accepted the Americans. But, that once done they seem to say to themselves: "Hallo, these women are so bright. We aren't going to be outdone in brightness." And for the time being they certainly aren't. But it wears off. So it was with Leonora—at least, until she noticed me. She began, Leonora did—and perhaps it was that that gave me the idea of a touch of insolence in her character, for she never afterwards did any one single thing like it—she began by saying in quite a loud voice and from quite a distance:

"Don't stop over by that stuffy old table, Teddy. Come and sit by these nice people!"

And that was an extraordinary thing to say. Quite extraordinary. I couldn't for the life of me refer to total strangers as nice people. But, of course, she was taking a line of her own in which I at any rate—and no one else in the room, for she too had taken the trouble to read through the list of guests—counted any more than so many clean, bull terriers. And she sat down rather brilliantly at a vacant table, beside ours—one that was reserved for the Guggenheimers. And she just sat absolutely deaf to the remonstrances of the head waiter with his face like a grey ram's. That poor chap was doing his steadfast duty too. He knew that the Guggenheimers of Chicago after they had stayed there a month and had worried the poor life out of him would give him two dollars fifty and grumble at the tipping system. And he knew that Teddy Ashburnham and his wife would give him no trouble whatever, except what the smiles of Leonora might cause in his apparently unimpressionable bosom—though you

never can tell what may go on behind even a not quite spotless plastron!—And every week Edward Ashburnham would give him a solid, sound, golden English sovereign. Yet this stout fellow was intent on saving that table for the Guggenheimers, of Chicago. It ended in Florence saying:

"Why shouldn't we all eat out of the same trough—that's a nasty New York saying. But I'm sure we're all nice quiet people, and there can be four seats at our table. It's round."

Then came as it were an appreciative gurgle from the Captain, and I was perfectly aware of a slight hesitation—a quick sharp motion in Mrs. Ashburnham, as if her horse had checked. But she put it at the fence all right, rising from the seat she had taken and sitting down opposite me, as it were, all in one motion.

I never thought that Leonora looked her best in evening dress. She seemed to get it too clearly cut, there was no ruffling. She always affected black and her shoulders were too classical. She seemed to stand out of her corsage as a white marble bust might out of black Wedgwood vase. I don't know.

I loved Leonora always and, to-day, I would very cheerfully lay down my life, what is left of it, in her service. But I am sure I never had the beginnings of a trace of what is called the sex instinct towards her.

And I suppose—no I am certain that she never had it towards me. As far as I am concerned I think it was those white shoulders that did it. I seemed to feel when I looked at them that, if ever I should press my lips upon them, they would be slightly cold—not icily, not without a touch of human heat, but, as they say of baths, with the chill off. I seemed to feel chilled at the end of my lips when I looked at her . . .

No, Leonora always appeared to me at her best in a blue tailor-made. Then her glorious hair wasn't deadened by anything in the world. Certain women's lines guide your eyes to their necks, their eyelashes, their lips, their breasts. But Leonora's seemed to conduct your gaze always to her wrist. And the wrist was at its best in a black or a dog-skin glove, and there was always a gold circlet with a little chain supporting a very small golden key to a dispatch box. Perhaps it was that in which she locked up her heart and her feelings.

Anyhow, she sat down opposite me and then, for the first time, she paid any attention to my existence. She gave me, suddenly, yet deliberately, one long stare. Her eyes, too, were blue and dark, and the eyelids were so arched that they gave you the whole round of the irises. And it was a most remarkable, a most moving glance, as if for a moment a lighthouse had looked at me. I seemed to perceive the swift questions chasing each other through the brain that was

behind them. I seemed to hear the brain ask and the eyes answer with all the simpleness of a woman who was a good hand at taking in qualities of a horse—as indeed she was. “Stands well, has plenty of room for his oats behind the girth. Not so much in the way of shoulders,” and so on. And so her eyes asked: “Is this man trustworthy in money matters; is he likely to try to play the lover; is he likely to let his women be troublesome? Is he above all likely to babble about my affairs?”

And suddenly, into those cold, slightly defiant, almost defensive china blue orbs, there came a warmth, a tenderness, a friendly recognition . . . Oh, it was very charming and very touching—and quite mortifying. It was the look of a mother to her son, of a sister to her brother. It implied trust; it implied the want of any necessity for barriers. By God, she looked at me as if I were an invalid—as any kind woman may look at a poor chap in a bath chair. And, yes, from that day forward she always treated me and not Florence as if I were the invalid. Why, she would run after me with a rug upon chilly days. I suppose therefore that her eyes had made a favourable answer. Or perhaps it wasn't a favourable answer. And then Florence said: “And so the whole round table is begun.” Again Edward Ashburnham gurgled slightly in his throat; but Leonora shivered a little, as if a goose had walked over her grave. And I was passing her the nickel-silver basket of rolls. *Avanti!* . . .

So began those nine years of uninterrupted tranquillity. They were characterised by an extraordinary want of any communicativeness on the part of the Ashburnhams, to which we on our part replied by leaving out quite as extraordinarily, and nearly as completely, the personal note. Indeed, you may take it that what characterised our relationships more than anything else was an atmosphere of taking everything for granted. The given proposition was, that we were all “good people.” We took for granted that we all liked beef underdone, but not too underdone; that both men preferred a good liqueur brandy after lunch; that both women drank a very light Rhine wine qualified with Fachingen water—that sort of thing.

It was also taken for granted that we were both sufficiently well off to afford anything that we could reasonably want in the way of amusements fitting to our station—that we could take motor cars and carriages by the day; that we could give each other dinners and dine our friends, and we could indulge if we liked in economy. Thus, Florence was in the habit of having the “Daily Telegraph” sent to her every day from London. She was always an Angle-maniac, was Florence; the Paris edition of the “New York Herald” was always good enough for me. But when we discovered that the Ashburnham's copy of that London paper followed them from England, Leonora and Florence decided between them to suppress one subscription one year and the other the next.

Similarly it was the habit of the Grand Duke of Nassau Schwerin, who came yearly to the baths to dine once with about eighteen families of regular Kur guests. In return he would give a dinner to all the eighteen at once. And, since these dinners were rather expensive—you had to take the Grand Duke and a good many of his suite, and any members of the diplomatic bodies that might be there—Florence and Leonora, putting their heads together, didn't see why we shouldn't give the Grand Duke his dinner together. And so we did. I don't suppose the Serenity minded that economy, or even noticed it. At any rate our joint dinner to the Royal Personage gradually assumed the aspect of a yearly function. Indeed, it grew larger and larger, until it became a sort of closing function for the season, at any rate as far as we were concerned.

I don't in the least mean to say that we were the sort of persons who aspired to “mix” with royalty.” We didn't; we hadn't any claims; we were just “good people.” But the Grand Duke was a pleasant, affable sort of royalty, like the late King Edward VII, and it was pleasant to hear him talk about the races and, very occasionally, as a *bonne bouche*, about his nephew, the Emperor; or to have him pause for a moment in his walk to ask after the progress of our cures, or to be benignantly interested in the amount of money we had put on Lelöffel's hunter for the Frankfurt Welter Stakes.

But upon my word, I don't know how we put in our time. How does one put in one's time? How is it possible to have achieved nine years and to have nothing what ever to show for it? Nothing whatever you understand. Not so much as a bone penholder, carved to resemble a chessman, with a hole in the top through which you could see four views of *Nauheim*. And, as for experience, as for knowledge of one's fellow beings—nothing either. Upon my word I couldn't tell you offhand whether the lady who sold the so expensive violets at the bottom of the road that leads to the station was cheating me or no; I can't tell whether the porter who carried our traps across the station at *Leghorn* was a thief or no when he said that the regular tariff was a lire a parcel. The instances of honesty that one comes across in this world are just as amazing as the instances of dishonesty. One ought to have acquired the habit of being able to know something about one's fellow beings. But one doesn't.

I think the modern civilised habit—the modern English habit of taking everyone for granted is a good deal to blame for this. I have observed this matter long enough to know the queer, subtle, thing that it is; to know how the faculty, for what it is worth, never lets you down.

Mind, I am not saying that this is not the most desirable type of life in the world; that it is not an almost unreasonably high standard. For it is really nauseating, when you detest it, to have to eat every day several slices of thin, tepid pink



Dancers.

W. Roberts.



Religion.

W. Roberts.

india-rubber, and it is disagreeable to have to drink brandy when you would prefer to be cheered up by warm, sweet Kummel. And it is nasty to have to take a cold bath in the mornin^g when what you want is really a hot one at night. And it stirs a little of the faith of your fathers that is deep down within you to have it taken for granted that you are an Episcopalian, when really you are an old-fashioned Philadelphia Quaker.

But these things have to be done; it is the cock that the whole of this society owes to Aesulapius.

And the odd, queer thin^g is that the whole collection of rules applies to anybody—to the anybodies that you meet in hotels, in railway trains, to a less degree perhaps in steamers, but even, in the end, upon steamers.

You meet a man or a woman and, from tiny and intimate sounds, from the slightest of movements, you know at once whether you are concerned with good people or with those who won't do. You know, that is to say, whether they will go ri^sidly through with the whole programme, from the underdone beef to the Anglicanism. It won't matter whether they be short or tall; whether the voice squeak like a marionette or rumbles like a town bull's; it won't, for the matter of that, matter whether they are Germans, Austrians, French, Spanish, or even Brazilians—they will be the Germans or Brazilians who take a cold bath every morning and who move, roughly speaking, in diplomatic circles.

But the inconvenient—well, hang it all, I will say it—the damnable nuisance of the whole thing is, that with all the taking for granted, you never really get an inch deeper than the things I have catalogued.

I can give you a rather extraordinary instance of this. I can't remember whether it was in our first year—the first year of us four at Nauheim, because, of course, it would have been the fourth year of Florence and myself—but it must have

been in the first or second year. And that gives the measure at once of the extraordinariness of our discussion and of the swiftness with which intimacy had grown up between us. On the one hand we seemed to start out on the expedition so naturally and with so little preparation, that it was as if we must have made many such excursions before; and our intimacy seemed so deep . . .

Yet the place to which we went was obviously one to which Florence at least would have wanted to take us quite early, so that you would almost think we should have gone there together at the beginning of our intimacy. Florence was singularly expert as a guide to archeological exceptions, and there was nothing she liked so much as taking people round ruins and showing you the window from which someone looked down upon the murder of someone else. She only did it once; but she did it quite magnificently. She could find her way, with the sole help of Baedeker, as easily about any old monument as she could about any American city where the blocks were all square and the streets all numbered, so that you can go perfectly easily from Twenty-Fourth to Thirtieth.

Now it happens that fifty minutes away from Nauheim, by a good train, is the ancient city of M——, upon a great pinnacle of basalt, girt with a triple road running sideways up its shoulder like a scarf. And at the top there is a castle—not a square castle like Windsor—but a castle all slate gables and high peaks, with gilt weathercocks flashing bravely—the castle of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. It has the disadvantage of being in Prussia; and it is always disagreeable to go into that country; but it is very old, and there are many double-spired churches, and it stands up like a pyramid out of the green valley of the Lahn. I don't suppose the Ashburnhams wanted especially to go there, and I didn't especially want to go there myself. But, you understand, there was no objection.

(To be continued.)

INDISSOLUBLE MATRIMONY

BY

REBECCA WEST.

When George Silverton opened the front door he found that the house was not empty for all its darkness. The spitting noise of the striking of damp matches and mild, growling exclamations of annoyance told him that his wife was trying to light the dining-room gas. He went in and with some short, hostile sound of greeting lit a match and brought brightness into the little room. Then, irritated by his own folly in bringing private papers into his wife's presence, he stuffed the letters he had brought from the office deep into the pockets of his overcoat. He looked at her suspiciously, but she had not seen them, being busy in unwinding her orange motor-veil. His eyes remained on her face to brood a little sourly on her moving loveliness, which he had not been sure of finding : for she was one of those women who create an illusion alternately of extreme beauty and extreme ugliness. Under her curious dress, designed in some pitifully cheap and worthless stuff by a successful mood of her indiscreet taste—she had black blood in her—her long body seemed pulsing with some exaltation. The blood was coursing violently under her luminous yellow skin, and her lids, dusky with fatigue, drooped contentedly over her great humid black eyes. Perpetually she raised her hand to the mass of black hair that was coiled on her thick golden neck, and stroked it with secretive enjoyment, as a cat licks its fur. And her large mouth smiled frankly, but abstractedly, at some digested pleasure.

There was a time when George would have looked on this riot of excited loveliness with suspicion. But now he knew it was almost certainly caused by some trifle—a long walk through stinging weather, the report of a Socialist victory at a by-election, or the intoxication of a waltz refrain floating from the municipal band-stand across the flats of the local recreation ground. And even if it had been caused by some amorous interlude he would not have greatly cared. In the ten years since their marriage he had lost the quality which would have made him resentful. He now believed that quality to be purely physical. Unless one was in good condition and responsive to the messages sent out by the flesh Evadne could hardly concern one. He turned the bitter thought over in his heart and stung himself by deliberately gazing unmoved upon her beautiful joyful body.

“ Let's have supper now! ” she said rather greedily.

He looked at the table and saw she had set it before she went out. As usual she had been in an improvident hurry : it was carelessly done. Besides, what an

absurd supper to set before a hungry solicitor's clerk! In the centre, obviously intended as the principal dish, was a bowl of plums, softly red, soaked with the sun, glowing like jewels in the downward stream of the incandescent light. Besides them was a great yellow melon, its sleek sides fluted with rich growth, and a honey-comb glistening on a willow-pattern dish. The only sensible food to be seen was a plate of tongue laid at his place.

“ I can't sit down to supper without washing my hands! ”

While he splashed in the bathroom upstairs he heard her pull in a chair to the table and sit down to her supper. It annoyed him. There was no ritual about it. While he was eating the tongue she would be crushing honey on new bread, or stripping a plum of its purple skin and holding the golden globe up to the gas to see the light filter through. The meal would pass in silence. She would innocently take his dumbness for a sign of abstraction and forbear to babble. He would find the words choked on his lips by the weight of dullness that always oppressed him in her presence. Then, just about the time when he was beginning to feel able to formulate his obscure grievances against her, she would rise from the table without a word and run upstairs to her work, humming in that uncanny, negro way of hers.

And so it was. She ate with an appalling catholicity of taste, with a nice child's love of sweet foods, and occasionally she broke into that hoarse beautiful croon. Every now and then she looked at him with too obvious speculations as to whether his silence was due to weariness or uncertain temper. Timidly she cut him an enormous slice of the melon, which he did not want. Then she rose abruptly and flung herself into the rocking chair on the hearth. She clasped her hands behind her head and strained backwards so that the muslin stretched over her strong breasts. She sang softly to the ceiling.

There was something about the fantastic figure that made him feel as though they were not properly married.

“ Evadne? ”

“ ‘ S? ’ ”

“ What have you been up to this evening? ”

“ I was at Milly Stafordale's. ”

He was silent again. That name brought up the memory of his courting days. It was under the benign eyes of blonde, plebeian Milly that he had wooed the distracting creature in the rocking chair.

Ten years before, when he was twenty-five, his firm had been reduced to hysteria over the estates of an extraordinarily stupid old woman, named Mrs. Mary Ellerker. Her stupidity, grappling with the complexity of the sources of the vast

income which rushed in spate from the properties of four deceased husbands, demanded oceans of explanations even over her weekly rents. Silverton alone in the office, by reason of a certain natural incapacity for excitement, could deal calmly with this marvel of imbecility. He alone could endure to sit with patience in the black-panelled drawing-room amidst the jungle of shiny mahogany furniture and talk to a mass of darkness, who rested heavily in the window-seat and now and then made an idiotic remark in a bright, hearty voice. But it shook even him. Mrs. Mary Ellerker was obscene. Yet she was perfectly sane and, although of that remarkable plainness noticeable in most oft-married women, in good enough physical condition. She merely presented the loathsome spectacle of an ignorant mind, contorted by the artificial idiocy of coquetry, lack of responsibility, and hatred of discipline, stripped naked by old age. That was the real horror of her. One feared to think how many women were really like Mrs. Ellerker under their armour of physical perfection or social grace. For this reason he turned eyes of hate on Mrs. Ellerker's pretty little companion, Milly Stafordale, who smiled at him over her embroidery with wintry northern brightness. When she was old she too would be obscene.

This horror obsessed him. Never before had he feared anything. He had never lived more than half-an-hour from a police station, and, as he had by some chance missed the melancholy clairvoyance of adolescence, he had never conceived of any horror with which the police could not deal. This disgust of women revealed to him that the world is a place of subtle perils. He began to fear marriage as he feared death. The thought of intimacy with some lovely, desirable and necessary wife turned him sick as he sat at his lunch. The secret obscenity of women! He talked darkly of it to his friends. He wondered why the Church did not provide a service for the absolution of men after marriage. Wife desertion seemed to him a beautiful return of the tainted body to cleanliness.

On his fifth visit to Mrs. Ellerker he could not begin his business at once. One of Milly Stafordale's friends had come in to sing to the old lady. She stood by the piano against the light, so that he saw her washed with darkness. Amazed, of tropical fruit. And before he had time to apprehend the sleepy wonder of her beauty, she had begun to sing. Now he knew that her voice was a purely physical attribute, built in her as she lay in her mother's womb, and no index of her spiritual values. But then, as it welled up from the thick golden throat and clung to her lips, it seemed a sublime achievement of the soul. It was smouldering contralto such as only those of black blood can possess. As she sang her great black eyes lay on him with the innocent shamelessness of a young animal, and he remembered hopefully that he was good looking. Suddenly she stood in silence, playing with her heavy black plait. Mrs. Ellerker broke into silly thanks. The girl's mother, who had been playing the accompaniment, rose and stood rolling up her music. Silverton, sick with excitement, was introduced to them. He noticed that the mother was a little darker than the conventions permit. Their name was Hannan—Mrs. Arthur Hannan and Evadne. They moved lithely and quietly out of the room, the girl's eyes still lingering on his face.

The thought of her splendour and the rolling echoes of her voice disturbed him all night. Next day, going to his office, he travelled with her on the horse-car that bound his suburb to Petrick. One of the horses fell lame, and she had time to tell him that she was studying at a commercial college. He quivered with distress. All the time he had a dizzy illusion that she was nestling up against him. They parted shyly. During the next few days they met constantly. He began to go and see them in the evening at their home—a mean flat crowded with cheap glories of bead curtains and Oriental hangings that set off the women's alien beauty. Mrs. Hannan was a widow and they lived alone, in a wonderful silence. He talked more than he had ever done in his whole life before. He took a dislike to the widow, she was consumed with fiery subterranean passions, no fit guardian for the tender girl.

Now he could imagine with what silent rapture Evadne had watched his agitation. Almost from the first she had meant to marry him. He was physically attractive, though not strong. His intellect was gently stimulating like a mild white wine. And it was time she married. She was ripe for adult things. This was the real wound in his soul. He had tasted of a divine thing created in his time for dreams out of her rich beauty, her loneliness, her romantic poverty, her immaculate youth. He had known love. And Evadne had never known anything more than a magnificent physical adventure which she had secured at the right time as she would have engaged a cab to take her to the station in time for the cheapest excursion train. It was a quick way to light-hearted living. With loathing he remembered how in the days of their engagement she used to gaze purely into his blinking eyes and with her unashamed kisses incite him to extravagant embraces. Now he cursed her for having obtained his spiritual revolution on false pretences. Only for a little time had he had his illusion, for their marriage was hastened by Mrs. Hannan's sudden death. After three months of savage mourning Evadne flung herself into marriage, and her excited candour had enlightened him very soon.

That marriage had lasted ten years. And to Evadne their relationship was just the same as ever. Her vitality needed him as it needed the fruit on the table before him. He shook with wrath and a sense of outraged decency.

“ O George ! ” She was yawning widely.

“ What's the matter ? ” he said without interest.

“ It's so beastly dull.”

“ I can't help that, can I ? ”

“ No.” She smiled placidly at him. “ We're a couple of dull dogs, aren't we ? I wish we had children.”

After a minute she suggested, apparently as an alternative amusement, “ Perhaps the post hasn't passed.”

As she spoke there was a rat-tat and the slither of a letter under the door. Evadne picked herself up and ran out into the lobby. After a second or two, during which she made irritating inarticulate exclamations, she came in reading the letter and stroking her bust with a gesture of satisfaction.

“ They want me to speak at Longton’s meeting on the nineteenth,” she purred.

“ Longton? What’s he up to? ”

Stephen Longton was the owner of the biggest iron works in Petrick, a man whose refusal to adopt the livery of busy oafishness thought proper to commercial men aroused the gravest suspicions.

“ He’s standing as Socialist candidate for the town council.”

“ . . . Socialist! ” he muttered.

He set his jaw. That was a side of Evadne he considered as little as possible. He had never been able to assimilate the fact that Evadne had, two years after their marriage, passed through his own orthodox Radicalism to a passionate Socialism, and that after reading enormously of economics she had begun to write for the Socialist press and to speak successfully at meetings. In the jaundiced recesses of his mind he took it for granted that her work would have the lax fibre of her character : that it would be infected with her Oriental crudities. Although once or twice he had been congratulated on her brilliance, he mistrusted this phase of her activity as a caper of the sensualist. His eyes blazed on her and found the depraved, over-sexed creature, looking milder than a gazeller, holding out a hand-bill to him.

“ They’ve taken it for granted! ”

He saw her name—his name—

MRS. EVADNE SILVERTON.

It was at first the blaze of stout scarlet letters on the dazzling white ground that made him blink. Then he was convulsed with rage.

“ Georgie dear! ”

She stepped forward and caught his weak body to her bosom. He wrenched himself away. Spiritual nausea made him determined to be a better man than her.

“ A pair of you ! You and Longton — ! ” he snarled scornfully. Then, seeing her startled face, he controlled himself.

“ I thought it would please you,” said Evadne, a little waspishly.

“ You mustn’t have anything to do with Longton,” he stormed.

A change passed over her. She became ugly. Her face was heavy with intellect, her lips coarse with power. He was at arms with a Socialist lead. Much he would have preferred the bland sensualist again.

“ Why ? ”

“ Because—his lips stuck together like blotting-paper—he’s not the sort of man my wife should—should— ”

With movements which terrified him by their rough energy, she folded up the bills and put them back in the envelope.

“ George. I suppose you mean that he’s a bad man.” He nodded.

“ I know quite well that the girl who used to be his typist is his mistress.” She spoke it sweetly, as if reasoning with an old fool. “ But she’s got consumption. She’ll be dead in six months. In fact, I think it’s rather nice of him. To look after her and all that.”

“ My God! He leapt to his feet, extending a shaking forefinger. As she turned to him, the smile dying on her lips, his excited weakness wrapped him in a paramnesic illusion : it seemed to him that he had been through all this before—a long, long time ago. “ My God, you talk like a woman off the streets! ”

Evadne’s lips lifted over her strong teeth. With clever cruelty she fixed his eyes with hers, well knowing that he longed to fall forward and bury his head on the table in a transport of hysterical sobs. After a moment of this torture she turned away, herself distressed by a desire to cry.

“ How can you say such dreadful, dreadful things! ” she protested, chokingly.

He sat down again. His eyes looked little and red, but they blazed on her. “ I wonder if you are,” he said softly.

“ Are what? ” she asked petulantly, a tear rolling down her nose.

“ You know,” he answered, nodding.

“ George, George, George! ” she cried.

“ You’ve always been keen on kissing and making love, haven’t you, my precious? At first you startled me, you did! I didn’t know women were like that.” From that morass he suddenly stepped on to a high peak of terror. Amazed to find himself sincere, he cried—“ I don’t believe good women are! ”

“ Georgie, how can you be so silly! exclaimed Evadne shrilly. “ You know quite well I’ve been as true to you as any woman could be.” She sought his eyes with a liquid glance of reproach. He averted his gaze, sickened at having put himself in the wrong. For even while he degraded his tongue his pure soul fainted with loathing of her fleshliness.

“ I—I’m sorry.”

Too wily to forgive him at once, she showed him a lowering profile with down-cast lids. Of course, he knew it was a fraud : an imputation against her chastity was no more poignant than a reflection on the cleanliness of her nails—rude and spiteful, but that was all. But for a time they kept up the deception, while she cleared the table in a steely silence.

“ Evadne, I’m sorry. I’m tired.” His throat was dry. He could not bear the discord of a row added to the horror of their companionship. “ Evadne, do forgive me—I don’t know what I meant by — ”

“ That’s all right, silly ! ” she said suddenly and bent over the table to kiss him. Her brow was smooth. It was evident from her splendid expression that she was pre-occupied. Then she finished clearing up the dishes and took them into the kitchen. While she was out of the room he rose from his seat and sat down in the armchair by the fire, setting his bull-dog pipe alight. For a very short time he was free of her voluptuous presence. But she ran back soon, having put the kettle on and changed her blouse for a loose dressing-jacket, and sat down on the arm of his chair. Once or twice she bent and kissed his brow, but for the most part she lay back with his head drawn to her bosom, rocking herself rhythmically. Silverton, a little disgusted by their contact, sat quite motionless and passed into a doze. He revolved in his mind the incidents of his day’s routine and remembered a snub from a superior. So he opened his eyes and tried to think of something else. It was then that he became conscious that the rhythm of Evadne’s movement was not regular. It was broken as though she rocked in time to music. Music? His sense of hearing crept up to hear if there was any sound of music in the breaths she was emitting rather heavily every now and now and then. At first he could hear nothing. Then it struck him that each breath was a muttered phrase. He stiffened, and hatred flamed through his veins. The words came clearly through her lips. . . . “ The present system of wage-slavery ”

“ Evadne ! ” He sprang to his feet. “ You’re preparing your speech ! ”

She did not move. “ I am,” she said.

“ Damn it, you shan’t speak ! ”

“ Damn it, I will ! ”

“ Evadne, you shan’t speak ! If you do I swear to God above I’ll turn you out into the streets—.” She rose and came towards him. She looked black and dangerous. She trod softly like a cat with her head down. In spite of himself, his tongue licked his lips in fear and he covered a moment before he picked up a knife from the table. For a space she looked down on him and the sharp blade.

“ You idiot, can’t you hear the kettle’s boiling over? ”

He shrank back, letting the knife fall on the floor. For three minutes he stood

there controlling his breath and trying to still his heart. Then he followed her into the kitchen. She was making a noise with a basinful of dishes.

“ Stop that row.”

She turned round with a dripping dish-cloth in her hand and pondered whether to throw it at him. But she was tired and wanted peace : so that she could finish the rough draft of her speech. So she stood waiting.

“ Did you understand what I said then? If you don't promise me here and now— ”

She flung her arms upwards with a cry and dashed past him. He made to run after her upstairs, but stumbled on the threshold of the lobby and sat with his ankle twisted under him, shaking with rage. In a second she ran downstairs again, clothed in a big cloak with black bundle clutched to her breast. For the first time in their married life she was seized with a convulsion of sobs. She dashed out of the front door and banged it with such passion that a glass pane shivered to fragments behind her.

“ What's this? What's this? ” he cried stupidly, standing up. He perceived with an insane certainty that she was going out to meet some unknown lover. “ I'll come and tell him what a slut you are! ” he shouted after her and stumbled to the door. It was jammed now and he had to drag at it.

The night was flooded with the yellow moonshine of midsummer: it seemed to drip from the lacquered leaves of the shrubs in the front garden. In its soft clarity he could see her plainly, although she was now two hundred yards away. She was hastening to the north end of Sumatra Crescent, an end that curled up the hill like a silly kitten's tail and stopped abruptly in green fields. So he knew that she was going to the young man who had just bought the Georgian Manor, whose elm-trees crowned the hill. Oh, how he hated her! Yet he must follow her, or else she would cover up her adulteries so that he could not take his legal revenge. So he began to run—silently, for he wore his carpet slippers. He was only a hundred yards behind her when she slipped through a gap in the hedge to tread a field-path. She still walked with pride, for though she was town-bred, night in the open seemed not at all fearful to her. As he shuffled in pursuit his carpet slippers were engulfed in a shining pool of mud : he raised one with a squelch, the other was left. This seemed the last humiliation. He kicked the other one off his feet and padded on in his socks, snuffing in anticipating of a cold. Then physical pain sent him back to the puddle to pluck out the slippers ; it was a dirty job. His heart battered his breast as he saw that Evadne had gained the furthest hedge and was crossing the stile into the lane that ran up to the Manor gates.

“ Go on, you beast! ” he muttered, “ Go on, go on! ” After a scamper he climbed the stile and thrust his lean neck beyond a mass of wilted hawthorn bloom that crumbled into vagrant petals at his touch.

The lane mounted yellow as cheese to where the moon lay on his iron tracery of the Manor gates. Evadne was not there. Hardly believing his eyes he hobbled over into the lane and looked in the other direction. There he saw her disappearing round the bend of the road. Gathering himself up to a run, he tried to think out his bearings. He had seldom passed this way, and like most people without strong primitive instincts he had no sense of orientation. With difficulty he remembered that after a mile's mazy wanderings between high hedges this lane sloped suddenly to the bowl of heather overhung by the moorlands, in which lay the Petrick reservoirs, two untamed lakes.

"Eh! she's going to meet him by the water!" he cursed to himself. He remembered the withered ash tree, seared by lightning to its root, that stood by the road at the bare frontier of the moor. "May God strike her like that," he prayed, "as she fouls the other man's lips with her kisses. O God! let me strangle her. Or bury a knife deep in her breast." Suddenly he broke into a lolloping run. "O my Lord, I'll be able to divorce her. I'll be free. Free to live alone. To do my day's work and sleep my night's sleep without her. I'll get a job somewhere else and forget her. I'll bring her to the dogs. No clean man or woman in Petrick will look at her now. They won't have her to speak at that meeting now!" His throat swelled with joy, he leapt high in the air.

"I'll lie about her. If I can prove that she's wrong with this man they'll believe me if I say she's a bad woman and drinks. I'll make her name a joke. And then —"

He flung wide his arms in ecstasy: the left struck against stone. More pain than he had thought his body could hold convulsed him, so that he sank on the ground hugging his aching arm. He looked backwards as he writhed and saw that the hedge had stopped; above him was the great stone wall of the county asylum. The question broke on him—was there any lunatic in its confines so slavered with madness as he himself? Nothing but madness could have accounted for the torrent of ugly words, the sea of uglier thoughts that was now a part of him. "O God, me to turn like this!" he cried, rolling over full-length on the grassy bank by the roadside. That the infidelity of his wife, a thing that should have brought out the stern manliness of his true nature, should have discovered him as lecherous-lipped as any pot-house loungee, was the most infamous accident of his married life. The sense of sin descended on him so that his tears flowed hot and bitterly. "Have I gone to the Unitarian chapel every Sunday morning and to the Ethical Society every evening for nothing?" his spirit asked itself in its travail. "All those Browning lectures for nothing . . ." He said the Lord's Prayer several times and lay for a minute quietly crying. The relaxation of his muscles brought him a sense of rest which seemed forgiveness falling from God. The tears dried on his cheeks. His calmer consciousness heard the sound of rushing waters mingled with the beating of blood in his ears. He got up and scrambled round the turn of the road that brought him to the withered ash-tree.

He walked forward on the parched heatherland to the mound whose scarred

sides, heaped with boulders, tufted with mountain grasses, shone before him in the moonlight. He scrambled up to it hurriedly and hoisted himself from ledge to ledge till he fell on his knees with a squeal of pain. His ankle was caught in a crevice of the rock. Gulping down his agony at this final physical humiliation he heaved himself upright and raced on to the summit, and found himself before the Devil's Cauldron, filled to the brim with yellow moonshine and the fiery play of summer lightning. The rugged crags opposite him were a low barricade against the stars to which the mound where he stood shot forward like a bridge. To the left of this the long Lisbeck pond lay like a trailing serpent; its silver scales glittered as the wind swept down from the vaster moorlands to the east. To the right under a steep drop of twenty feet was the Whimsey pond, more sinister, shaped in an unnatural oval, sheltered from the wind by the high ridge so that the undisturbed moonlight lay across it like a sharp-edged sword.

He looked about for some sign of Evadne. She could not be on the land by the margin of the lakes, for the light blazed so strongly that each reed could be clearly seen like a black dagger stabbing the silver. He looked down Lisbeck and saw far east a knot of red and green and orange lights. Perhaps for some devilish purpose Evadne had sought Lisbeck railway station. But his volcanic mind had preserved one grain of sense that assured him that, subtle as Evadne's villainy might be, it would not lead her to walk five miles out of her way to a terminus which she could have reached in fifteen minutes by taking a train from the station down the road. She must be under cover somewhere here. He went down the gentle slope that fell from the top of the ridge to Lisbeck pond in a disorder of rough heather, unhappy patches of cultivated grass, and coppices of silver birch, fringed with flaming broom that seemed faintly tarnished in the moonlight. At the bottom was a roughly hewn path which he followed in hot aimless hurry. In a little he approached a riot of falling waters. There was a slice ten feet broad carved out of the ridge, and to this narrow channel of black shining rock the floods of Lisbeck leapt some feet and raced through to Whimsey. The noise beat him back. The gap was spanned by a gaunt thing of paint-blistered iron, on which he stood dizzily and noticed how the wide step that ran on each side of the channel through to the other pond was smeared with sinister green slime. Now his physical distress reminded him of Evadne, whom he had almost forgotten in contemplation of these lonely waters. The idea of her had been present but obscured, as sometimes toothache may cease active torture. His blood lust set him on and he staggered forward with covered ears. Even as he went something caught his eye in a thicket high up on the slope near the crags. Against the slender pride of some silver birches stood a gnarled hawthorn tree, its branches flattened under the stern moorland winds so that it grew squat like an opened umbrella. In its dark shadows, faintly illumined by a few boughs of withered blossom, there moved a strange bluish light. Even while he did not know what it was it made his flesh stir.

The light emerged. It was the moonlight reflected from Evadne's body. She was clad in a black bathing dress, and her arms and legs and the broad streak of flesh laid bare by a rent down the back shone brilliantly white, so that she seemed

like a grotesquely patterned wild animal as she ran down to the lake. Whirling her arms above her head she trampled down into the water and struck out strongly. Her movements were full of brisk delight and she swam quickly. The moonlight made her the centre of a little feathery blur of black and silver, with a comet's tail trailing in her wake.

Nothing in all his married life had ever staggered Silverton so much as this. He had imagined his wife's adultery so strongly that it had come to be. It was now as real as their marriage ; more real than their courtship. So this seemed to be the last crime of the adulteress. She had dragged him over those squelching fields and these rough moors and changed him from a man of irritations, but no passions, into a cold designer of murderous treacheries, so that he might witness a swimming exhibition! For a minute he was stunned. Then he sprang down to the rushy edge and ran along in the direction of her course, crying—" Evadne! Evadne! " She did not hear him. At last he achieved a chest note and shouted—" Evadne! come here! " The black and silver feather shivered in mid-water. She turned immediately and swam back to shore. He suspected sullenness in her slowness, but was glad of it, for after the shock of this extraordinary incident he wanted to go to sleep. Drowsiness lay on him like lead. He shook himself like a dog and wrenched off his linen collar, winking at the bright moon to keep himself awake. As she came quite near he was exasperated by the happy, snorting breaths she drew, and strolled a pace or two up the bank. To his enragement the face she lifted as she waded to dry land was placid, and she scrambled gaily up the bank to his side.

" O George, why did you come! " she exclaimed quite affectionately, laying a damp hand on his shoulder.

" O damn it, what does this mean! " he cried, committing a horrid tenor squeak. " What are you doing? "

" Why, George," she said, " I came here for a bathe."

He stared into her face and could make nothing of it. It was only sweet surfaces of flesh, soft radiances of eye and lip, a lovely lie of comeliness. He forgot this present grievance in a cold search for the source of her peculiar hatefulness. Under this sick gaze she pouted and turned away with a peevish gesture. He made no sign and stood silent, watching her saunter to that gaunt iron bridge. The roar of the little waterfall did not disturb her splendid nerves and she drooped sensuously over the hand-rail, sniffing up the sweet night smell ; too evidently trying to abase him to another apology.

A mosquito whirred into his face. He killed it viciously and strode off towards his wife, who showed by a common little toss of the head that she was conscious of his coming.

" Look here, Evadne! " he panted. " What did you come here for? Tell me the truth and I promise I'll not—I'll not— "

" Not WHAT, George? "

“ O please, please tell me the truth, do Evadne! ” he cried pitifully.

“ But, dear, what is there to carry on about so? You went on so queerly about my meeting that my head felt fit to split, and I thought the long walk and the dip would do me good.” She broke off, amazed at the wave of horror that passed over his face.

His heart sank. From the loose-lipped hurry in the telling of her story, from the bigness of her eyes and the lack of subtlety in her voice, he knew that this was the truth. Here was no adulteress whom he could accuse in the law courts and condemn into the street, no resourceful sinner whose merry crimes he could discover. Here was merely his good wife, the faithful attendant of his hearth, relentless wrecker of his soul.

She came towards him as a cat approaches a displeased master, and hovered about him on the stone coping of the noisy sluice.

“ Indeed! ” he found himself saying sarcastically. “ Indeed! ”

“ Yes, George Silverton, indeed! ” she burst out, a little frightened. “ And why shouldn't I? I used to come here often enough on summer nights with poor Mamma— ”

“ Yes! ” he shouted. It was exactly the sort of thing that would appeal to that weird half-black woman from the back of beyond. “ Mamma! ” he cried tauntingly, “ Mamma! ”

There was a flash of silence between them before Evadne, clutching her breast and balancing herself dangerously on her heels on the stone coping, broke into gentle shrieks. “ You dare talk of my Mamma, my poor Mamma, and she cold in her grave! I haven't been happy since she died and I married you, you silly little misery, you! ” Then the rage was suddenly wiped off her brain by the perception of a crisis.

The trickle of silence overflowed into a lake, over which their spirits flew, looking at each other's reflection in the calm waters : in the hurry of their flight they had never before seen each other. They stood facing one another with dropped heads, quietly thinking.

The strong passion which filled them threatened to disintegrate their souls as a magnetic current decomposes the electrolyte, so they fought to organise their sensations. They tried to arrange themselves and their lives for comprehension, but beyond sudden lyric visions of old incidents of hatefulness—such as a smarting quarrel of six years ago as to whether Evadne had or had not cheated the railway company out of one and eightpence on an excursion ticket—the past was intangible. It trailed behind this intense event as the pale hair trails behind the burning comet. They were pre-occupied with the moment. Quite often George had found a mean pleasure in the thought that by never giving Evadne a child he had cheated her out of one form of experience, and now he paid the price for this unnatural pride of

sterility. For now the spiritual offspring of their intercourse came to birth. A sublime loathing was between them. For a little time it was a huge perilous horror, but afterwards, like men aboard a ship whose masts seek the sky through steep waves, they found a drunken pride in the adventure. This was the very absolute of hatred. It cheapened the memory of the fantasias of irritation and ill-will they had performed in the less boring moments of their marriage, and they felt dazed, as amateurs who had found themselves creating a masterpiece. For the first time they were possessed by a supreme emotion and they felt a glad desire to strip away, restraint and express it nakedly. It was ecstasy ; they felt tall and full of blood.

Like people who, bewitched by Christ, see the whole earth as the breathing body of God, so they saw the universe as the substance and the symbol of their hatred. The stars trembled overhead with wrath. A wind from behind the angry crags set the moonlight on Lisbech quivering with rage, and the squat hawthorn-tree creaked slowly like the irritation of a dull little man. The dry moors, parched with harsh anger, waited thirstily and, sending out the murmur of rustling mountain grass and the cry of wakening fowl, seemed to huddle closer to the lake. But this sense of the earth's sympathy slipped away from them and they loathed all matter as the dull wrapping of their flame-like passion. At their wishing matter fell away and they saw sarcastic visions. He saw her as a toad squatting on the clean earth, obscuring the stars and pressing down its hot moist body on the cheerful fields. She felt his long boneless body coiled round the roots of the lovely tree of life. They shivered fastidiously. With an uplifting sense of responsibility they realised that they must kill each other.

A bird rose over their heads with a leaping flight that made it seem as though its black body was bouncing against the bright sky. The foolish noise and motion precipitated their thoughts. They were broken into a new conception of life. They perceived that God is war and his creatures are meant to fight. When dogs walk through the world cats must climb trees. The virgin must snare the wanton, the fine lover must put the prude to the sword. The gross man of action walks, spurred on the bloodless bodies of the men of thought, who lie quiet and cunningly do not tell him where his grossness leads him. The flesh must smother the spirit, the spirit must set the flesh on fire and watch it burn. And those who were gentle by nature and shrank from the ordained brutality were betrayers of their kind, surrendering the earth to the seed of their enemies. In this war there is no discharge. If they succumbed to peace now, the rest of their lives would be dishonourable, like the exile of a rebel who has begged his life as the reward of cowardice. It was their first experience of religious passion, and they abandoned themselves to it so that their immediate personal qualities fell away from them. Neither his weakness nor her prudence stood in the way of the event.

They measured each other with the eye. To her he was a spidery thing against the velvet blackness and hard silver surfaces of the pond. The light soaked her bathing dress so that she seemed, against the jagged shadows of the rock cutting, as though she were clad in a garment of dark polished mail. Her knees were bent so clearly, her toes gripped the coping so strongly. He understood very clearly that

if he did not kill her instantly she would drop him easily into the deep riot of waters. Yet for a space he could not move, but stood expecting a degrading death. Indeed, he gave her time to kill him. But she was without power too, and struggled weakly with a hallucination. The quarrel in Sumatra Crescent with its suggestion of vast and unmentionable antagonisms; her swift race through the moon-drenched countryside, all crepitant with night noises: the swimming in the wine-like lake: their isolation on the moor, which was expressedly hostile to them, as nature always is to lonely man: and this stark contest face to face, with their resentments heaped between them like a pile of naked swords—these things were so strange that her civilised self shrank back appalled. There entered into her the primitive woman who is the curse of all women: a creature of the most utter femaleness, useless, save for childbirth, with no strong brain to make her physical weakness a light accident, abjectly and corruptingly afraid of man. A squaw, she dared not strike her lord.

The illusion passed like a moment of faintness and left her enraged at having forgotten her superiority even for an instant. In the material world she had a thousand times been defeated into making prudent reservations and practising unnatural docilities. But in the world of thought she had maintained unfalteringly her masterfulness in spite of the strong yearning of her temperament towards voluptuous surrenders. That was her virtue. Its violation whipped her to action and she would have killed him at once, had not his moment come a second before hers. Sweating horribly, he had dropped his head forward on his chest: his eyes fell on her feet and marked the plebeian moulding of her ankle, which rose thickly over a crease of flesh from the heel to the calf. The woman was coarse in grain and pattern.

He had no instinct for honourable attack, so he found himself striking her in the stomach. She reeled from pain, not because his strength overcame hers. For the first time her eyes looked into his candidly open, unveiled by languor or lust: their hard brightness told him how she despised him for that unwarlike blow. He cried out as he realised that this was another of her despicable victories and that the whole burden of the crime now lay on him, for he had begun it. But the rage was stopped on his lips as her arms, flung wildly out as she fell backwards, caught him about the waist with abominable justness of eye and evil intention. So they fell body to body into the quarrelling waters.

The feathery confusion had looked so soft, yet it seemed the solid rock they struck. The breath shot out of him and suffocation warmly stuffed his ears and nose. Then the rock cleft and he was swallowed by a brawling blackness in which whirled a vortex that flung him again and again on a sharp thing that burned his shoulder. All about him fought the waters, and they cut his flesh like knives. His pain was past belief. Though God might be war, he desired peace in his time, and he yearned for another God—a child's God, an immense arm coming down from the hills and lifting him to a kindly bosom. Soon his body would burst for breath, his agony would smash in his breast bone. So great was his pain that his consciousness was strained to apprehend it, as a too tightly stretched canvas splits and rips.

Suddenly the air was sweet on his mouth. The starlight seemed as hearty as a cheer. The world was still there, the world in which he had lived, so he must be safe. His own weakness and loveableness induced enjoyable tears, and there was a delicious moment of abandonment to comfortable whining before he realised that the water would not kindly buoy him up for long, and that even now a hostile current clasped his waist. He braced his flaccid body against the sucking blackness and flung his head back so that the water should not bubble so hungrily against the cords of his throat. Above him the slime of the rock was sticky with moonbeams, and the leprous light brought to his mind a newspaper paragraph, read years ago, which told him that the dawn had discovered floating in some oily Mersey dock, under walls as infected with wet growth as this, a corpse whose blood-encrusted finger-tips were deeply cleft. On the instant his own finger-tips seemed hot with blood and deeply cleft from clawing at the impregnable rock. He screamed gaspingly and beat his hands through the strangling flood. Action, which he had always loathed and dreaded, had broken the hard mould of his self-possession, and the dry dust of his character was blown hither and thither by fear. But one sharp fragment of intelligence which survived this detrition of his personality perceived that a certain gleam on the rock about a foot above the water was not the cold putrescence of the slime, but certainly the hard and merry light of a moon-ray striking on solid metal. His left hand clutched upwards at it, and he swung from a rounded projection. It was, his touch told him, a leaden ring hanging obliquely from the rock, to which his memory could visualise precisely in some past drier time when Lisbech sent no flood to Whimsey, a waterman mooring a boat strewn with pale-bellied perch. And behind the stooping waterman he remembered a flight of narrow steps that led up a buttress to a stone shelf that ran through the cutting. Unquestionably he was safe. He swung in a happy rhythm from the ring, his limp body trailing like a caterpillar through the stream to the foot of the steps, while he gasped in strength. A part of him was in agony, for his arm was nearly dragged out of its socket and a part of him was embarrassed because his hysteria shook him with a deep rumbling chuckle that sounded as though he meditated on some unseemly joke ; the whole was pervaded by a twilight atmosphere of unenthusiastic gratitude for his rescue, like the quietly cheerful tone of a Sunday evening sacred concert. After a minute's deep breathing he hauled himself up by the other hand and prepared to swing himself on to the steps.

But first, to shake off the wet worsted rags, once his socks, that now stuck uncomfortably between his toes, he splashed his feet outwards to midstream. A certain porpoise-like surface met his left foot. Fear dappled his face with goose flesh. Without turning his head he knew what it was. It was Evadne's fat flesh rising on each side of her deep-furrowed spine through the rent in her bathing dress.

Once more hatred marched through his soul like a king : compelling service by his godhead and, like all gods, a little hated for his harsh lieu on his worshipper. He saw his wife as the curtain of flesh between him and celibacy, and solitude and all those delicate abstentions from life which his soul desired. He saw her as the invisible worm destroying the rose of the world with her dark secret love. Now

he knelt on the lowest stone step watching her wet seal-smooth head bobbing nearer on the waters. As her strong arms, covered with little dark points where her thick hairs were clotted with moisture, stretched out towards safety he bent forward and laid his hands on her head. He held her face under water. Scornfully he noticed the bubbles that rose to the surface from her protesting mouth and nostrils, and the foam raised by her arms and her thick ankles. To the end the creature persisted in turmoil, in movement, in action. . . .

She dropped like a stone. His hands, with nothing to resist them, slapped the water foolishly and he nearly overbalanced forward into the steam. He rose to his feet very stiffly. "I must be a very strong man," he said, as he slowly climbed the steps. "I must be a very strong man," he repeated, a little louder, as with a hot and painful rigidity of the joints he stretched himself out at full length along the stone shelf. Weakness closed him in like a lead coffin. For a little time the wetness of his clothes persisted in being felt: then the sensation oozed out of him and his body fell out of knowledge. There was neither pain nor joy nor any other reckless ploughing of the brain by nerves. He knew unconsciousness, or rather the fullest consciousness he had ever known. For the world became nothingness, and nothingness which is free from the yeasty nuisance of matter and the ugliness of generation was the law of his being. He was absorbed into vacuity, the untamed substance of the universe, round which he conceived passion and thought to circle as straws caught up by the wind. He saw God and lived.

In Heaven a thousand years are a day. And this little corner of time in which he found happiness shrank to a nut-shell as he opened his eyes again. This peace was hardly printed on his heart, yet the brightness of the night was blurred by the dawn. With the grunting carefulness of a man drunk with fatigue, he crawled along the stone shelf to the iron bridge, where he stood with his back to the roaring sluice and rested. All things seemed different now and happier. Like most timid people he disliked the night, and the commonplace hand which the dawn laid on the scene seemed to him a sanctification. The dimmed moon sank to her setting behind the crags. The jewel lights of Lisbech railway station were weak, cheerful twinklings. A steaming bluish milk of morning mist had been spilt on the hard silver surface of the lake, and the reeds no longer stabbed it like little daggers, but seemed a feathery fringe, like the pampas grass in the front garden in Sumatra Crescent. The black crags became brownish, and the mist disguised the sternness of the moor. This weakening of effects was exactly what he had always thought the extinction of Evadne would bring the world. He smiled happily at the moon.

Yet he was moved to sudden angry speech. "If I had my time over again," he said, "I wouldn't touch her with the tongs." For the cold he had known all along he would catch had settled in his head, and his handkerchief was wet through.

He leaned over the bridge and looked along Lisbech and thought of Evadne. For the first time for many years he saw her image without spirits, and wondered without indignation why she had so often looked like the cat about to steal the cream. What was the cream? And did she ever steal it? Now he would never

know. He thought of her very generously and sighed over the perversity of fate in letting so much comeliness.

“ If she had married a butcher or a veterinary surgeon she might have been happy,” he said, and shook his head at the glassy black water that slid under the bridge to that boiling sluice.

A gust of ague reminded him that wet clothes clung to his fevered body and that he ought to change as quickly as possible, or expect to laid up for weeks. He turned along the path that led back across the moor to the withered ash tree, and was learning the torture of bare feet on gravel when he cried out to himself : “ I shall be hanged for killing my wife.” It did not come as a trumpet-call, for he was one of those people who never quite hear what is said to them, and this deafishness extended in him to emotional things. It stole on him clamly, like a fog closing on a city. When he first felt hemmed in by this certainty he looked over his shoulder to the crags, remembering tales of how Jacobite fugitives had hidden on the moors for many weeks. There lay at least another day of freedom. But he was the kind of man who always goes home. He stumbled on, not very unhappy, except for his feet. Like many people of weak temperament he did not fear death. Indeed, it had a peculiar appeal to him ; for while it was important, exciting, it did not, like most important and exciting things try to create action. He allowed his imagination the vanity of painting pictures. He saw himself standing in their bedroom, plotting this last event, with the white sheet and the high lights of the mahogany wardrobe shining ghostly at him through the darkness. He saw himself raising a thin hand to the gas bracket and turning on the tap. He saw himself staggering to their bed while death crept in at his nostrils. He saw his corpse lying in full daylight, and for the first time knew himself certainly, unquestionably dignified.

He threw back his chest in pride : but at that moment the path stopped and he found himself staggering down the mound of heatherland and boulders with bleeding feet. Always he had suffered from sore feet, which had not exactly disgusted but, worse still, disappointed Evadne. A certain wistfulness she had always evinced when she found herself the superior animal had enraged and humiliated him many times. He felt that sting him now, and flung himself down the mound cursing. When he stumbled up to the withered ash tree he hated her so much that it seemed as though she were alive again, and a sharp wind blowing down from the moor terrified him like her touch.

He rested there. Leaning against the stripped grey trunk, he smiled up at the sky, which was now so touched to ineffectiveness by the dawn that it looked like a tent of faded silk. There was the peace of weakness in him, which he took to be spiritual, because it had no apparent physical justification : but he lost it as his dripping clothes chilled his tired flesh. His discomfort reminded him that the phantasmic night was passing from him. Daylight threatened him : the daylight in which for so many years he had worked in the solicitor’s office and been snubbed and ignored. “ ‘ The garish day,’ ” he murmured disgustedly, quoting the blasphemy of some hymn writer. He wanted his death to happen in this phantasmic night.

So he limped his way along the road. The birds had not yet begun to sing, but the rustling noises of the night had ceased. The silent highway was consecrated to his proud progress. He staggered happily like a tired child returning from a lovely birthday walk : his death in the little bedroom, which for the first time he would have to himself, was a culminating treat to be gloated over like the promise of a favourite pudding for supper. As he walked he brooded dozingly on large and swelling thoughts. Like all people of weak passions and enterprise he loved to think of Napoleon, and in the shadow of the great asylum wall he strutted a few steps of his advance from murder to suicide, with arms crossed on his breast and thin legs trying to strut massively. He was so happy. He wished that a military band went before him, and pretended that the high hedges were solemn lines of men, stricken in awe to silence as their king rode out to some nobly self-chosen doom. Vast he seemed to himself, and magnificent like music, and solemn like the Sphinx. He had saved the earth from corruption by killing Evadne, for whom he now felt the unremorseful pity a conqueror might bestow on a devastated empire. He might have grieved that his victory brought him death, but with immense pride he found that the occasion was exactly described by a text. "He saved others, Himself He could not save." He had missed the stile in the field above Sumatra Crescent and had to go back and hunt for it in the hedge. So quickly had his satisfaction borne him home.

The field had the fantastic air that jerry-builders give to land poised on the knife-edge of town and country, so that he walked in romance to his very door. The unmarred grass sloped to a stone-hedge of towers of loose brick, trenches and mounds of shining clay, and the fine intentful spires of the scaffolding round the last unfinished house. And he looked down on Petrick. Though to the actual eye it was but a confusion of dark distances through the twilight, a breaking of velvety perspectives, he saw more intensely than ever before its squalid walls and squalid homes where mean men and mean women enlaced their unwholesome lives. Yet he did not shrink from entering for his great experience : as Christ did not shrink from being born in a stable. He swaggered with humility over the trodden mud of the field and the new white flags of Sumatra Crescent. Down the road before him there passed a dim figure, who paused at each lamp post and raised a long wand to behead the yellow gas-flowers that were now wilting before the dawn : a ghostly herald preparing the world to be his deathbed. The Crescent curved in quiet darkness, save for one house, where blazed a gas-lit room with undrawn blinds. The brightness had the startling quality of a scream. He looked in almost anxiously as he passed, and met the blank eyes of a man in evening clothes who stood by the window shaking a medicine. His face was like a wax mask softened by heat : the features were blurred with the suffering which comes from the spectacle of suffering. His eyes lay unshiftingly on George's face as he went by and he went on shaking the bottle. It seemed as though he would never stop.

In the hour of his grandeur George was not forgetful of the griefs of the little human people, but interceded with God for the sake of this stranger. Everything was beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

His own little house looked solemn as a temple. He leaned against the lamp-post at the gate and stared at its empty windows and neat bricks. The disorder of the shattered pane of glass could be overlooked by considering a sign that this house was a holy place : like the Passover blood on the lintel. The propriety of the evenly drawn blind pleased him enormously. He had always known that this was how the great tragic things of the world had accomplished themselves : quietly. Evadne's raging activity belonged to trivial or annoying things like spring-cleaning or thunderstorms. Well, the house belonged to him now. He opened the gate and went up the asphalt path, sourly noticing that Evadne had as usual left out the lawn-mower, though it might very easily have rained, with the wind coming up as it was. A stray cat that had been sleeping in the tuft of pampas grass in the middle of the lawn was roused by his coming, and fled insolently close to his legs. He hated all wild homeless things, and bent for a stone to throw at it. But instead his fingers touched a slug, which reminded him of the feeling of Evadne's flesh through the slit in her bathing dress. And suddenly the garden was possessed by her presence : she seemed to amble there as she had so often done, sowing seeds unwisely and tormenting the last days of an ailing geranium by insane transplantation, exclaiming absurdly over such mere weeds as morning glory. He caught the very clucking of her voice . . . The front door opened at his touch.

The little lobby with its closed doors seemed stuffed with expectant silence. He realised that he had come to the theatre of his great adventure. Then panic seized him. Because this was the home where he and she had lived together so horribly, he doubted whether he could do this splendid momentous thing, for here he had always been a poor thing with the habit of failure. His heart beat in him more quickly than his raw feet could pad up the oil-clothed stairs. Behind the deal door at the end of the passage was death. Nothingness! It would escape him, even the idea of it would escape him if he did not go to it at once. When he burst at last into its presence he felt so victorious that he sank back against the door waiting for death to come to him without turning on the gas. He was so happy. His death was coming true.

But Evadne lay on his deathbed. She slept there soundly, with her head flung back on the pillows so that her eyes and brow seemed small in shadow, and her mouth and jaw huge above her thick throat in the light. Her wet hair straggled across the pillow on to a broken cane chair covered with her tumbled clothes. Her breast, silvered with sweat, shone in the ray of the street lamp that had always disturbed their nights. The counterpane rose enormously over her hips in rolls of glazed linen. Out of mere innocent sleep her sensuality was distilling a most drunken pleasure.

Not for one moment did he think this a phantasmic appearance. Evadne was not the sort of woman to have a ghost.

Still leaning against the door, he tried to think it all out : but his thoughts came brokenly, because the dawnlight flowing in at the window confused him by its pale glare and that lax figure on the bed held his attention. It must have been that when he laid his murderous hands on her head she had simply dropped below the

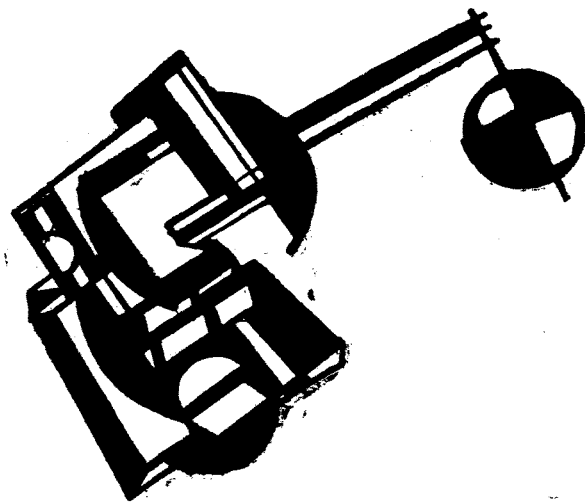
surface and swum a few strokes under water as any expert swimmer can. Probably he had never even put her into danger, for she was a great lusty creature and the weir was a little place. He had imagined the wonder and peril of the battle as he had imagined his victory. He sneezed exhaustingly, and from his physical distress realised how absurd it was ever to have thought that he had killed her. Bodies like his do not kill bodies like hers.

Now his soul was naked and lonely as though the walls of his body had fallen in at death, and the grossness of Evadne's sleep made him suffer more unlovely a destitution than any old beggarwoman squatting by the roadside in the rain. He had thought he had had what every man most desires : one night of power over a woman for the business of murder or love. But it had been a lie. Nothing beautiful had ever happened to him. He would have wept, but the hatred he had learnt on the moors obstructed all tears in his throat. At least this night had given him passion enough to put an end to it all.

Quietly he went to the window and drew down the sash. There was no fireplace, so that sealed the room. Then he crept over to the gas bracket and raised his thin hand, as he had imagined in his hour of vain glory by the lake.

He had forgotten Evadne's thrifty habit of turning off the gas at the main to prevent leakage when she went to bed.

He was beaten. He undressed and got into bed : as he had done every night for ten years, and as he would do every night until he died. Still sleeping, Evadne caressed him with warm arms.



INNER NECESSITY.

(Extracts from Kandinsky's "Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst," translated by Edward Wadsworth, by permission of Messrs. Constable, who have recently published a translation of the book by M. T. H. Sadler: "The Art of Spiritual Harmony.")

This book is a most important contribution to the psychology of modern art. The author's eminence as an artist adds considerable value to the work—fine artists as a rule being extremely reluctant to, or incapable of, expressing their ideas in more than one medium. Herr Kandinsky, however, is a psychologist and a metaphysician of rare intuition and inspired enthusiasm. He writes of art—not in its relation to the drawing-room or the modern exhibition, but in its relation to the universe and the soul of man. He writes, not as an art historian, but essentially as an artist to whom form and colour are as much the vital and integral parts of the cosmic organisation as they are his means of expression.

The art of the East has always consciously and passionately expressed this point of view, which, if it has been perceived dimly in Western art, has been only half-heartedly expressed. European artists of the past have treated art almost entirely from a too obviously and externally human outlook. Europe to-day, which is laying the solid foundations of the Western art of to-morrow, approaches this task from the deeper and more spiritual standpoint of the soul. And Herr Kandinsky is concerned chiefly in pointing out that the *raison d'être*, the beauty and the durability of art are only possible if they have their roots in what he terms the Principle of Inner Necessity.

"Inner Necessity," he says, "arises out of three mystical fundamentals. It is created out of three mystical necessities:—

1. Every artist, as a creator, has to express himself (Element of Personality).
2. Every artist, as the child of his epoch, has to express what is particular to this epoch (Element of Style—in an inner sense, composed of the speech of the epoch, and the speech of the nation, as long as the nation exists as such).
3. Every artist, as the servant of art, has to express what is particular to all art. (Element of the pure and eternal qualities of the art of all men, of all peoples and of all times, which are to be seen in the works of art of all artists of every nation and of every epoch, and which, as the principal elements of art, know neither time nor space).

"It is necessary to penetrate with one's mental vision only the first two elements in order to see this third element exposed. One sees then that a coarsely carved

Indian Temple pillar is animated with exactly the same spirit as even the most modern vivacious work.

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“ Only the third element of the eternal and pure qualities remains ever alive. It does not lose its strength with time, but continually acquires more. An Egyptian statue astounds us certainly more to-day than it could have astounded its contemporaries : for them it was associated much too strongly with characteristics and personalities of the period, which weakened its effect. To-day we hear in it the exposed timbre of eternal art. And contrarily : the more a modern work possesses the first two elements, naturally the more easily will it find access to the spirit of its contemporaries. And further : the more the third element exists in a modern work, the more will the first two be drowned, and consequently the access to the spirit of its contemporaries becomes more difficult. On this account centuries must sometimes pass away before the timbre of the third element reaches the soul of man.

“ The preponderance, then, of this third element in a work of art is a sign of its greatness and the greatness of the artist.

“ These three mystical necessities are the three necessary elements of a work of art and are closely united to one another. . . . The event of the development of art consists to a certain extent of the progression of the pure and external from the elements of personality and the style of the period. So that these two elements are not only accompanying forces, but also restraining forces.

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“ These two elements are of a subjective nature. The whole epoch desires to reflect itself and express its life aesthetically. The artist desires to express himself in the same way, and chooses only those forms which are related to his spirit.

“ Gradually in the end the style of the epoch shapes itself and acquires a certain external and subjective form. The pure and eternal art is on the contrary the objective element which becomes intelligible by means of the subjective.

“ The inevitable desire to express the objective is the force which is here termed Inner Necessity, and which to-day extracts ONE universal form from the subjective and to-morrow another. . . . It is clear then that the inner spiritual force of art uses contemporary forms only as a step by which to progress.

In short—the effect of Inner Necessity, or the development of art, is a progressive expression of the eternally objective within the temporarily subjective. Or otherwise the subjugation of the subjective by the objective.

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“ So one sees finally (and this is of indescribable importance for all time, and especially for to-day) that the search after personality, after style (and consequently national style), cannot only never be attained by this search, but also has not the



Drawing.

Jacob Epstein.



Drawing.

Jacob Epstein.

great importance which to-day is imputed to it. And one sees that the common relationship between works that have not become effete after centuries, but have always become more and more powerful, does not lie in externality, but in the root of roots—the mystical content of Art.”

And this Principle of Inner Necessity Herr Kandinsky applies not only to the basic inspiration of creation, but also to the concrete problems of execution. This same force that animates the roots must generate a solid stem and permeate the picture in every branch and fibre, and in the organic structure of every leaf.

This leads him to an extended consideration of the emotional and psychical effect of forms and colours as such, divorced as far as is humanly possible from their attendant associations. And Herr Kandinsky does not consider the effect of form and colour on the soul only, but also its relationship to the other senses and its effect on the physical organism. Colour is more habitually accredited with powers of emotion than form, but by establishing a common root principle with regard to the emotional effects of form and colour Herr Kandinsky destroys this erroneous opinion. And he does this not only by means of logical argument and metaphysical ratiocination, but also by a minute analysis of the colours themselves—their physical characteristics, and the possibilities of psychic effect in all their gradations of lightness and darkness, and in their warm and cold tones.

Form (i.e., the suitability of the form to the emotion the artist wishes to express) springs from the same fundamental Principle of Inner Necessity, and has always a psychic import. And this is true not only of the whole composition of a picture, but also of its component parts and their relationship one to another, and also again of the form created by their relationship to the whole composition.

“ Form alone, even if it is quite abstract and geometrical, has its inner timbre, and is a spiritual entity with qualities that are identical with this form : a triangle (whether it be acute-angled, obtuse-angled or equilateral) is an entity of this sort with a spiritual perfume proper to itself alone. In combination with other forms this perfume becomes differentiated, acquires accompanying nuances, but remains radically unalterable, like the smell of the rose which can never be mistaken for that of the violet.

“ It is easy to notice here that some colours are accentuated in value by some forms and weakened by others. In any case bright colours vibrate more strongly in pointed, angular forms (e.g., a yellow triangle). Those that have a tendency to deepen will increase this effect in round forms (e.g., a blue circle). It is naturally clear on the other hand that the unsuitability of the form to the colour must not be regarded as something “ inharmonious,” but on the contrary as a new possibility, and consequently harmony.

“ Form in the narrower sense is, however, nothing more than the boundaries

between one surface and another. This is its external meaning. But since everything external implicitly conceals an interior (which comes to light forcibly or feebly), so also every form has an inner content.

“ FORM IS THEN THE UTTERANCES OF ITS INNER CONTENT. This is its inner meaning. One must think here of the simile of the piano, but apply “ form ” instead of “ colour.” The artist is the hand, which, through this or that key (= form) makes the human soul vibrate appropriately. It is clear then that the harmony of form must be based only on the appropriate striking of the human soul.

“ This we termed the Principle of Inner Necessity.

“ The two aspects of form just mentioned are at the same time its two aims. And on account of this the external limitation is thoroughly appropriate only when it best expresses the inner meaning of the form. The exterior of the form, i.e., its boundaries, to which the form in this case is subservient, may be very diverse.

“ But in spite of all diversity that the form can offer, it nevertheless will never exceed two exterior limits, namely :—

1. Either the form serves as a shape, and by means of this shape, to cut out a material object on the surface : i.e., to draw this material object on the surface, or

2. The form remains abstract : i.e., it represents no real object, but is a perfect abstract entity. Such pure abstract entities, which as such have their life, their influence and their effect, are a square, a circle, a triangle, a rhombus, a trapezium, and the other innumerable forms which become ever more complicated and possess no mathematical significance. All these forms are citizens of the abstract empire with equal rights.’

Once having accepted the emotional significance of form and colour as such, it follows that the necessity for expressing oneself exclusively with forms that are based on nature is only a temporary limitation similar to, though less foolish than, the eighteenth century brown-tree convention.

“ . . . to-day’s inner laws of harmony become to-morrow’s external laws, which on further application depend for their life only on this now external Necessity.’

And so logically this axiom must be accepted : that the artist can employ any forms (natural, abstracted or abstract) to express himself, if his feelings demand it.

Those who perceive no emotional significance in form and colour as such, invariably argue that to avoid human and natural forms is to sterilize one’s creative faculties and to rob oneself of all that is noble in art. But—

“ On the other hand, there is no perfect concrete form in art. It is not possible to represent a natural form exactly. The artist succumbs—well or badly—either to

his hand or his eye, which in this case are more artistic than his soul, which is incapable of desiring more than photography. The conscious artist, however, who cannot be content with recording material objects, seeks unconditionally to give expression to the object represented—what one formerly called to “idealise,” later on to “stylize,” and what to-morrow may be called anything else.

“This impossibility and futility (in art) of copying an object without any aim, this striving to borrow expression from the object itself, is the starting point from which the artist begins to aspire to purely aesthetic aims (pictural) as opposed to literary representation.

“And so the abstract element comes always gradually to the front in art—which even yesterday was concealed timidly and was scarcely visible behind purely material endeavours.

“And this development and eventual preponderance of the abstract is natural.

“It is natural, since, the more the organic form is repelled, the more the abstract comes to the front and acquires timbre.

“The organic that remains, however, has, as we have said, its own inner Timbre, which is either identical with the inner Timbre of the second component—or abstract part of the form (simple combination of both elements)—or it may be of a very different nature—(complicated and perhaps necessarily inharmonious combination).

“In any case, however, the Timbre of the Organic is heard in the form it chooses, even if it is quite suppressed. On this account the choice of the real object is important. In the two-fold Timbre (spiritual chord) of both component parts of the form the organic can support the abstract (by means of concord or discord) or it can be disturbing to it. The object can create only an accident Timbre, which, if substituted by another, calls forth no essential difference in the fundamental timbre.

“A rhomboidal composition is constructed, for instance, out of a number of human figures. One judges it with one’s feelings and asks oneself the question—are the human figures absolutely necessary to the composition, or could one substitute other organic forms for them without thereby injuring the inner fundamental Timbre of the composition?

“And if ‘yes’—then the case is imminent where the Timbre of the object not only does not help the Timbre of the abstraction, but directly injures it : inappropriate Timbre of the object weakens the Timbre of the abstraction. And this is not only logical, but is, as a matter of fact, the case in art. In the above case then, either some object should be found which corresponds more to the inner Timbre of the abstraction (corresponding concordantly or discordantly) or this whole form should remain purely abstract.

“The more abstract the form, the more purely and therefore the more

primitively it will resound. In a composition then, where the corporeal is more or less superfluous, one can more or less leave it out and substitute for it either purely abstract forms or abstracted corporeal forms. In either of these cases one's feelings must be the only judge, guide and arbiter. And indeed, the more the artist uses these abstract or abstracted forms, the more he becomes at home in their kingdom and the deeper he enters into this sphere. And in the same way the spectator, who gathers more and more knowledge of the abstract speech until he finally masters it, is guided in this by the artist.

“ And so on the one hand the difficulties of art will increase, but at the same time the abundance of forms—as a means of expression—will increase also, both in quality and quantity. Here the question of bad drawing will disappear and will be replaced by another much more aesthetic consideration. How far is the inner Timbre of the given object mystified or defined? This alteration in one's point of view will always progress and lead to a still greater enrichment of one's means of expression, since mystery is an enormous force in art. The combination of the mysterious and the definite will create a new possibility of Leitmotive in a composition of forms. . . .

“ Composition of this kind (the corporeal and particularly the abstract) will always appear as unfounded arbitrariness to those who do not perceive the inner Timbre of forms. The apparent inconsequent distortion of the single forms on the surface of the picture appears in these cases like an empty joke with the forms. . . .

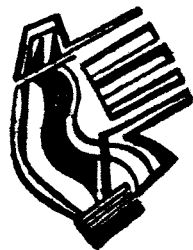
“ When, for instance, features or different parts of the body are distorted or perverted for aesthetic reasons, one strikes against purely pictorial questions as well as anatomical ones, which restrain the pictorial intentions and obtrude upon their subsidiary calculations. In our case, however, everything subsidiary disappears, and there remains only the essential—the aesthetic aim. Exactly this apparently arbitrary, but in reality extremely determinable possibility of distorting forms is one of the sources of the endless number of purely aesthetic creations.

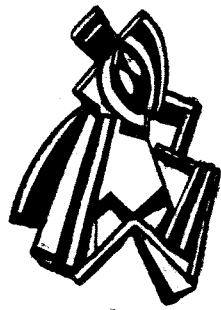
“ The flexibility of the single form, then, its inner organic change, if one may say so ; its direction in the picture (movement), the preponderance of the corporeal over the abstract in this single form on the one hand, and on the other the combination of the forms which create the big shape of the whole picture : further, the principles of concord and discord in all the aforesaid parts, i.e., the juxtaposition of the single forms, the interpenetration of one form with another, the distortion, the binding and tearing apart of the individual forms, the same treatment of the groups of forms, of the combination of the mysterious with the definite, the rhythmic with the non-rhythmic on the same plane, the abstract forms with the purely geometrical (simple or complicated) and the less definitely geometrical, the same treatment of the combination of the boundary lines of the forms from one another (heavy or light), etc., etc.—all these are the elements which create the possibility of a purely aesthetic counterpoint and which will lead up to this counterpoint.

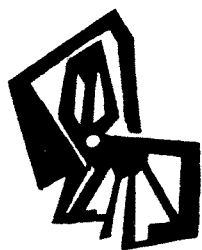
“ . . . And colour, which is itself a material for counterpoint, which conceals in itself endless possibilities, will, in conjunction with drawing, lead to a great pictorial counterpoint on which will be built also a pictorial composition that will serve God as a real, pure art. And the same infallible guide brings it to that dizzy height—The Principle of Inner Necessity.”

This insistence on the value of one's feelings as the only aesthetic impulse, means logically that the artist is not only entitled to treat form and colour according to his inner dictates, but that it is his duty to do so, and consequently his life (his thoughts and deeds) becomes the raw material out of which he must carve his creations. The author points out that on account of this, although the artist is absolutely free to express himself as he will in art, he is not free in life. “ He is not only a king . . . in the sense that he has great power, but also in the sense that his duties are great.”

The constructive tendencies of painting Herr Kandinsky divides into two groups—(1) simple composition of a more or less obviously geometrical character, which he calls “ melodic composition,” and which has been more generally employed by western artists (Duccio, Ravenna mosaics, Cezanne), and (2) complicated rhythmic composition which he calls “ symphonic,” and which is the characteristic medium of oriental art and of Kandinsky himself.



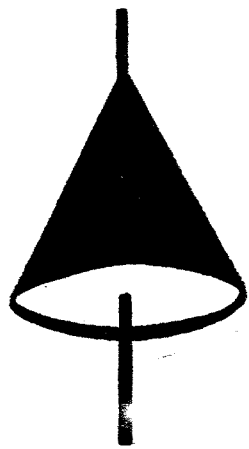


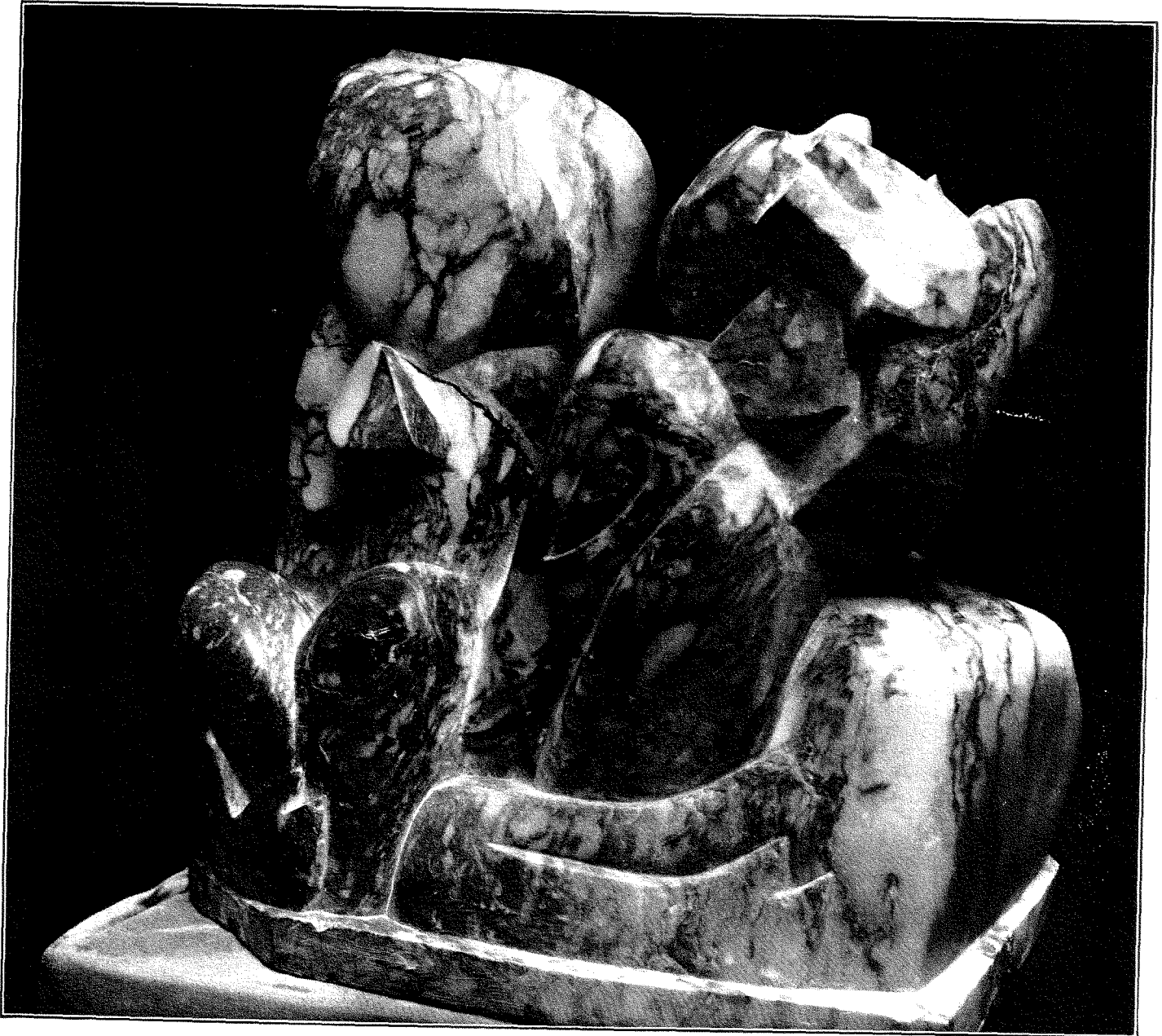


VORTECES AND NOTES

BY

WYNDHAM LEWIS.





Stags.

Gaudier Brzeska.



Group.

Cuthbert Hamilton

“ LIFE IS THE IMPORTANT THING ! ”

In the revolt against Formula, revolutionaries in art sell themselves to Nature. Without Nature's aid the “ coup ” could not be accomplished. They, of course, become quite satisfied slaves of Nature, as their fathers were of Formula. It never occurs to them that Nature is just as sterile a Tyrant. This is what happened with the Impressionists.

An idea which haunts the head of many people is that “ Nature ” is synonymous with freshness, richness, constant renewal, life : “ Nature ” and natural art synonymous with “ Life.”

This idea, trotted out in various forms, reminds one of the sententious pronouncement one so often hears : “ LIFE is the important thing! ” It is always said with an air of trenchant and final wisdom, the implication being : “ You artists are so indirect and intellectual, worry your heads about this and about that, while life is there all the time, etc., etc.”

If you ask these people what they mean by LIFE (for there are as many Lives as there are people in the world), it becomes evident that they have no profounder view of life in their mind than can be included in the good dinner, good sleep, roll-in-the-grass category.

“ After all, life is the important thing! ” That is to live as nearly like a chicken or a King Charles as is compatible with having read “ Sex and Character ” and “ L'Isle des Pengouins ” in a translation.

This is the typical cowardly attitude of those who have failed with their minds, and are discouraged and unstrung before the problems of their Spirit ; who fall back on their stomachs and the meaner working of their senses.

Nature will give you, then, grass enough for cow or a sheep, any fleshly conquest you can compass. One thing she is unable to give, that that is peculiar to men. Such stranger stuff men must get out of themselves.

To consider for a moment this wide-spread notion, that “ Nature,” as the majority mean it, is synonymous really with “ Life,” and inexhaustible freshness of material :—

NATURE IS NO MORE INEXHAUSTIBLE, FRESH, WELLING UP WITH INVENTION, ETC., THAN LIFE IS TO THE AVERAGE MAN OF FORTY, WITH HIS GROOVE, HIS DISILLUSION, AND HIS LITTLE ROUND OF HABITUAL DISTRACTIONS.

It is true, "Life is there all the time." But he cannot get at it except through himself. For him too, even—apart from his daily fodder—he has to draw out of himself any of that richness and fineness that is something more and different to the provender and the contentment of the cow.

For the suicide, with the pistol in his mouth, "Life is there," as well, with its variety and possibilities. But a dissertation to that effect would not influence Him ; on the contrary.

For those men who look to Nature for support, she does not care.

"Life" is a hospital for the weak and incompetent.

"Life" is a retreat of the defeated.

It is very salubrious—The cooking is good—

Amusements are provided.

In the same way, Nature is a blessed retreat, in art, for those artists whose imagination is mean and feeble, whose vocation and instinct are unrobust. When they find themselves in front of Infinite Nature with their little paint-box, they squint their eyes at her professionally, and coo with lazy contentment and excitement to just so much effort as is hygienic and desirable. She does their thinking and seeing for them. Of course, when they commence painting, technical difficulties come along, they sweat a bit, and anxiety settles down on them. But then they regard themselves as martyrs and heroes. They are lusty workmen, grappling with the difficulties of their trade !

No wonder painting has been discredited ! "Life" IS the important thing, indeed, if much painting of Life that we see is the alternative. Who would not rather walk ten miles across country (yes, ten miles, my friend), and use his eyes, nose and muscles, than possess ten thousand Impressionist oil-paintings of that country side?

There is only one thing better than "Life"—than using your eyes, nose, ears and muscles—and that is something very abstruse and splendid, in no way directly dependent on "Life." It is no EQUIVALENT for Life, but ANOTHER Life, as NECESSARY to existence as the former.

This NECESSITY is what the indolent and vulgar journalist mind chiefly denies it. All the accusations of "mere intelligence" or "cold intellectuality" centre round misconception of this fact.

Before leaving this beautiful useful phrase—of unctuous "Life," etc.—I would prevent a confusion. I have been speaking so far of the Impressionist sensibility, and one of the arguments used by that sensibility to disparage the products of a new effort in art.

Daumier, whose work was saturated with reference to Life, has been, for instance, used to support imitation of Nature, on grounds of a common realism. This man would have been no more capable of squatting down and imitating the forms of life day after day than he would have been able to copy one of his crowds.

It was Life that MOVED MUCH TOO QUICKLY FOR ANYTHING, BUT THE IMAGINATION that he lived for. He combined in his art great plastic gifts with great literary gifts, and was no doubt an impure painter, according to actual standards. But it was great literature, always, along with great art. And as far as " Life " is concerned, the Impressionists produced nothing that was in any sense a progress from this great realist, though much that was a decadence. Many reproductions of Degas paintings it would be impossible, quite literally, to distinguish from photographs: and his pastels only less so because of the accident of the medium. The relative purity of their palette, and consequent habituating of the public to brighter colours, was their only useful innovation. Their analytic study of light lead into the Pointilliste cul de sac (when it was found that although light can be decomposed, oil-paint is unfortunately not light.

FUTURISM, MAGIC AND LIFE.

I. The Futurist theoretician should be a Professor of Hoffman Romance, and attempt the manufacture of a perfect being.

Art merges in Life again everywhere.

Leonardo was the first Futurist, and, incidentally, an airman among Quattro Cento angels.

His Mona Lisa eloped from the Louvre like any woman.

She is back again now, smiling, with complacent reticence, as before her escapade ; no one can say when she will be off once more, she possesses so much vitality.

Her olive pigment is electric, so much more so than the carnivorous Belgian bumpkins by Rubens in a neighbouring room, who, besides, are so big they could not slip about in the same subtle fashion.

Rubens IMITATED Life—borrowed the colour of it's crude blood, traced the sprawling and surging of it's animal hulks.

Leonardo MADE NEW BEINGS, delicate and severe, with as ambitious an intention as any ingenious mediæval Empiric.

He multiplied in himself, too, Life's possibilities. He was not content to be as an individual Artist alone, any more than he was content with Art.

Life won him with gifts and talents.

2. In Northern Europe (Germany, Scandinavia and Russia) for the last half century, the intellectual world has developed savagely in one direction—that of Life.

His war-talk, sententious elevation and much besides, Marinetti picked up from Nietzsche.

Strindberg, with his hysterical and pulssant autobiographies, life-long tragic coquetry with Magic, extensive probing of female flesh and spirit, is the great Scandinavian figure best representing this tendency.

Bergson, the philosopher of Impressionism, stands for this new prescience in France.

Everywhere LIFE is said instead of ART.

3. By " Life " is not meant good dinner, sleep and copulation.

There is rather only room for ONE Life, in Existence, and Art has to behave itself and struggle.

Also Art has a selfish trick of cutting the connections.

The Wild Body and Primitive Brain have found a new outside art of their own.

The Artist pleasure-man is too naturalistic for this age of religion.

“ The theatre is immoral, because a place where people go to enjoy other people’s sufferings and tears.” (to d’Alembert.)

The soft stormy flood of Rousseauism, Dicken’s sentimental ghoulish gloating over the death of little Nell, the beastly and ridiculous spirit of Keats’ lines:—

**“ If your mistress some RICH anger show,
Imprison her soft hand and let her rave,
While you feast long,” etc.**

disgusted about 1870 people who had not got a corner in dog’s nerves or heart idling about the stomach instead of attending to its business of pump, and whose heads were, with an honest Birmingham screw, straightly riveted into their bodies.

The good artists, as well, repudiated the self-indulgent, special-privileged, priggish and cowardly role of “ Artist,” and joined themselves to the Birmingham screws.

England emerged from Lupanars and Satanics about 1900, the Bourgeoisie having thoughtfully put Wilde in prison, and Swinburne being retired definitely to Putney.

This brings you to the famous age where we are at present gathered, in which Humanity’s problem is “ live with the minimum of pleasure possible for bare existence.”

4. Killing somebody must be the greatest pleasure in existence : either like killing yourself without being interfered with by the instinct of self-preservation— or exterminating the instinct of self-preservation itself !

But if you begin depositing your little titivations of pleasure in Humanity’s Savings Bank, you want something for your trouble.

We all have a penetrative right over each other, to the tune of titivations lost, if not of heart blood.

5. Not many people have made up their minds yet as to the ultimate benefit or the reverse of this state of affairs.

Some people enjoy best by proxy, some by masturbation ; others prefer to do things themselves, or in the direct regular partnership of existence.

You are fiercely secretive and shy : or dislike interference.

Most fine artists cannot keep themselves out of wood and iron, or printed sheets : they leave too much of themselves in their furniture.

For their universality a course of egotistic hardening, if anything, is required.

Buddha found that his disciples, good average disciples, required a severe discipline of expansion ; he made them practice every day torpedoing East and West, to inhabit other men, and become wise and gentle.

The Artist favours solitude, conditions where silence and purity are possible, as most men favour gregariousness where they shine and exist most.

But the Artist is compensated, at present, by a crown, and will eventually arrange things for the best.

6. It is all a matter of the most delicate adjustment between voracity of Art and digestive quality of Life.

The finest Art is not pure Abstraction, nor is it unorganised life.

Dreams come in the same category as the easy abstractions and sentimentalities of art known as " Belgian."

Great Artists with their pictures and books provide Nursing Homes for the Future, where Hypnotic Treatment is the principal stunt.

To dream is the same thing as to lie : anybody but an invalid or a canaille feels the discomfort and repugnance of something not clean in it.

There is much fug in the Past—due, no doubt, to the fact that most of the ordinary Ancients neglected their persons.

Realism is the cleanliness of the mind.

Actuality or " fashionableness " is the desire to be spick and span, and be a man remade and burnished half-an-hour ago.

Surprise is the brilliant and prodigious fire-fly, that lives only twenty minutes : the excitement of seeing him burn through his existence like a wax-vesta makes you marvel at the slow-living world.

The most perishable colours in painting (such as Veronese green, Prussian Blue, Alizarin Crimson) are the most brilliant.

This is as it should be : we should hate other ages, and don't want to fetch £40,000, like a horse.

7. The actual approximation of Art to Nature, which one sees great signs of to-day, would negative effort equally.

The Artist, like Narcissus, gets his nose nearer and nearer the surface of Life.

He will get it nipped off if he is not careful, by some Pecksniff-shark sunning

It's lean belly near the surface, or other lurker beneath his image, who has been feeding on it's radiance.

Reality is in the artist, the image only in life, and he should only approach so near as is necessary for a good view.

The question of focus depends on the power of his eyes, or their quality.

8. The Futurist statue will move : then it will live a little : but any idiot can do better than that with his good wife, round the corner.

Nature's definitely ahead of us in contrivances of that sort.

We must remain children, less scientific than a Boy Scout, but less naive than Flaubert jeune !

Nature is grown up.

WE could not make an Elephant.

9. With Picasso's revolution in the plastic arts, the figure of the Artist becomes still more blurred and uncertain.

Engineer or artist might conceivably become transposable terms, or one, at least, imply the other.

What is the definite character of the artist ; obvious pleasure, as an element, shrinking daily, or rather approximating with Pleasure as it exists in every other form of invention?

Picasso has proved himself lately too amateurish a carpenter.

Boot-making and joining also occur to one.

Or the artist will cease to be a workman, and take his place with the Composer and Architect?

The artist till now has been his own interpreter, improvisation and accidents of a definite medium playing a very important part.

To-day there are a host of first rate interpreters : the few men with the invention and brains should have these at their disposal : but unfortunately they all want to be " composers," and their skill and temperament allow them to do very good imitations.

But perhaps things are better as they are : for it you think of those stormy Jewish faces met in the corridors of the tube, Beethovenesque and femininely ferocious, on the concert-bills, or " our great Shakespearean actors," you feel that Beethoven and Shakespeare are for the student, and not for the Bechstein Hall or the modern theatre.

At any period an artist should have been able to remain in his studio, imagining form, and provided he could transmit the substance and logic of his inventions to another man, could have, without putting brush to canvas, be the best artist of his day.

NOTE

[on some German Woodcuts at the Twenty-One Gallery].

At this miniature sculpture, the Woodcut, Germans have always excelled.

It is like the one-string fiddle of the African.

This art is African, in that it is sturdy, cutting through every time to the monotonous wall of space, and intense yet hale : permeated by Eternity, an atmosphere in which only the black core of Life rises and is silhouetted.

The black, nervous fluid of existence flows and forms into hard, stagnant masses in this white, luminous body. Or it is like a vivid sea pierced by rocks, on to the surface of which boned shapes rise and bask blackly.

It deals with Man and objects subject to him, on Royal white, cut out in black sadness.

White and Black are two elements. Their possible proportions and relations to each other are fixed.—All the subtleties of the Universe are driven into these two pens, one of which is black, the other white, with their multitude.

It is African black.

It is not black, invaded by colour, as in Beardsley, who was never simple enough for this blackness. But unvarying, vivid, harsh black of Africa.

The quality of the woodcut is rough and brutal, surgery of the senses, cutting and not scratching : extraordinarily limited and exasperating.

It is one of the greatest tests of fineness.

Where the Germans are best—disciplined, blunt, thick and brutal, with a black simple skeleton of organic emotion—they best qualify for this form of art.

All the things gathered here do not come within these definitions. Melzer is sculpture, too, but by suggestion, not in fact. The principle of his work is an infatuation for bronzes.

Pechstein has for nearest parallel the drawings and lithographs of Henri Matisse.

Marc, Bolz, Kandinsky, Helbig and Morgner would make a very solid show in one direction.

Bolz's "Maskenfest" is a Kermesse of black strips and atoms of life. His other design, like a playing-card, is a nerve or woman, and attendant fascinated atoms, crushed or starred.

Morgner drifts into soft Arctic snow-patches.

Marc merges once more in leaves and sun-spotting the protective markings of animals, or in this process makes a forest into tigers.

Some woodcuts by Mr. H. Wadsworth, though not part of the German show, are to be seen in the Gallery. One of a port, is particularly fine, with its white excitement, and compression of clean metallic shapes in the well of the Harbour, as though in a broken cannon-mouth.

POLICEMAN AND ARTIST.

1. In France no Artist is as good as "the Policeman."

Rousseau the Douanier, the best policeman, is better than Derain, the best French Artist.

Not until Art reaches the fresher strata of the People does it find a vigorous enough bed to flourish.

There is too much cultivation, and only the Man of the People escapes the softening and intellectualizing.

There is one exception—the crétin or sawney.

Cézanne was an imbecile, as Rousseau was a "Policeman."

Nature's defence for Cézanne against the deadly intelligence of his country was to make him a sort of idiot.

2. In England the Policeman is dull.

The People (witness dearth of Folk-song, ornament, dance, art of any sort, till you get to the Border or the Marches of Wales) is incapable of Art.

The Artist in England has the advantages and gifts possessed by the Policeman in France,

His position is very similar.

William Blake was our arch-Policeman.

Had Blake, instead of passing his time with Renaissance bogeys and athletes, painted his wife and himself naked in their conservatory (as, in a more realistic tradition, he quite conceivably might have done), the result would have been very similar to Rosseau's portraits.

The English Artist (unlike the Frenchman of the people) has no Artistic tradition in his blood.

His freshness and genius is apt to be obscured, therefore (as in the case of Blake, THE English Artist), by a borrowed Italian one.

3. It is almost as dangerous in England to be a sawney, as it is in France to be intelligent.

Cézanne in England would have to be a very intelligent fellow.

(You can't be too intelligent here !)

(It is the only place in Europe where that is the case.)

Blake in France would have been a Policeman.

It is finer to be an Artist than to be a Policeman !

FÈNG SHUI AND CONTEMPORARY FORM.

1. That a mountain, river or person may not "suit"—the air of the mountain, the character of the person—and so influence lives, most men see.

But that a hill or man can be definitely disastrous, and by mere existence be as unlucky as hemlock is poisonous, shame or stupidity prevents most from admitting.

A certain position of the eyes, their fires crossing ; black (as a sort of red) as sinister ; white the mourning colour of China ; white flowers, in the West, signifying death—white, the radium among colours, and the colour that comes from farthest off : 13, a terrible number : such are much more important discoveries than gravitation.

The law of gravitation took its place in our common science following the fall of an apple on somebody's head, which induced reflection.

13 struck people down again and again like a ghost, till they ceased hunting for something human, but invisible, and found a Number betraying its tragic nature and destiny.

Some Numbers are like great suns, round which the whole of Humanity must turn.

But people have a special personal Numerical which for them in particular is an object of service and respect.

2. Telegraph poles were the gloomiest of all Western innovations for China : their height disturbed definitely the delicate equilibrium of lives.

They were consequently resisted with bitterness.

Any text-book on China becomes really eloquent in its scorn when it arrives at the ascendancy of the Geomancers.

Geomancy is the art by which the favourable influence of the shape of trees, weight of neighbouring water and its colour, height of surrounding houses, is determined.

"No Chinese street is built to form a line of uniform height" (H. A. Giles), the houses are of unequal heights to fit the destinies of the inhabitants.

I do not suppose that good Geomancers are more frequent than good artists.

But their functions and intellectual equipment should be very alike.

3. Sensitiveness to volume, to the life and passion of lines, meaning of water, hurried conversation of the sky, or silence, impossible propinquity of endless clay nothing will right, a mountain that is a genius (good or evil) or a bore, makes the artist ; and the volume, quality, or luminosity of a star at birth of Astrologers is also a clairvoyance within the painters gift.

In a painting certain forms MUST be SO ; in the same meticulous, profound manner that your pen or a book must lie on the table at a certain angle, your clothes at night be arranged in a set personal symmetry, certain birds be avoided, a set of railings tapped with your hand as you pass, without missing one.

Personal tricks and ceremonies of this description are casual examples of the same senses' activity.

RELATIVISM AND PICASSO'S LATEST WORK.

(Small structures in cardboard, wood, zinc, glass string, etc., tacked, sown or stuck together is what Picasso has last shown as his.)

1. Picasso has become a miniature naturalistic sculptor of the vast natures—morte of modern life.

Picasso has come out of the canvas and has commenced to build up his shadows against reality.

Reality is the Waterloo, Will o' the wisp, or siren of artistic genius.

“ Reality ” is to the Artist what “ Truth ” is to the philosopher.

(The Artists OBJECTIVE is Reality, as the Philosopher's is Truth.)

The “ Real Thing ” is always Nothing. REALITY is the nearest conscious and safe place to “ Reality.” Once an Artist gets caught in that machinery, he is soon cut in half—literally so.

2. The moment an image steps from the convention of the canvas into life, it's destiny is different.

The statue has been, for the most part, a stone-man.

An athletic and compact statue survives. (African, Egyptian Art, etc., where faces are flattened, limbs carved in the mass of the body for safety as well as sacredness.)

You can believe that a little patch of paint two inches high on a piece of canvas is a mountain. It is difficult to do so with a two inch clay or stone model of one.

3. These little models of Picasso's reproduce the surface and texture of objects. So directly so, that, should a portion of human form occur, he would hardly be content until he could include in his work a plot of human flesh.

But it is essentially NATURES-MORTES, the enamel of a kettle, wall-paper, a canary's cage, handle of mandoline or telephone.

4. These wayward little objects have a splendid air, starting up in pure creation, with their invariable and lofty detachment from any utilitarian end or purpose.

But they do not seem to possess the necessary physical stamina to survive.

You feel the glue will come unstuck and that you would only have to blow with your mouth to shatter them.

They imitate like children the large, unconscious, serious machines and contrivances of modern life.

So near them do they come, that they appear even a sort of new little parasite bred on machinery.

Finally, they lack the one purpose, or even necessity, of a work of Art : namely Life.

5. In the experiments of modern art we come face to face with the question of the raison d'être of Art more acutely than often before, and the answer comes more clearly and unexpectedly.

Most of Picasso's latest work (on canvas as well) is a sort of machinery. Yet these machines neither propel nor make any known thing : they are machines without a purpose.

If you conceive them as carried out on a grand scale, as some elaborate work of engineering the paradox becomes more striking.

These machines would, in that case, before the perplexed and enraged questions of men, have only one answer and justification.

If they could suggest or convince that they were MACHINES OF LIFE, a sort of LIVING plastic geometry, then their existence would be justified.

6. To say WHY any particular man is alive is a difficult business : and we cannot obviously ask more of a picture than of a man.

A picture either IS or it IS NOT.

A work of art could not start from such a purpose as the manufacture of nibs or nails.

These mysterious machines of modern art are what they are TO BE ALIVE.

Many of Picasso's works answer this requirement.

But many, notably the latest small sculpture he has shown, attach themselves too coldly to OTHER machines of daily use and inferior significance.

Or, he practically MAKES little nature-mortes, a kettle, plate, and piece of wall-paper, for example.

He no longer so much interprets, as definitely MAKES, nature (and "DEAD" nature at that).

A kettle is never as fine as a man.

This is a challenge to the kettles.

THE NEW EGOS.

1. A civilized savage, in a desert-city, surrounded by very simple objects and restricted number of beings, reduces his Great Art down to the simple black human bullet.

His sculpture is monotonous. The one compact human form is his Tom-Tom. We have nothing whatever to do with this individual and his bullet.

Our eyes sweep life horizontally.

Were they in the top of our head, and full of blank light, our art would be different, and more like that of the savage.

The African we have referred to cannot allow his personality to venture forth or amplify itself, for it would dissolve in vagueness of space.

It has to be swaddled up in a bullet-like lump.

But the modern town-dweller of our civilization sees everywhere fraternal moulds for his spirit, and interstices of a human world.

He also sees multitude, and infinite variety of means of life, a world and elements he controls.

Impersonality becomes a disease with him.

Socially, in a parallel manner, his egotism takes a different form.

Society is sufficiently organised for his ego to walk abroad

Life is really no more secure, or his egotism less acute, but the frontier's interpenetrate, individual demarcations are confused and interests dispersed.

2. According to the most approved contemporary methods in boxing, two men burrow into each other, and after an infinitude of little intimate pommels, one collapses.

In the old style, two distinct, heroic figures were confronted, and one ninepin tried to knock the other ninepin over.

We all to-day (possibly with a coldness reminiscent of the insect-world) are in each other's vitals—overlap, intersect, and are Siamese to any extent.

Promiscuity is normal ; such separating things as love, hatred, friendship are superseded by a more realistic and logical passion.

The human form still runs, like a wave, through the texture or body of existence, and therefore of art.

But just as the old form of egotism is no longer fit for such conditions as now prevail, so the isolated human figure of most ancient Art is an anachronism.

THE ACTUAL HUMAN BODY BECOMES OF LESS IMPORTANCE EVERY DAY.

It now, literally, EXISTS much less.

Love, hatred, etc., imply conventional limitations.

All clean, clear cut emotions depend on the element of strangeness, and surprise and primitive detachment.

Dehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World.

One feels the immanence of some REALITY more than any former human beings can have felt it.

This superseding of specific passions and easily determinable emotions by such uniform, more animal instinctively logical Passion of Life, of different temperatures, but similar in kind, is, then, the phenomenon to which we would relate the most fundamental tendencies in present art, and by which we would gauge it's temper.

ORCHESTRA OF MEDIA.

Painting, with the Venetians, was like pianoforte playing as compared to the extended complicated orchestra aspired to by the Artist to-day.

Sculpture of the single sententious or sentimental figure on the one hand, and painting as a dignified accomplished game on the other, is breaking up and caving in.

The medium (of oil-paint) is modifiable, like an instrument. Few to-day have forsaken it for the more varied instruments, or orchestra of media, but have contented themselves with violating it.

The reflection back on the present, however, of this imminent extension—or, at least the preparation for this taking-in of other media—has for effect a breaking up of the values of beauty, etc., in contemporary painting.

The surfaces of cheap manufactured goods, woods, steel, glass, etc., already appreciated for themselves, and their possibilities realised, have finished the days of fine paint.

Even if painting remain intact, it will be much more supple and extended, containing all the elements of discord and “ugliness” consequent on the attack against traditional harmony.

The possibilities of colour, exploitation of discords, odious combinations, etc., have been little exploited.

A painter like Matisse has always been harmonious, with a scale of colour pleasantly Chinese.

Kandinsky at his best is much more original and bitter. But there are fields of discord untouched.

THE MELODRAMA OF MODERNITY.

1. Of all the tags going, "Futurist," for general application, serves as well as any for the active painters of to-day.

It is picturesque and easily inclusive.

It is especially justifiable here in England where no particular care or knowledge of the exact (or any other in matters of art) signification of this word exist.

In France, for instance, no one would be likely to apply the term "Futurist" to Picasso or Derain; for everyone there is familiar with Marinetti's personality, the detail of his propaganda, and also the general history of the Cubist movement—Picasso's part, Derain's part, and the Futurist's.

On the other hand, here in England, Marquet, Vuillard, Besnard, even, I expect, would be called "Futurist" fairly often.

As "Futurist," in England, does not mean anything more than a painter, either a little, or very much, occupying himself with questions of a renovation of art, and showing a tendency to rebellion against the domination of the Past, it is not necessary to correct it.

We may hope before long to find a new word.

If Kandinsky had found a better word than "Expressionist" he might have supplied a useful alternative.

2. Futurism, as preached by Marinetti, is largely Impressionism up-to-date. To this is added his Automobilmism and Nietzsche stunt.

With a lot of good sense and vitality at his disposal, he hammers away in the blatant mechanism of his Manifestos, at his *idée fixe* of Modernity.

From that harsh swarming of animal vitality in almost Eastern cities across the Alps, his is a characteristic voice, with execration making his teeth ragged, blood weltering and leaping round his eyes.

He snarls and bawls about the Past and Future with all his Italian practical directness.

This is of great use when one considers with what sort of person the artist to-day has to deal!

His certain success in England is similar to that of Giovanni Grasso. Any spectacular display of temperament carries away the English crowd. With an Italian crowd it has not the same effect. This popular orator again possesses qualities which attach him on the one hand to a vitality possessed by all artists a cut above the senile prig, and on the other hand he has access to the vitality of the People.

3. Futurism, then, in its narrow sense and in the history of modern Painting, is a picturesque, superficial and romantic rebellion of young Milanese painters against the Academism which surrounded them.

Gino Severini was the most important. Severini, with his little blocks, strips and triangles of colour, "zones" of movement, etc., made many excellent plastic discoveries. I say "was" because to-day there are practically no Futurists, or at least, Automobilmists, left. Balla is the best painter of what was once the Automobilmist group.

4. Modernity, for Severini, consisted in the night cafés of Paris. It is doubtful whether the Future (of his or any one else's ISM) will contain such places.

We all foresee, as I have argued in another place, in a century or so men and women being put to bed at 7 o'clock by a state nurse (in separate beds, of course!).

No cocottes for Ginos of the Future !

With their careful choice of motor omnibuses, cars, lifes, aeroplanes, etc., the Automobilist pictures were too "picturesque," melodramatic and spectacular, besides being undigested and naturalistic to a fault.

Severini only seemed to me to escape, by his feeling for pattern, and certain clearness and restraint (even in the excesses of a gigantic set-piece).

The Melodrama of Modernity is the subject of these fanciful but rather conventional Italians.

Romance about science is a thing we have all been used to for many years, and we resent it being used as a sauce for a dish claiming to belong strictly to emancipated Futures.

A motor omnibus can be just as romantically seen as Carisbrooke Castle or Shakespeare's house at Stratford.

I do not hold a brief opposed to Romance, but most of the Futurist work, is in essence as sentimental as Boccioni's large earlier picture at the Sackville Gallery Show, called the BUILDING OF A CITY.

This was sheer unadulterated Belgian romance : blue clouds of smoke, pawing horses, heroic grimy workers, sententious sky-scrappers, factory chimneys' etc.

If, divested of this element of illustration, H. G. Wells romance, and pedantic naturalism, Marinetti's movement could produce profounder visions with this faith of novelty, something fine might be done.

For it does not matter what incentive the artist has to creation.

Schiller always kept a few rotten pears in his drawer, and when he felt the time had come to write another lyric, he would go to his drawer and take out a rotten pear. He would sniff and sniff. When he felt the lyric rising from the depths of him in response, he would put the pear back and seize the pen.

If "dynamic" considerations intoxicate Balla and make him produce significant patterns (as they do), all is well.

5. But as I have said, Balla is not a "Futurist" in the Automobilist sense.

He is a rather violent and geometric sort of Expressionist.

His paintings are purely abstract : he does not give you bits of automobiles, or complete naturalistic fragments of noses and ears, or any of the Automobilist bag of tricks, in short.

So in the present and latest exhibition of Futurists at the Doré Gallery there are no Futurists left, except perhaps the faithful lieutenant Boccioni : although he too becomes less representative and more abstract every day.

As to the rest, they seem to have become quite conventional and dull Cubists or Picassoists, with nothing left of their still duller Automobilism but letters and bits of newspaper stuck all over the place.

6. Cannot Marinetti, sensible and energetic man that he is, be induced to throw over this sentimental rubbish about Automobiles and Aeroplanes, and follow his friend Balla into a purer region of art? Unless he wants to become a rapidly fossilizing monument of puerility, cheap reaction and sensationalism, he had better do so.

THE EXPLOITATION OF VULGARITY.

When an ugly or uncomely person appeared on the horizon of their daily promenade, Ingres' careful wife would raise her shawl protectingly, and he would be spared a sight that would have offended him.

To-day the Artist's attention would be drawn, on the contrary, to anything particularly hideous or banal, as a thing not to be missed.

Stupidity has always been exquisite and ugliness fine.

Aristophanes loved a fool as much as any man his shapely sweetheart.

Perhaps his weakness for fools dulled his appreciation of the Sages.

No doubt in a perfectly "wholesome," classic state of existence, Humour would be almost absent, and discords would be scrupulously shunned, or exist only as a sacred disease that an occasional man was blighted with.

We don't want to-day things made entirely of gold (but gold mixed with flint or grass, diamond with paste, etc.) any more than a monotonous paradise or security would be palatable.

But the condition of our enjoyment of vulgarity, discord, cheapness or noise is an unimpaired and keen disgust with it.

It depends, that is, on sufficient health, not to relinquish the consciousness of what is desirable and beneficial.

Rare and cheap, fine and poor, these contrasts are the male and female, the principle of creation to-day.

This pessimism is the triumphant note in modern art.

A man could make just as fine an art in discords, and with nothing but "ugly" trivial and terrible materials, as any classic artist did with only "beautiful" and pleasant means.

But it would have to be a very tragic and pure creative instinct.

Life to-day is giddily frank, and the fool is everywhere serene and blatant.

Human insanity has never flowered so colossally.

Our material of discord is to an unparalleled extent forcible and virulent.

Pleasantness, too, has an edge or a softness of unusual strength.

The world may, at any moment, take a turn, and become less vulgar and stupid.

The great artist must not miss this opportunity.

But he must not so dangerously identify himself with vulgarity as Picasso, for instance, inclines to identify himself with the appearance of Nature.

There are possibilities for the great artist in the picture postcard.

The ice is thin, and there is as well the perpetual peril of virtuosity.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE.

The passion of his function to order and transmute, is exasperated in the artist of to-day, by vacuity and complication, as it was in the case of the imitators of Romanticism before "Wild Nature."

One of the most obvious questions that might have been put to any naturalistic painter of twenty years ago, or for that matter to Rembrandt or a Japanese, was this :

Is there no difference, or if so, what difference, between a bad piece of architecture or a good piece represented in a painting, or rather would it be a greater type of art that had for representative content objects finer in themselves?

This kind of argument, of course, refers only to the representative painter.

Rembrandt might have replied that there is no fine man or poor man, that vulgarity is as good as nobleness : that in his paintings all things were equal. But in taking Rembrandt the point may be confused by sentimentality about a great artist, "touching" old beggar man, "soul-painting," etc.

(Just as profound sentimentality might arise about Newness, Brand Newness, as about age, ruins, mould and dilapidation.)

Every one admits that the interior of an A. B. C. shop is not as fine as the interior of some building conceived by a great artist.

Yet it would probably inspire an artist to-day better than the more perfect building.

With its trivial ornamentation, mirrors, cheap marble tables, silly spacing, etc.: it nevertheless suggests a thousand great possibilities for the painter.

Where is the advantage, then, for the painter to-day, for Rembrandt or for a Japanese, in having a better standard of taste in architecture, finer dresses, etc.?

2. If it were not that vulgarity and the host of cheap artisans compete in earning with the true artist immeasurably more than in a "great period of art," the Present would be an ideal time for creative genius.

Adverse climatic conditions—drastic Russian winters, for example—account for much thought and profundity.

England which stands for anti-Art, mediocrity and brainliness among the nations of Europe, should be the most likely place for great Art to spring up.

England is just as unkind and inimical to Art as the Arctic zone is to Life.

This is the Siberia of the mind.

If you grant this, you will at once see the source and reason of my very genuine optimism.

OUR VORTEX.

I.

Our vortex is not afraid of the Past : it has forgotten it's existence.

Our vortex regards the Future as as sentimental as the Past.

The Future is distant, like the Past, and therefore sentimental.

The mere element " Past " must be retained to sponge up and absorb our melancholy.

Everything absent, remote, requiring projection in the veiled weakness of the mind, is sentimental.

The Present can be intensely sentimental—especially if you exclude the mere element " Past."

Our vortex does not deal in reactive Action only, nor identify the Present with numbing displays of vitality.

The new vortex plunges to the heart of the Present.

The chemistry of the Present is different to that of the Past. With this different chemistry we produce a New Living Abstraction.

The Rembrandt Vortex swamped the Netherlands with a flood of dreaming.

The Turner Vortex rushed at Europe with a wave of light.

We wish the Past and Future with us, the Past to mop up our melancholy, the Future to absorb our troublesome optimism.

With our Vortex the Present is the only active thing.

Life is the Past and the Future.

The Present is Art.

II.

Our Vortex insists on water—tight compartments.

There is no Present—there is Past and Future, and there is Art.

Any moment not weakly relaxed and slipped back, or, on the other hand, dreaming optimistically, is Art.

“ Just Life ” or soi-disant “ Reality ” is a fourth quantity, made up of the Past, the Future and Art.

This impure Present our Vortex despises and ignores.

For our Vortex is uncompromising.

We must have the Past and the Future, Life simple, that is, to discharge ourselves in, and keep us pure for non-life, that is Art.

The Past and Future are the prostitutes Nature has provided.

Art is periodic escapes from this Brothel.

Artists put as much vitality and delight into this saintliness, and escape out, as most men do their escapes into similar places from respectable existence.

The Vorticist is at his maximum point of energy when stillest.

The Vorticist is not the Slave of Commotion, but it's Master.

The Vorticist does not suck up to Life.

He lets Life know its place in a Vorticist Universe !

III.

In a Vorticist Universe we don't get excited at what we have invented.

If we did it would look as though it had been a fluke.

It is not a fluke.

We have no Verbotens.

There is one Truth, ourselves, and everything is permitted.

But we are not Templars.

We are proud, handsome and predatory.

We hunt machines, they are our favourite game.

We invent them and then hunt them down.

This is a great Vorticist age, a great still age of artists.

IV.

As to the lean belated Impressionism at present attempting to eke out a little life in these islands :

Our Vortex is fed up with your dispersals, reasonable chicken-men.

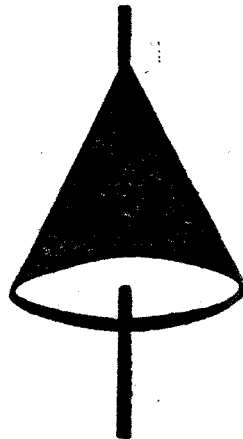
Our Vortex is proud of its polished sides.

Our Vortex will not hear of anything but its disastrous polished dance.

Our Vortex desires the immobile rythm of its swiftmess.

Our Vortex rushes out like an angry dog at your Impressionistic fuss.

Our Vortex is white and abstract with its red-hot swiftmess.



FREDERICK SPENCER GORE.

Born in 1879, Gore died on March 27th, 1914, of pneumonia, after an illness of three days.

Had he lived, his dogged, almost romantic industry, his passion for the delicate objects set in the London atmosphere around him, his grey conception of the artist's life, his gentleness and fineness, would have matured into an abundant personal art, something like Corot and Gessing.

His habit of telling you of things he had his eye on and intended painting three years hence, and all his system of work was with reference to minute and persistent labour, implying a good spell of life, which almost retarded accomplishment.

He projected himself into the years of work before him, and organized queerly what was to be done. He possessed physically, a busy time three years away, as much as to-day.

A boastfully confident attitude to Time's expanse, and absence of recognition of the common need to hurry, characterized him.

Death cut all this short to the dismay of those who had known him from the start, and regarded, confidently like him, this great artist and dear friend as a permanent thing in their lives, and his work as in safe hands and sure of due fulfilment. His leisureliness and confidence were infectious.

His painting as it is, although incomplete, is full of illustrations of a maturer future. His latest work, with an accentuation of structural qualities, a new and suave simplicity, might, in the case of several examples I know, be placed beside that of any of the definitely gracious artists in Europe.

The welter of pale and rather sombre colour filling London back-yards, the rather distant, still and sultry well-being of a Camden Town summer, in trivial crescents with tall trees and toy trains, was one of his favourite themes.

He was a painter of the London summer, of heavy dull sunlight, of exquisite, respectable and stodgy houses, more than anybody else.

The years he spent working on scenes from the London music-halls brought to light a new world of witty illusion. I much prefer Gore's paintings of the theatre to Dégas'. Gore gets everything that Dégas with his hard and rather paltry science apparently did not see.

He had an admirable master for his drawing in Mr. Walter Sickert, to whose advice and friendship he no doubt owed more than to anybody else.

But he was quite independent of Mr. Sickert, or of any group of artists, and even diametrically opposed to many of his friends in his feeling towards the latest movement in painting, which from the first he gave his word for. Some of his work towards the end belonged rather to this present movement than to any other.

The memorial exhibition of his work shortly to be held should, if possible, since the Cabaret Club has closed, contain the large paintings he did for that place.

TO SUFFRAGETTES.

A WORD OF ADVICE.

**IN DESTRUCTION, AS IN OTHER THINGS,
stick to what you understand.**

WE MAKE YOU A PRESENT OF OUR VOTES.

ONLY LEAVE WORKS OF ART ALONE.

**YOU MIGHT SOME DAY DESTROY A
GOOD PICTURE BY ACCIDENT.**

THEN !—

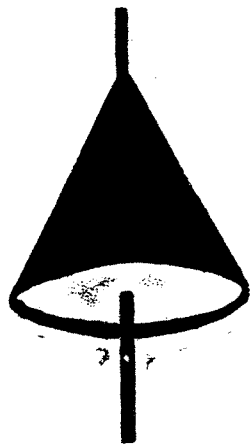
MAIS SOYEZ BONNES FILLES !

NOUS VOUS AIMONS !

**WE ADMIRE YOUR ENERGY. YOU AND ARTISTS
ARE THE ONLY THINGS (YOU DON'T MIND
BEING CALLED THINGS?) LEFT IN ENGLAND
WITH A LITTLE LIFE IN THEM.**

**IF YOU DESTROY A GREAT WORK OF ART you
are destroying a greater soul than if you
annihilated a whole district of London.**

LEAVE ART ALONE, BRAVE COMRADES !





Brighton Pier

Spencer Gore.



Richmond Houses

Spencer Gore.

VORTEX.

POUND.

The vortex is the point of maximum energy,

It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency.

We use the words "greatest efficiency" in the precise sense—as they would be used in a text book of MECHANICS.

You may think of man as that toward which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic substance RECEIVING impressions.

OR you may think of him as DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance, as CONCEIVING instead of merely observing and reflecting.

THE PRIMARY PIGMENT.

The vorticist relies on this alone; on the primary pigment of his art, nothing else.

Every conception, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form.

It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself its expression, but which is the most capable of expressing.

THE TURBINE.

**All experience rushes into this vortex. All the energized past, all the past that is living and worthy to live. All MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID,
NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE.**

The DESIGN of the future in the grip of the human vortex. All the past that is vital, all the past that is capable of living into the future, is pregnant in the vortex, NOW.

Hedonism is the vacant place of a vortex, without force, deprived of past and of future, the vertex of a still spool or cone.

Futurism is the disgorging spray of a vortex with no drive behind it, DISPERSAL.

EVERY CONCEPT, EVERY EMOTION PRESENTS ITSELF TO THE VIVID CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOME PRIMARY FORM. IT BELONGS TO THE ART OF THIS FORM. IF SOUND, TO MUSIC; IF FORMED WORDS, TO LITERATURE; THE IMAGE, TO POETRY; FORM, TO DESIGN; COLOUR IN POSITION, TO PAINTING; FORM OR DESIGN IN THREE PLANES, TO SCULPTURE; MOVEMENT TO THE DANCE OR TO THE RHYTHM OF MUSIC OR OF VERSES.

Elaboration, expression of second intensities, of dispersedness belong to the secondary sort of artist. Dispersed arts HAD a vortex.

Impressionism, Futurism, which is only an accelerated sort of impressionism, DENY the vortex. They are the CORPSES of VORTICES. POPULAR BELIEFS, movements, etc., are the CORPSES OF VORTICES. Marinetti is a corpse.

THE MAN.

The vorticist relies not upon similarity or analogy, not upon likeness or mimicry.

In painting he does not rely upon the likeness to a beloved grandmother or to a caressable mistress.

VORTICISM is art before it has spread itself into a state of flaccidity, of elaboration, of secondary applications.

ANCESTRY.

“All arts approach the conditions of music.”—*Pater*.

“An Image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.”—*Pound*.

“You are interested in a certain painting because it is an arrangement of lines and colours.”—*Whistler*.

Picasso, Kandinski, father and mother, classicism and romanticism of the movement.

POETRY.

The vorticist will use only the primary media of his art.

The primary pigment of poetry is the IMAGE.

The vorticist will not allow the primary expression of any concept or emotion to drag itself out into mimicry.

In painting Kandinski, Picasso.

In poetry this by, “H. D.”

Whirl up sea —
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir.

VORTEX.

GAUDIER BRZESKA.

Sculptural energy is the mountain.

Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.

Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses by planes.

The PALEOLITHIC VORTEX resulted in the decoration of the Dordogne caverns.

Early stone-age man disputed the earth with animals.

His livelihood depended on the hazards of the hunt—his greatest victory the domestication of a few species.

Out of the minds primordially preoccupied with animals Font-de-Gaume gained its procession of horses carved in the rock. The driving power was life in the absolute—the plastic expression the fruitful sphere.

The sphere is thrown through space, it is the soul and object of the vortex—

The intensity of existence had revealed to man a truth of form—his manhood was strained to the highest potential—his energy brutal—HIS OPULENT MATURITY WAS CONVEX.

The acute fight subsided at the birth of the three primary civilizations. It always retained more intensity East.

The HAMITE VORTEX of Egypt, the land of plenty—

Man succeeded in his far reaching speculations—Honour to the divinity!

Religion pushed him to the use of the VERTICAL which inspires awe. His gods were self made, he built them in his image, and RETAINED AS MUCH OF THE SPHERE AS COULD ROUND THE SHARPNESS OF THE PARALLELOGRAM.

He preferred the pyramid to the mastaba.

The fair Greek felt this influence across the middle sea.

The fair Greek saw himself only. HE petrified his own semblance.

**HIS SCULPTURE WAS DERIVATIVE his feeling for form secondary.
The absence of direct energy lasted for a thousand years.**

The Indians felt the hamitie influence through Greek spectacles. Their extreme temperament inclined towards asceticism, admiration of non-desire as a balance against abuse produced a kind of sculpture without new form perception—and which is the result of the peculiar

VORTEX OF BLACKNESS AND SILENCE.

PLASTIC SOUL IS INTENSITY OF LIFE BURSTING THE PLANE.

The Germanic barbarians were verily whirled by the mysterious need of acquiring new arable lands. They moved restlessly, like strong oxen stampeding.

The SEMITIC VORTEX was the lust of war. The men of Elam, of Assur, of Bebel and the Kheta, the men Armenia and those of Canaan had to slay each other crully for the possession of fertile valleys. Their gods sent them the vertical direction, the earth, the SPHERE.

They elevated the sphere in a splendid squatness and created the HORIZONTAL.

From Sargon to Amir-nasir-pal men built man-headed bulls in horizontal flight-walk. Men flayed their their captives alive and erected howling lions : THE ELONGATED HORIZONTAL SPHERE BUTTRESSED ON FOUR COLUMNS, and their kingdoms disappeared.

Christ flourished and perished in Yudah.

Christianity gained Africa, and from the seaports of the Mediterranean it won the Roman Empire.

The stampeding Franks came into violent contact with it as well as with the Groeco-Roman tradition.

They were swamped by the remote reflections of the two vortices of the West.

Gothic sculpture was but a faint echo of the HAMITO-SEMITIC energies through Roman traditions, and it lasted half a thousand years, and it wilfully divagated again into the Greek derivation from the land of Amen-Ra.

VORTEX OF A VORTEX !!

VORTEX IS THE POINT ONE AND INDIVISIBLE !

VORTEX IS ENERGY ! and it gave forth SOLID EXCREMENTS in the quattro é cinco cento, LIQUID until the seventeenth century, GASES whistle till now. THIS is the history of form value in the West until the FALL OF IMPRESSIONISM.

The black-haired men who wandered through the pass of Khotan into the valley of the YELLOW RIVER lived peacefully tilling their lands, and they grew prosperous.

Their paleolithic feeling was intensified. As gods they had themselves in the persons of their human ancestors—and of the spirits of the horse and of the land and the grain.

THE SPHERE SWAYED.

THE VORTEX WAS ABSOLUTE.

The Shang and Chow dynasties produced the convex bronze vases.

The features of Tao-t'ie were inscribed inside of the square with the rounded corners—the centuple spherical frog presided over the inverted truncated cone that is the bronze war drum.

THE VORTEX WAS INTENSE MATURITY. Maturity is fecundity—they grew numerous and it lasted for six thousand years.

The force relapsed and they accumulated wealth, forsook their work, and after losing their form-understanding through the Han and T'ang dynasties, they founded the Ming and found artistic ruin and sterility.

THE SPHERE LOST SIGNIFICANCE AND THEY ADMIRERD THEMSELVES.

During their great period off-shoots from their race had landed on another continent.—After many wanderings some tribes settled on the highlands of Yukatan and Mexico.

When the Ming were losing their conception, these nei-Mongols had a flourishing state. Through the strain of warfare they submitted the Chinese sphere to horizontal treatment much as the Semites had done. Their cruel nature and temperament supplied them with a stimulant: THE VORTEX OF DESTRUCTION.

Besides these highly developed peoples there lived on the world other races inhabiting Africa and the Ocean islands.

When we first knew them they were very near the paleolithic stage. Though they were not so much dependent upon animals their expenditure of energy was wide, for they began to till the land and practice crafts rationally, and they fell into contemplation before their sex: the site of their great energy: THEIR CONVEX MATURITY.

They pulled the sphere lengthways and made the cylinder, this is the VORTEX OF FECUNDITY, and it has left us the masterpieces that are known as love charms.

The soil was hard, material difficult to win from nature, storms frequent, as also fevers and other epidemics. They got frightened : This is the VORTEX OF FEAR, its mass is the POINTED CONE, its masterpieces the fetishes.

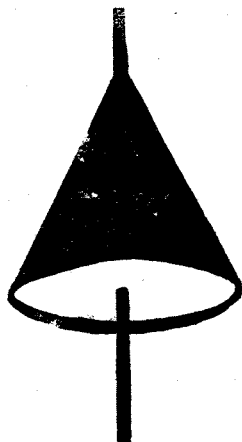
And WE the moderns : Epstein, Brancusi, Archipenko, Dunikowski, Modigliani, and myself, through the incessant struggle in the complex city, have likewise to spend much energy.

The knowledge of our civilisation embraces the world, we have mastered the elements.

We have been influenced by what we liked most, each according to his own individuality, we have crystallized the sphere into the cube, we have made a combination of all the possible shaped masses—concentrating them to express our abstract thoughts of conscious superiority.

Will and consciousness are our

VORTEX.



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