BROOM

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BROOM

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FOUR STEICHEN PRINTS

The earth, the rock and the oil of the earth, the slippery
frozen places of the earth, these are for homes of rainbow
bubbles, curves of the circles of a bubble, curves of the
arcs of the rainbow prisms—between sun and rock they lift
to the sun their foam feather and go.

Throw your neck back, throw it back till the neck muscles shine
at the sun, till the falling hair at the scalp is a black cry,
till limbs and knee bones form an altar and a girl's torso over
the fire rock torso shouts hi yi, hi yee, h a l l e l u j a h.

Goat girl caught in the brambles, deerfoot or foxhead, ankles
and hair of feeders of the wind, let all the covering burn,
let all stopping a naked plunger from plunging naked, let it
all burn in this wind fire, let the fire have it in a fast
crunch and a flash.

They threw you in a pot of thorns with a wreath in your hair
and the bunches of grapes over your head—your hard little
buttocks in the thorns—then the black eyes, the white teeth,
the nameless muscular flair of you, rippled and twisted in
sliding rising scales of laughter; the earth never had a
gladder friend; pigs, goats, deer, tawny tough-haired jaguars
might understand you.

CARL SANDBURG

RICHARD SEEWALD

Porto Longone — Elba

EXTRAVAGANZAS

MARCHE FUNÈBRE

I was despondent that day — till I met the funeral procession. It was going my way, up the Boulevard Saint Michel. No reason, I argued, why I should turn aside. Never had I interfered with the dead. Why should I allow the dead to interfere with me ?

So I walked on the pavement, parallel to the mourners who walked in the middle of the street. How far, I wondered, will these black sorrowing ladies and gentlemen continue to follow a corpse ? Perhaps to the gate of the cemetery, into the graveyard. Why not even further, into the grave itself ? There was nothing to shock me in this supposition. For surely they must have tendencies towards death — those who follow the dead.

Watch them — the mourners. See their dun sightless faces. Watch their gestures, listen to the noises they make.

Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.
Right leg.	Left leg.
Sniff.	Blow of the nose.
Right leg.	Sniff.
Left leg..	Blow of the nose.
Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.

What does this prove ? That they live ? Not a bit of it. I know of toys sold on the Grand Boulevards at Christmas that can make at the same time five gestures and as many noises. You would not call them alive.

These mourners are dead. They follow the man in the coffin. Why? He is their chief. The chief of the dead. Of course there is a difference. He is ahead of them, beyond; in a rarer plane, higher; in a sublimated clique. Having attained he has ceased to aspire. Or rather he aspires at his ease. No moving of legs and blowing of noses in his sublime set. He has reached the silent, the motionless, the forever recumbent. Gloriously dead he is, flat on his back. Pettishly dead are the mourners, still on the march.

But I, though despondent, was alive. I followed no dead chief. Instead I followed the sad and merry, random and often mechanical cross purposes of life. People around and about me, in front and behind, were also alive — everyone of them. That girl with the loaf of bread in her arms was alive. Later, she or someone else, would set live teeth into the crust. The priest with the small cruel eyes was alive; doubtless he was subtly compromising with the serpent as he muttered his Pater. That mason was alive, you had but to watch him brawnily mixing mortar and with disdain spitting. Alive those determined people deepening the rut to the workshop. Alive those less determined ones, those who looked at advertisements wistfully. Yes, all of us were alive. That moment I was almost glad.

Up the Boulevard Saint Michel moved the funeral procession. First the black horses, like death lackadaisical. The coachmen, corpses rouged by the wind, parodying grimly, pianissimo, the gestures of the hack drivers of the living. The coach where the chief reposed in dead state. Then the mourners, on the apathetic march:

Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.
Right leg.	Left leg.
Sniff.	Blow of the nose.
Right leg.	Sniff.
Left leg.	Blow of the nose.
Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.

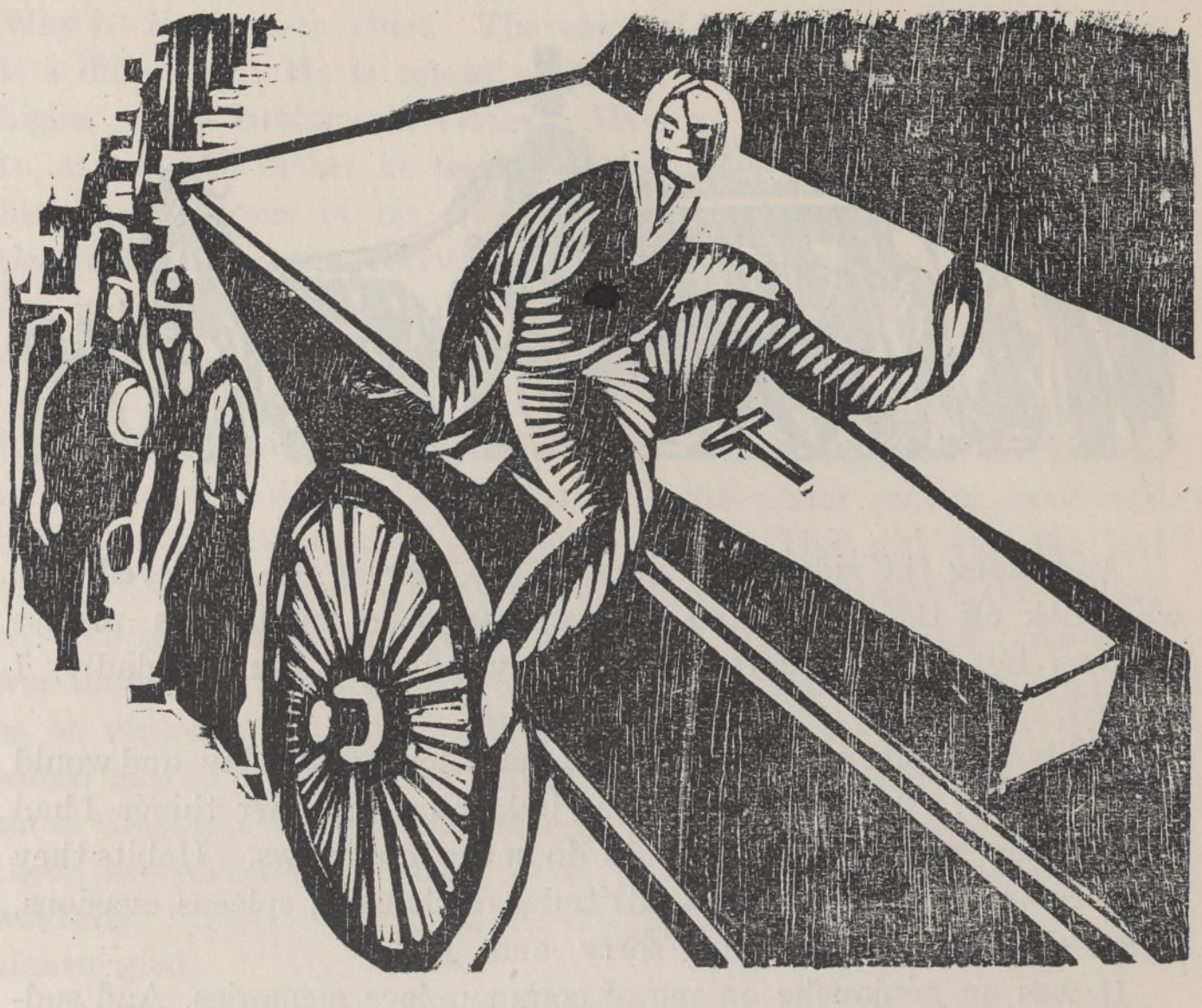
And along the sidewalk, a little in the rear of the dry eyed men who took off their hats and the women who made less precise gestures but looked more convincingly affected, almost gladly, I walked.

Suddenly I remembered a thing I had done yesterday and would do tomorrow. And this thing was linked up to other things I had done in the yesterdays and would do in the tomorrows. Habits they were, common tricks, gestures, attitudes of thought, spleens, evasions, resignations, ways of being sorry and glad.

It was an avalanche on me of commonplace memories. And suddenly my soul sickened. It tightened and snarled, made as though to vomit the customary memories. Now it was with a new eye that I regarded the funeral. With a new respect I glanced at the coffin. For he in the coffin was doing a thing unmatched in his memory. His journey up the street, the grandiose manner of it, was for him original and unprecedented. Bitterly, I envied him.

I acted then in a manner peculiar. Very inconspicuously I climbed onto the coach, opened the coffin, removed the body. I settled myself on my back, comfortably. Then, taking my time, I quietly died.

I am sure nobody noticed me, for through a crack in the boards I saw people walking up and down as they do when funerals go by. I even saw a man in a black overcoat who bore a striking resemblance



to me. Possibly this man was I. I was not sure then. I watched him bump into a man and apologize.

Behind, muffled by the walls of my coffin, I heard the march of my mourners:

Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.
Right leg.	Left leg.
Sniff.	Blow of the nose.
Right leg.	Sniff.
Left leg.	Blow of the nose.
Right leg forwards.	Left leg forwards.

Now I was at home. Within and around me, my soul stretched itself, purred. I was content, satisfied. Without doubt I had a vocation for death.

Now and then I looked out on the live world through the crack in my coffin. Men whom I did not know lifted their hats. Many of them were famous men, I was sure, who had never troubled about me during my lifetime. Women looked at me in their charming easily affected ways, sighed, crossed themselves. Good looking women, too, many of them. At last I was appreciated.

But the supreme acknowledgement was in store for me. Suddenly, probably owing to some tangle in the traffic, the coach which bore me stopped. A man who had kept a little in the rear came up to my level. The same man wearing a black overcoat who had reminded me of myself some minutes ago. I examined him carefully, with that impartial thoroughness only practised by the dead. There was no mistaking him. That man was I.

He stopped for a moment, lifted his hat, passed on. Suddenly I felt my soul in and around me swelling with a great pride and joy. This was the crowning gratification and homage. I had come into my own.

LAWRENCE VAIL

THE WARDROBE WITH THE MIRROR DOOR

That mirrored wardrobe on the first floor faced the street and if one opened it a little, one saw the paved bed of a river through transparent and delicate waters.

I am a swimmer ever going against the current, joining my hands like the mystic. Hop ! I dive, hands in form of prow, into the water of the wardrobe mirror, as one who throws himself from the height of a spring-board into the sea.

I find myself, all of a sudden, among some blouses which smell of clean women and vervain.

My voyage had been like the most daring swim of the Channel, and it has remained a secret even to me how I crossed all the liquid glance of the mirror which united the street and the wardrobe like a bridge.

How sweet the repose of this wardrobe ! I touched everything in the obscurity. Silk stockings delicious to crumple, prayer-books bound in ivory, rosaries of mother of pearl, kid gloves exquisite as hands.

Then like the swimmer who comes back to the street by the same way, I threw myself into the water of the mirror and I swam to the other shore, taking the pavement that I was following when I came upon the path of the fourth dimension in front of the mirror which reflected us both, me and the street.

THE SON THAT I WOULD HAVE HAD

I had not had a son and I met the son that I would have had if I had had a son.

— " Father, I would have been your son, the son that you would have had, the son that you should have had, " said this young adolescent to me when I passed out of life into a kind of immense alcove, something like the alcove of a hospital without windows but illuminated by the livid light of a perpetual Sunday.

I looked at him who would have been my son and I said to him :

" I am overjoyed to make your acquaintance, my son, that is to say my son who is not my son . . . I had a desire to know you . . . So it's you ! How curious life would have been if it had been different. "

" I have waited in vain, father, " said the pale adolescent, pale as even a corpse can never be pale.

" What can we do about it, my son ? If only I had known that it was you ! But think, you might have been one of those idiotic sons who think of nothing, who maltreat their parents, and whose mad ambition to tyrannize the world is especially painful to contemplate. . . And they can never be tyrants, they become the most miserable proletariat in the world ; and their fathers, before a pride so ignoble and so little justified, should demolish them . . .

— " Well, you see that I would not have been thus ; I would have been full of common sense, and simplicity, worthy of you . . . "

" I see it now . . . but how could I have guessed it ? If I had known it, I would have found you a mother . . . but there is such a chance of getting an antipathetic son, one of those low vulgar-minded rascals . . . "

He interrupted me :

" Or an antipathetic father. "

" Yes you are right. But I would not have been a bad father, I would not have showed favoritisms, for there is nothing that justifies the hatred of sons as much as the favoritism of fathers. I would have been one of those rare fathers, equitable and capable of feeling himself the son of his son. "

My son, that is to say, the son that I would have had if I had had a son, replied to me :

" I know it well, father. "

And pausing he drew from his pocket a bundle of letters and said to me :

— " Look at the letters that I would have written you. "

This gesture, which made me think of a prisoner who had occupied the hours of his confinement in writing, upset me more than everything, and I saw him, my possible son, bent over the desk of chaos, killing the nostalgia that he had for his father in writing the letters that he would have written him during the absences which would have separated them in life.

The handwriting of these letters was faint as though written with white ink, but in a fine English handwriting, and in the one which I chose from the package, the style was sincere, full of memories, tenderness and solitude.

And I was impatient, tortured without knowing what to say, nor how to exonerate myself ; and tapping the shoulders of the son that I would have had, I said : " Well, my son, I am very glad to have met you. "

I went out of the hall, large as hospital ward, with no windows on either side but nevertheless illuminated by the livid light of an eternal Sunday, that made fluorescent the stucco walls.

ONE HUNDRED ENVELOPES

The dead man, who had expected death, cried out in the other world, with rage, indignation and sorrow:

"And I had just bought a hundred envelopes this very day so that I could write to many people over a long time!"

Really the act of buying one hundred envelopes seems to give an irresistible continuity to life, to put off death until the hundred envelopes are exhausted.

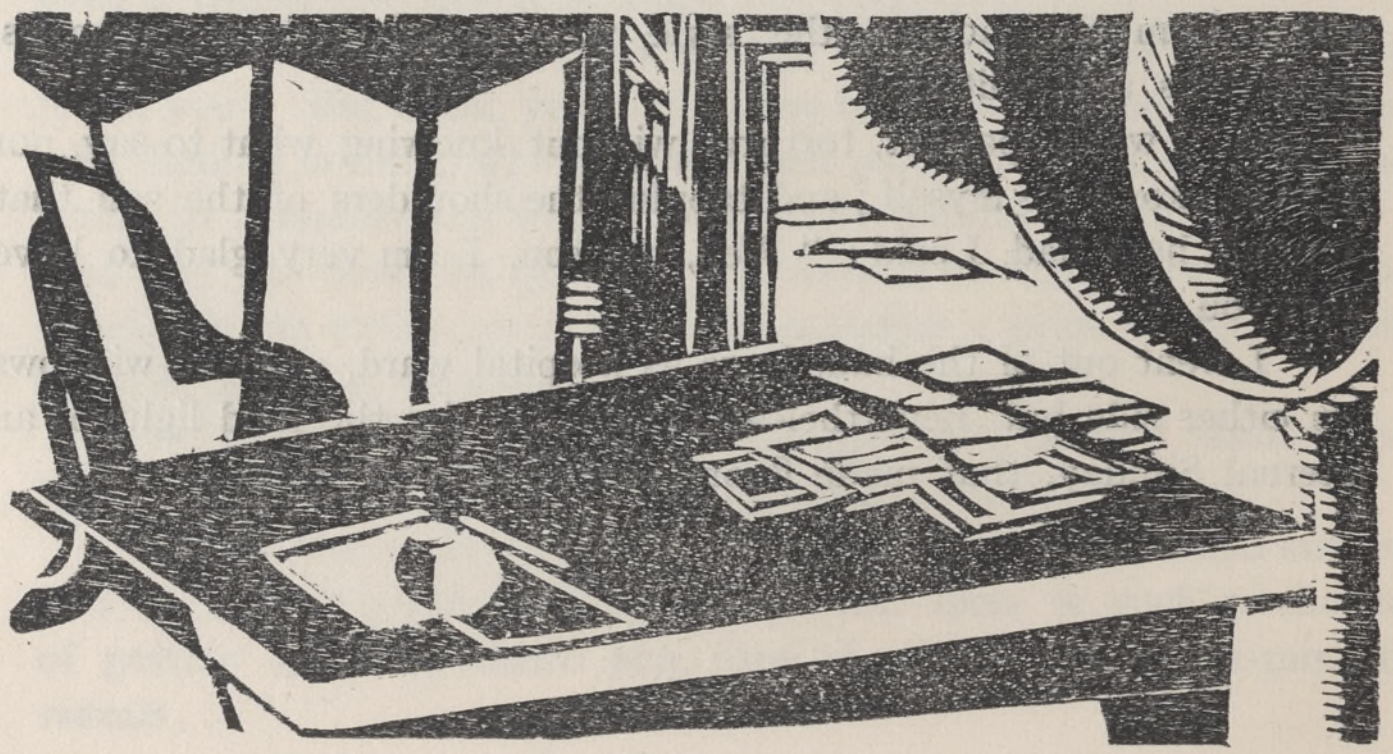
"One hundred envelopes! One hundred envelopes that I had just bought!" cried the dead man, "Such things don't happen!"

Really it would seem that a hundred envelopes should last a lifetime, never be used up, be ready for emergencies, help many people to live, and keep death in abeyance.

Now they would be of no use, even for his funeral announcements, since they were not mourning envelopes.

"One hundred envelopes, bought only yesterday" is all that the dead man can say in the eternal to-day of death.

(Translated from the Spanish of)
RAMON GOMEZ DE LA SERNA



THE POETS AND THE HOUSEWIFE

Once upon a time, on a summer's day, two poets having shut up shop, went out into the country to collect copy, for their stock of this commodity was exhausted.

And they were careful to dress themselves carelessly : and one put on a black collar and black-and-white checked trousers, and the other a cravat of raging scarlet, "for" they thought (though they did not say so) "we must dress the part." And their hats were wide and reckless and the hair beneath their hats was as the thatch upon a broad-eaved barn.

And as they journeyed, poking about with their walking-sticks after the precious substance of their quest, there gathered over their heads the devil of a storm.

And at the proper moment the storm burst and the rain came down and the poets left off seeking for copy and huddled under a hawthorn-tree. And they appeared as two proud exotic birds, lighted down from the Lord knows where.

And there was a lodge near the hawthorn-tree, and the lodge-keeper's wife looked out and, seeing the two, she exclaimed : — "Lord, look what the wet brings out !" And the rain increased fearfully.

And when, after a while, she looked out again the poets were changed, for their bloom was impaired, the rain had clotted their hair, and the scarlet cravat of the one had become crimson from saturation. And rain dripped from all their extremities.

And the lodgekeeper's wife was grieved for them and called out : — "Young men, will you not come in ? Why play the heron who stands lugubrious with his feet in cold water when it is open to you to become as sparrows twittering with gladness beneath the eaves ?"

But they bowed politely and replied : — "Thanks awfully, ma'am, but we are poets and we like it."

And the lodgekeeper's wife was riled and sneered at them, saying :— "They have had a drop too much." But they, smiling deprecatingly upon her, responded :— "Madam, you are pleased to be dry."

"And you," quoth she, "are pleased to be wet." And she clapped-to the window, casting up her eyes and enquiring rhetorically "Did you ever?" and "What next?"

And the rain came down like hell, leaping a foot high from the road and sousing all things.

And after another while the lodgekeeper's wife looked out again, and the two had gathered closer about the trunk of the hawthorn-tree, and they were as two old crows, for their shoulders were up and their beaks were down and they were unbelievably dishevelled.

And, being a charitable woman, she shouted to them again:— "Miserable gentlemen, in the name of civilization and commonsense, come inside."

But they dared not turn their faces to her for fear that the water should run down their necks; so, revolving themselves all of a piece, they replied:— "Renewed thanks, ma'am, but we are very well for we are acquiring copy."

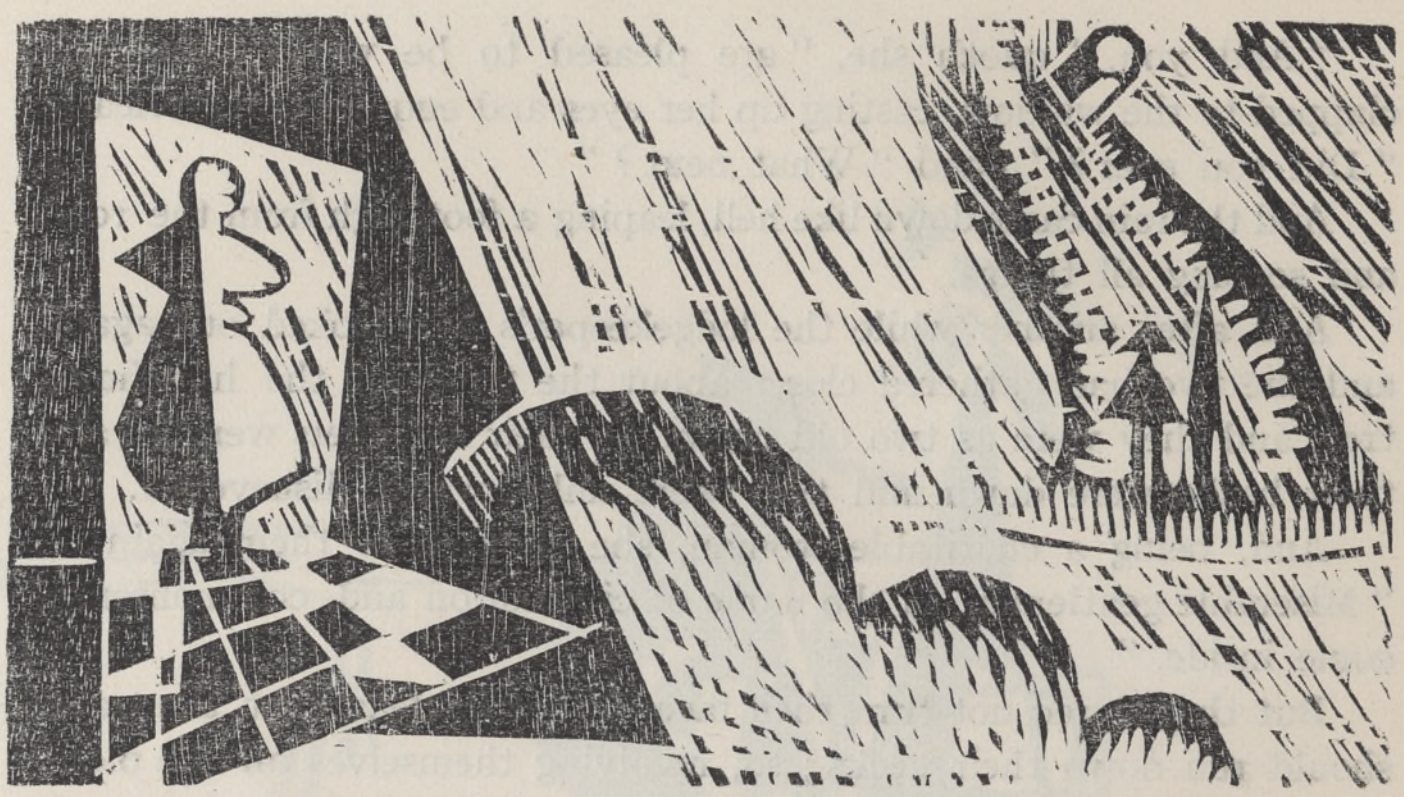
But the lodgekeeper's wife did not understand the wood *copy*, so that she was amazed beyond measure and the power of comment was taken from her.

And the storm, having stormed itself out, abated: and the place was filled with delicious smells of breathing leaves, and the warm sweetness of hawthorn perfumed the air.

And the lodgekeeper's wife looked out from the window a fourth and last time, and the poets were departing. And the tragedy of their appearance was beyond all computing. For the scarlet from the cravat of the one had run down into the bosom of his shirt, so that he was as it were a robin-redbreast. And both were soaked to the uttermost.

And when those poets were returned home, the one found that he had lost a shirt and the other that he had gained a cold. Therefore the one went out and bought a new shirt at seven and six and dear at that, and the other got himself a shilling bottle of Ammoniated Quinine which was tolerably cheap considering.

And the one wrote an ode called *Midsummer Storm* for which he



obtained five guineas, so that (deducting fourpence for stamps and seven and six for the shirt) his net profit was four pounds seventeen and twopence.

But the other could only manage a one-guinea sonnet called *Rain Among Leaves,* so that (deducting fourpence for stamps and a shilling for the Quinine) his net profit was but nineteen and eight.

Thus the two acquired great store of copy (more indeed than they bargained for) and the sum of five pounds sixteen shillings and tenpence thrown in.

But the wife of the lodgekeeper knew nothing of this : therefore she still believes, like many other ill-informed persons, that poets are but unpractical dreamers.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

MONKEY ISLAND

In the Villa Borghese in Rome stands a very high tree, without twigs or bark. The trunk is as smooth as a skull, peeled by the sun and water, and as yellow as a skeleton. It stands bolt upright, without roots, dead, planted in cement like a mast in the middle of an oval island about the size of a river steamer, and is separated from the Kingdom of Italy by a smooth concrete trench. This trench is just so wide, and at the outer edge so deep, that a monkey from the island could neither climb nor spring over it. From the outside it might be done, but not from the inside. The trunk gives a good foothold, and as the mountain tourists say "makes easy pleasant climbing." At the top of it are strong branches running out horizontally in several directions. If one could take off shoes and socks, with heels in, soles pressing well about the rounding of the trunk, and the hands gripping tensely above, how splendidly one could get out and along to the end of that sun-warmed branch, stretching away over the green ostrich feather tips of the pines.

This wonderful island is inhabited by three different families. About fifteen quick moving sinewy fellows, with their girls — each one the size of a child of four — live on the tree. At the foot, in the only house on the island — a palace the form and size of a dog kennel — live a married couple of a much mightier breed, with their tiny little son. This is the King of the island, the Queen, and the Crown Prince. It never happens that the old ones wander far from him on the ground. They sit, one on each side of the little Prince, immovably alert, gazing wide out past their noses. They never leave him, except once in every hour, when the King mounts the tree to inspect his domain. He then strides gravely along the trunk, and it seems as if he will not notice how humbly and mistrustfully the others retreat before him. To

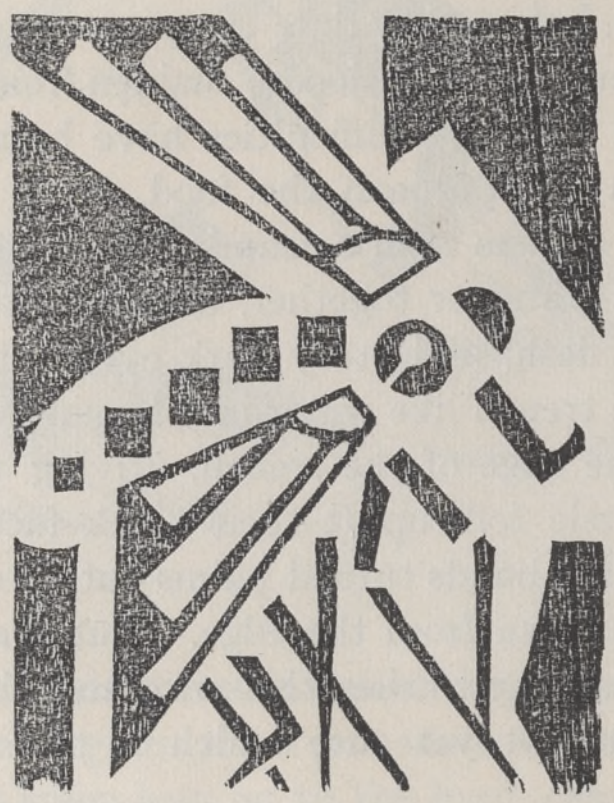
avoid the look of unseemly haste or fear they slide sideways along the branches, till the end gives them no more quarter, and they must take the dangerous steep leap on to the hard cement below. So the King strides on, from one branch to the other, till every branch is empty when he returns again. And the keenest observer cannot tell from his expression if it is a necessary Royal duty, or a mere healthful exercise. Meanwhile, the little Prince sits alone on the roof of the palace, for curiously enough, the Queen disappears each time the King mounts the tree, and through his thin upstanding ears the sun shines coral red. One can scarcely imagine anything more stupid or helpless, and yet so incomprehensibly mantled around with dignity

as this little monkey. The hunted-down-tree-folk, one after the other, slip past him; each one, if he wished, could wring with ease that thin little neck — and they are manifestly ill humoured — but they all make a wide curve around him, and exhibit other signs of the respect and shyness due from them to one of his breed. It takes some time before one discovers that still another monkey folk find shelter on the island. Driven from the air and the surface of the earth, a horde of still smaller monkeys takes refuge in the trench. If one of them unbetimes, dares to show a face on the island, the tree folk hunt him relentlessly back again with insult and bloody disciplines. When food comes, they must wait till every one else is satisfied, and back again in their places, before they dare creep out to capture the scraps. Sometimes a malicious fellow or jocose maiden from the tree, so satisfied apparently that digestive difficulties have begun, waits slyly till the little folk begin to approach the food, then slips down again, whereupon the first comers rush screaming back to the others in the trench, and they all whimper together, and press against each other, till a surface of air, flesh, and crazy dark eyes is formed, welling up the outer wall of the trench like water in a leaning vessel. The persecutor paces along the edge of the trench, driving the wave of terror before him. The little folk uplift their black faces, and fling their arms heavenward, their hands turned palms out, in defence against the evil eye which looks down from the edge. But gradually one of their number is singled out; he pushes this way and that restlessly some five others with him, not yet sure which is the real target of the evil stare.

The soft mass, lame from terror, still holds together. Finally that indifferent stare nails its victim, there is no escape. He is absolutely unable to control his little face, to show neither too much nor too little of the terror that is convulsing him. From second to second it descends deeper, this indifferent gaze from one soul into the soul of another, boring down past all reserve, till hate is bare, and a creature without restraint, or form, or shame, whimpers under its punishment.

With cries of relief the others dash away along the trench. Flickering along, without one gleam of light, as possessed souls in Purgatory, they huddle together at the furthermost edge, chattering gaily.

When all is past, the persecutor climbs with elastic grip the topmost branch of the tree. He sits there erect, motionless and austere, and so remains ages long. Although he is still concealed in the green shimmering clouds of the tree tops, the line of his stare sweeps the summits of the Pincio and the Villa Borghese and beyond them to where the great yellow city lies extended, and back again, indifferently.



TANGLEFOOT

Fly paper "Tanglefoot" is almost twelve inches long by seven broad, and found in every household. It is spread about with a yellow poisonous substance, and comes to us from Canada. When a fly alights on it, not from greed so much as from a certain conventionality — many flies are there already — it sticks with the extremities

of its little legs. First a strange soft feeling arises, just as if we, in the dark, should tread suddenly on a substance, at first nothing but a warm soft unrecognizable resistence, but assuming gradually the horribly familiar characteristics of a human hand, that lies there for some unknown purpose, and grips at us with its five ever clearer shaping fingers.

It first pulls itself up like a paralytic who would mirror immobility, or like a shaky old officer — a little bow-legged truly — as if it stood on a sharp edge. Then it recovers itself, and gathers together every faculty of strength and wisdom it possesses. After a few seconds, the decision is made, and it does all it can by whirring its wings to lift itself. It continues these mad efforts till exhausted, a breathing pause follows, then a new trial. But the intervals, between the struggles grow longer. It now stands quite still, and I feel how helpless it is. Intoxicating vapours rise. Its tongue beats in and out like a tiny hammer. Its head, as if cut out of cocoanut, is brown and hairy, like the nigger idol heads that look like men's. It sways backward and forward, and bends in the joints at the knees, as men do who endeavour to lift an impossible weight, though more tragicly than the effort of a labourer, more like the heroic spirit of uttermost resistance in the limbs of the Laocoon. The time comes finally — it is ever the same — when the need of a moment overcomes the mightiest vitality of that mighty instinct in us all, the will to live. It is the moment when the climber opens his hand involuntarily from the pain in his fingers, and lets go : when the body lost in the snow lies down to sleep like a tired child ; like the moment when the quarry with burning flanks stops short. No longer erect in the old straining terror, it relaxes perceptibly, and, quite human, is caught at once in another place, higher up the legs, or behind on the body, or at the tip of a wing.

When the spiritual exhaustion is overcome, and it is ready again for the life struggle, it is situated so unfavourably that its movements become eccentric and unnatural. It tries to pull itself up, supported by the elbows, the hind legs stretched out ; or it sits down completely,

arms extended like a woman vainly endeavouring to free her hands from the closed fists of a man ; or it lies flat on its stomach, head and arms in front, as if it had fallen in running while holding up its head.

The enemy remains passive, but it gains with every confused and despairing movement. A nothing which is everything. So slowly, that one can scarcely follow its gain until the end, when the victory is completed with unexpected swiftness. The last inner despair floods through the little victim, it lets itself collapse head over heels, or on one side, legs out as if rowing. There it lies like a broken areoplane, one wing in the air, or like the dead body of a horse, or like a sleeper.

Even on the next day, one fly, here and there, will wake again, to agitate a limb in the air or flutter a wing. Sometimes such a movement shudders right through the field after which they all sink again deeper into their death. On the one side of the body, there, where the legs join, is a little flimmering organ which still lives, opening and closing ; one cannot see it without a magnifying glass. It looks like a tiny human eye, that ceaselessly opens and shuts.

THE MOUSE IN THE FODARA VEDLA

Fodara Vedla, Ladian Alps, three thousand feet and more above the peopled country and then still further away ; who has placed a bench here ?

He who sits on this bench, sits tight, mouth closed. Breathing seems strange, a process of nature, not quite natural when one is conscious of it, for then it becomes a happening — like pregnacy in a woman.

The grass, from the year before, is as pallid as if a stone had just rolled off it. All around are hunches and troughs, senseless and numberless ; stunted pines and Alps. From this surging quiet one's vision is thrown again and again to the round yellow cliffs where it

is shivered into hundreds of fragments. It is not excessively high, but above is only blue nothingness. The world is once more as deserted and inhuman as during the creation.

The little mouse has laid in the earth a system of trenches. Mouse deep, with holes in which to disappear, and others to come up from. It darts in circles, stands still, then darts off again in wider rings. The human hand sinks down from the back of the bench. An eye as large and black as the head of a pin looks at it. Is it the tiny, restless, alive eye, or the immovability of the mountains ?

Is it God's will, or the will of a little field mouse that makes you stand shaken and unprepared ?

One puts aside the thought of God, and asks oneself more exactly : — is it the mobility of the eye, or the immovability of the enormous mountains ? And helpless, one perceives that they are one and the same thing . . .

(*Translated from the German of*)
ROBERT MUSIL

THE SNOW MAN

The Square was at afternoon ; snow fell : straight, monotonous, unflurried ; it made little cones on the tops of posts, it made hawsers out of wires, it amplified every twig on every tree, it made the roofs look thatched, it filled foot-prints and wheel-tracks. A man paused in one of the curving pathways, and having paused stayed there. There was nowhere for him to go, he was not cold nor hungry nor thirsty nor sleepy any more, nor had he any elation about anything. As he stood there motionless looking across the square, his hands deep in the pockets of his long overcoat, the snow made a high-peaked fool's cap out of his derby hat, put epaulets on his shoulders, changed the color of his coat from black to white. Until presently the man was obliterated except for the end of his pipe, which smoked, notwithstanding the snow that fell into it, though the stem, too, had its little cresting of snow like the tops of the iron fences.

Some urchins of the street came by, shuffling lanes in the snow with their feet. "Let's make a snow man," one of them yelled.

"Here's one started," the others said, and they heaped the snow about the man's feet, and built it up about his legs, his body, his arms, his shoulders.

"Aw, leave the pipe," screamed one.

They covered his head about with snow. He was not very tall. And in the top of his snow-cap they stuck a dead twig from a tree. The pipe kept on smoking. Then, as it was dusk, the boys, after making eyes, nose and mouth for their snow man and buttons down the front of his coat, with bits of blackened sticks from the trees, went home. And the snow stopped, and no more smoke came out of the snow man's pipe, and as the watch went on their rounds they each whacked at the

snow man in a friendly way with their night-sticks, to keep warm, and because they must whack somebody. But the snow man had quite frozen.

As the extinguisher of lamps hurried that way over the ice, putting out the street lights at six the next morning, he thought he heard a voice asking him for a light. But looking around and seeing no one but the snow man, and being intent upon putting out the lights and getting to the corner for a cup of coffee, he paid little attention. When all the lights in the square were out and the sun came up, more boys passed that way.

"See the snow guy wid de pipe," they said, and forthwith, following the instinct of their race, set to work to knock the pipe out of the snow man's mouth.

This accomplished, they decided to bombard him. After many lumps of ice had struck the snow man on his chest, on his head, on his arms, on his ears, he fell down, and the boys walked on him.

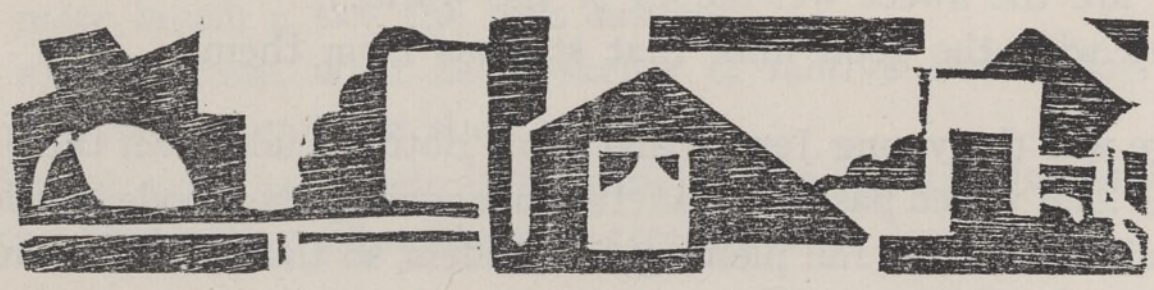
"He's a stiff," they commented, and went their way hooting.

In the full splendour of forenoon, when the twigs of all the trees, encased in ice, were gossamer arabesques against the sky, and men with spades were scraping all the sidewalks, making hoarse sounds, one of the watch, striding past, paused, and surveyed the prostrate snow man.

"Get on out of this," he ordered, and smote the soles of the snow man's feet with his stave, first one and then the other, with the accomplished tattoo of the sole-beater.

But the snow man lay quite still.

DONALD CORLEY



FOUR ETUDES

1.

The forenoon sleeps peacefully in the heat
of the vast stupefying sun. The fruit trees
and green plants in the orchard bleach and suffer
unthinkingly and still there blows no breeze,
but carries to us gnats and stinging flies.

The parched air permits no murmured thought,
and light beats down, while the earth mutely fries. . .

In the intense silence time flows unseen
from the glistening ether over the hot pale green
of the motionless fields.

2.

Speckled cows graze in humble pastures,
blotted against the richness of a long hill,
while a chance cloud above keeps them in shadow.

Heads bent in the invisible vassalage,
they are the sweet wet-nurses of the world,
heavy with the good milk that streams from them . . .

There was the young Jersey that went rioting madly over the pasture, her long yoked passions buffeting her against the wooden enclosures, and died with a rail piercing her udders, so that the blood mingled with the milk.

3.

— " Having turned this trying hill, we may rest here and regard the valleys below, the confronting mountain, and the many purple dips of the earth-crust in the clouded distance, but above all this singularly charming valley at its tranquil level, whose suavity softens even the flow of sunlight into it.

" Let us hold this height, viewing the valley at our feet and many others, including the occasionally glimpsed stream which gutted them, not to speak of the numberless hills and mountains so entwined in their uncertain directions and distances, that it all but gives one the vertigo to eye them."

— " But come, I grow faint here, as if my identity were escaping from me. No, let us rather go down into this valley with its yellow fields, than stay here . . . Now see, how, with the hills running sheer against the sky, locking us in so there is apparently no egress, we are within our microcosm again ! "

4.

In the whole valley there was but one light,
a lamp in a farm-house shooting through four windows ;
and the dark hummed with the irresolute voices of the fields.
But the uneasy darkness could not bend or silence
the small still light,
which from the four windows
past fronting trees stabbed long yellow lines
toward the four corners of the valley, where they lay
demolished at the feet of the hills.

How more lavish a sky the hills suspend,
with what largesse, what helter-skelter of motive and tenor
do the busy and voluble stars complain,
the distant suns and their broods of planets drench the fields,
and the Milky Way filter through tree-tops ?

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

GEORGE MOORE, AESTHETE

George Moore's experience of life has been exceptional, and there are phases of life with which he is not familiar but it is his idiosyncrasy not to qualify. He is an aesthete, a man of supreme accomplishement in presenting sensation. To any but one who has made a specialty of sensation, he seems superficial, but a nerve is a nerve and his expertness as an observer makes one feel as if sensation might at any time wander all the way to the heart as indeed it does in Esther Waters. His introducing in his work so many imagined instances of suffering illustrates this aesthetic sensitiveness and is a marvel of contrast to the unconcern of such a writer as Defoe, who tells in Robinson Crusoe of the hungry wildcat :

" I tossed her a bit of biscuit, though by the way I was not very free of it, for my store was not great : however, I spared her a bit, I say, and she went to it, smelled of it, and ate it, and looked (as pleased) for more, but I thanked her, and could spare no more ; so she marched off "

and of the sleeping lion :

" I took the best aim I could with the first piece to have shot him in the head, but he lay so with his leg raised a little above his nose, that the slugs hit his leg about the knee, and broke the bone.... I took a second piece immediately, and though he began to move off fired again, and shot him into the head, and had the pleasure to see him drop, and make but little noise, but lay struggling for life. ... This was indeed game to us, but this was no food, and I was very sorry to lose three charges of powder and shot upon a creature that was good for nothing to us. ... I bethought myself, however ; ... at last we got off the hide of him, and spreading it on top of our cabin, the sun effectually dried it in two days' time and it afterward served me to lie upon. "

Defoe is austere ; George Moore, the obverse ; the sense of sense is so poignant that there is no room for pity. In Hail and Farewell, he speaks of his and Yeats's altering of Edward Martyn's play The Tale of a Town, with Edward Martyn in an adjoining room and says, " We were like two boys threading a

bluebottle." Héloïse said, "I cannot sit reading with the skin of the animal about my knees that howled to me for help" and Héloïse and Abélard "continued talking through a cloudy morning of May, puzzled to discover in their imagination how a wolf and her cub had come by their deaths." There is a tinge of misery in this pathological humanitarianism.

Aesthetic feeling sometimes plays Mr. Moore false, for narrator though he is, apparently impeccable in conversation and in his conception of dramatic interval, there are in Héloïse and Abélard, passages in which crudeness, mawkishness, indecision and lame unnatural cadence spring out at one: "A good baby, the best of babies Héloïse said; I believe that there was never so good a child. . . . Dear wife, dear wife! he said overcoming the suffocation of the moment." *The Spectator* remarks that Mr. Moore has chosen to write "in a kind of diluted Wardour Street," that "his characters do not say Tush! or Zooks!" and that "he has avoided the worst blunders of the 'hath done' style, but. . . there is too much talk of 'ousels' and 'willow beds;'" a not unfair criticism. One is merely aware of these flaws upon perfection as of the minor blemish of cover and print. One expects the taste of an aesthete to be impeccable; then why the pale print and clamorous bourgeois binding of the American edition?

In common with other aesthetes, Mr. Moore sacrifices the austere beauty of the athlete; this would perhaps be his defence for so repeatedly making a study of themes which involve the disintegrating factor of sensuality. Perhaps he would have one charitably transfer to him Héloïse's defence of Abélard when she says, "If we are to have genius we must put up with the consequences of genius, a thing the world will never do; it wants geniuses but it would like them to be just like other people." The average person has seen genius walking erect too many times to accept the implication that genius progresses best when it crawls; innate sensuality is a mildew and in defense of an author who is aesthete pure and simple, one recalls Abélard's observation respecting Madelon: "We owe her a good deal. . . and we are paying with our patience all that we owe her."

As in The Brook Kerith Mr. Moore is not a theologian, so in Héloïse and Abélard, he is not a philosopher. His knowledge is a knowledge of living, not a concept of life; his philosophical discussions no more attain the illusion of realness than he seems in them, like Socrates. To those deeply interested in philosophy, it is irritating that philosophy should be made a back drop to "a rampage of the passions," but Mr. Moore's imperviousness to disapproval is part of his virtue and in Héloïse and Abélard, it is not twelfth century scholastic philosophy but George Moore that we read. In Abélard, Madelon, Héloïse and Fulbert, we have four aspects of him.

In Abélard, we have the Arabian nights concept of masculine favour in

which the grand-vizier indicates with his sceptre, which maiden shall advance — a contrast indeed, to the " charity in armour " of mediaevelism — to Rudel of whom Abélard says that he walked " with a stoop, deep in his dream, seeing his princess far more clearly than the women about him " and to the romantic self abasement of the seventeenth century :

" Mon Dieu, aide-moi !
That I with the primroses of my fresh wit,
May tumble her tyranny under my feet.
Donc je serai un jeune roi. "

Instead of being " animated by a durable ecstasy. . . which rendered him capable of haughty thoughts and valiant deeds, " Abélard was demoralized, finding in Héloïse, man's natural enemy ; this fact Mr. Moore elaborates, quoting Proverbs, " I have found woman bitterer than death; . . . her hands are chains; " citing Adam and how " the first woman brought about the banishment of man from paradise ; " Samson, " brought to such despair that he buried himself. . . under the ruins of the temple ; " Solomon who " lost his reason through a woman ; " Socrates, whose sufferings should " cause the most thoughtless to ponder ; " and Job, " for it was against his wife that Job, that holy man, fought the last and hardest fight of all. " Mr. Moore shares the oriental conception that to be inescapably associated with woman, is degradation. Although, as he says, " in every life there is an adventure that sums up lesser adventures, " and in Abélard's case, " Héloïse was this summary, " he causes Abélard to reflect that " if he had not met her his life would have continued to be an ever-swirling adventure. " " He hated to think of himself as an animal at tether, moving circlewise, always equidistant from the centre, never able to project himself even a few feet farther into the unknown. " In reading George Moore, one cannot but feel the retentiveness of his mind and in his attributing to Abélard a remarkable memory, one is aware of his own highly specialized faculty. When Abélard says to Héloïse : " if the Georgics were lost, we could recover them all from our memories, for where mine failed thou wouldst come to my aid, and together we could give back to the world the book it had lost, " we are reminded of Avowals in which Mr. Moore says, " Your memory is better than mine. . . in this instance, certainly " and Mr. Gosse replies, " Thank you for this tribute, which it is an honour to receive from one of prodigious memory, though of slight reading. "

In Madelon, we have the foil to reflection — corresponding to that which we have in the Gosse of Avowals.

In Héloïse, we have Mr. Moore's concept of woman as man's satellite and

handmaid. Héloïse is like the Lady Malberge of the Hermit's ballad: "She has no real being except in me; she is here, and nowhere else, and the Hermit pointed to his heart." Life at Argenteuil was to her after leaving Abélard, "shadowy as the world she saw about her when she left the library and walked into the open air" and "there was nothing true in her except her love for Abélard, whom she would follow into the gulfs of hell rather than live in paradise without." "And in one intense moment of vision," says Mr. Moore, "she saw into life as it is offered to women, the obliteration of themselves in marriage or the obliteration of themselves in convent rules; . . . convent or marriage, it's always that for a woman." Another phase of Mr. Moore's notion of woman's subordinate rôle, we have in the young Astrolabe's ennui at being obliged to stay in the convent with the nuns and with his mother; he said, "I don't want to live here shut up with a lot of women" and upon being asked, "And what will you do, little sir, when you are older? I do not know so much what I shall do, Astrolabe answered. I shall escape away from women of whom I have seen enough." Although Mr. Moore apparently supports the illusion of Héloïse's erudition, her Ovid and Virgil do not as presented make her seem learned. She is like Tappé's Miss Pellicoe, "circumspect and tidy, polite and tractable, working away behind closed doors at deportment, penmanship, Latin, Greek and botany." "Moreover," says Tappé, "Miss Pellicoe is not six forever; she eventually achieves the academic age of sixteen and with it the dignity of profound hours in a college library." It is dignity of this sort that Héloïse seems to us to have attained. In insisting upon her indifference to religion, Mr. Moore departs possibly a little from the original. Roman Catholicism is a formal religion and she was negatively its disciple although she had also, it is true, definite interests of the intellect and of the emotions.

But if, according to Mr. Moore, she was indifferent to religion, she was not more so than Fulbert in whom we have a fourth phase of Mr. Moore's aesthetics of materialism. "He had gone for a handful of nuts and a tankard of wine," says Mr. Moore. "He sat cracking and skinning the nuts and drinking large draughts in silence." Despite the fact that Mr. Harris lauds Mr. Moore's moderation, anything more unequivocally sottish, it would be impossible to imagine. Fulbert remarks that "when the belly suffers, the heart is hard," and other like allusions are made, as that of the robber. The Canon speculates upon "the shortsightedness of servants governed always by the seeming need of the moment" and upon the advisability of "throwing himself upon the charity of a new servant who, though she might not have the faults that Madelon had, would have other faults. . . and the thought of Madelon's dismissal was dropped almost as quickly as it had come." His appreciation of creature comfort has no less conspicuous a counterpart in Abélard and Héloïse

than in Madelon, who is made to say of the pigeon that he " is better if he be laid out between slices of good beef, for the neighborhood of the beef favours him " and " when the king of fishes, the shad, was laid before them : of more delicate flavour than the bass, better than the turbot, a fish that makes the sole seem common, said Abélard. " Abélard is made to speak " of a vexing puffing wind, that carries us a little way and then leaves us " and many times in this book as in others of his books, one notes Mr. Moore's appraisement of the pain of being thwarted. When Héloïse inquired about Abélard, " As the student gave ear to him, thinking he was about to speak of Abélard. But it was of the fine weather they spoke. "

In the matter of architectural setting which is essentially a matter of feeling, in the crafty, leisurely advance, one is conscious of no flaws. The fact that Mr. Moore tells a story different from the one on which his narrative is based, does not matter. The proportioned, unhurried spaciousness of design — so much the reverse of what is usual — excites admiration. Buildings of great size are often complained of as not being set in sufficient greensward; similarly, one must give architectural advantage to an experience of colossal size and this Mr. Moore does. There is an orchestral quality, a premonitory note in his deliberate advance upon his theme, whereby he carries one " like a fish in net drawn along. " In the beginning, one notes this atmosphere of veiled suspense, in the uncertainty which surrounds Héloïse's future. The possibility of her becoming an abbess is mentioned and of her being forced into a marriage abhorrent to her. Madelon is made to say, " I have my doubts if thou'lt ever get back to Argenteuil. " She is made to " ask herself for the first time. . . if she had a destiny, glad or sad. . . and waited for an answer that did not come. "

Mr. Moore's conception of narrative is supported, moreover, by his predilection for reverie — by the romantic warpedness of his imagination. He speaks of " the sense of sadness inseparable from a river, " of how " the dead have a hold upon us that the living haven't. " He says of Héloïse, that " her thoughts seemed to fall into nothing " and speaks of " innumerable peacocks, ghostly birds in the mild moonlight, whose long white tails set Madelon crying : " ghosts or angels ; let us away. " " Is it not strange, " Abélard said to himself, " that what I love best in the world should bring me back to the country most antagonistic to me and my ideas, and reining in his horse he pondered in front of the city on hatred and love, asking himself which was the deeper feeling. " Observe, moreover, how in Héloïse's meditation on the soul and the body, he gives a facsimile of the mental process in which the mind picks us and drops an idea and picks it up again :

" She returned to the window overlooking the Seine ; unable to take up the book again, she fell to thinking instead of the Poet whim Christianity unites

with paganism in honouring : and her eyes returning to the page, she reread that Iris. . . descended to liberate the soul from the body. But why liberate the soul from the body ? she asked, since the two are inseparable as we know them. "

Mr. Moore has said in Avowals, " Whosoever keeps humour under lock and key is read in the next generation, if he writes well, for to write well without humour is the supreme test ; " nevertheless, sleights of mind should not count for nothing. " In difficult and thorny questions an adjournment of the debate is always welcome ; " " the false always being accepted, rather than the true, . . . small satisfaction it is to us that the truth shall prevail in the end, Abélard said ; " " why, indeed, said Romauld, " should one come between friends who have chosen to quarrel, " since swordsmanship proceeds out of friendship, like the egg from the hen ; we can't have one without the other. " These things amuse us but we agree that they are subsidiary to the structure. Mr. Moore's flawless transcript of the surface of things makes him powerful ; in his reverence for himself as an artist — his willingness to " pick a thing to threads and reweave, " he is essentially the writer, interested in elegance and lucidity. The tendency to experiment with punctuation — to take away unnecessary detail that one may exhibit the meaning — is characteristic only of those who are interested in the mechanics of language and his abandoning of quotation marks perhaps necessary to an understanding of the meaning as one feels by their absence, is none the less a phase of the spirit which enables him to say, " The exception to the rule must return to the rule for fortification against eccentricity " and " she awoke suddenly though she had not been asleep. " His artificial simplicity — " corrupt simplicity " so-called — is the artificial simplicity of every fashion expert and it is not to our discredit that we like it. When in Hail and Farewell, he says, " We never grieve for anybody, parent or friend as we should like to grieve and are always shocked by our absentmindedness, " when he says, " The trouvère getting the better of the philosopher he forgot faith and reason and said : the beauty of the larches is enough, " the demure, assured quality, the ripeness as of meat well hung yet not decayed — so recognizable as to be signed without a name — is none the less expert foı the consciousness of its effort to be sensational. It is the writer rather than the experiencer who says, " Life is more elaborate in its processes than we think for ; " who says of Abélard that " he never said anything twice in the same way, " who causes Abélard to say that " all similes are defective if pressed too far, " who quotes from the two gleemen : " At first our differences were slight, and it amused us to wrangle over an art that was dear to both of us ; but in the second year we wearied of our differences. " " Buried shade is a strange expression » said Héloïse and reminding one of Avowals, she speculates further on the refinements of language when she says, " But

why, uncle, do we not write as the pagans wrote ? " Mr. Moore exhibits in his sentence structure with its echo of The House that Jack Built, a seventeenth century fastidiousness :

" It may seem to thee that I am talking only as the mad talk... But I am not talking, Abélard, I am thinking ; I am not thinking, Abélard, I am dreaming ; I am not dreaming, Abélard, I am feeling ; and in this moment I am consonant with the tree above me and the stars above the tree ; I am amid the roots of the hills. "'

It is only one who has analyzed the secret of emphasis who could say, " protracted farewells may be borne only by those whose hearts are cold ; " " it is always coming and going from the convent to the world, and from the world to the convent ; " and " the longer the immortality, the more perfect it becomes, time putting a patina on the bronze and the marble and... I think upon texts. "

Note the outcome of sober observation, the accurate, crafty transcript of human behaviour and of nature — of the veracious, intentionally conspicuous lack of sentimentality in the following characterization :

" Of a sudden the voices ceased, and, turning her head, Héloïse saw a short man, of square build, who, although well advanced in the thirties, still conveyed an impression of youthfulness ; for though squarely built his figure was well knit, his eyes bright, and his skin fresh and not of an unpleasing hue, brown and ruddy. The day being warm, he walked carrying his hat in his hand, looking round him pleased at the attendance, and it was this look of self-satisfaction that stirred a feeling of dislike in Héloïse. He seemed to her complacent and vain ; and she did not like his round head, his black hair, his slightly prominent eyes : ... the only feature that forced an acknowledgement from her was his forehead, which was large and finely turned... She could not imagine Aristotle or Plato... or Seneca, or Virgil, or Ovid, or Tibullus... converging to the type that Abélard represented so prominently... Half an hour must have been spent in the donning of the laces at his cuffs and another in choosing the buckles of his shoes. But her criticism of his apparel was quickly swept away again by the sound of the rich, smooth, baritone voice, and this time she perceived that the voice was accompanied by an exquisite courtesy, and that the manner in which he walked addressing those who gathered about him to admire and to listen was kindly, although it was plain that though familiarity from him would be an honour he would resent it quickly in another. "

The account of Héloïse's behaviour upon her second visit to the Canon, moreover — the intense, introspective captiousness of youth — is psychologically accurate and is one of the most close-textured, distinctive episodes in the book :

" The Canon stopped speaking so that Héloïse might ask him some questions that would lead to a further unwinding of a story which had begun to seem to him more inveigling than he knew it to be before he began it. But Héloise said nothing, and after waiting for a question from her, he said : where are thy thoughts ? My thoughts, uncle, were — I do not know where they were. I suppose I must have been thinking. Can anyone think without words ? Ah, now I remember ; I was asking myself if Abélard's story would have revealed to me the man whom I saw and heard in the cloister. . . If thou hadst heard his story from me before seeing him ? Yes, uncle ; and her face still deep in a cloud of meditation, she confessed that it was not until she heard him in the cloister that she began to see that what she saw and heard were not two different things but one thing for he would not be himself without — Without what, niece ? the Canon asked, for he was amused by Héloïse's embarrassment, and to continue it he added : his beauty ? The sneer threw Héloïse off her guard, and she answered that nobody could call Abélard an ugly man. A stocky little fellow, the Canon persisted. And he would have said more of the same kind if Héloise's face had not warned him not to proceed further with his teasing. He spoke instead of Abélard's forehead, which he admitted to be of the Socratic type in its amplitude ; but he averred that the likeness between the two men ceased at the forehead, for whereas Socrates was of the ascetic temperament, Abélard was by his face notably a free liver, a disparagement that seemed to Héloïse like a challenge. She asked the Canon to mention a feature that would testify to the truth of this, and the spirit of battle being upon him he could not keep back the words : his singing of French songs. You never spoke to me before of Abélard as one divided between free living and philosophy. Nor is it many minutes since you were speaking of him as the intellectual descendant of Aristotle and Plato ; your present sneers of him cannot be else than an attempt to anger me, and we would do better, mayhap, to talk of matters on which we are agreed. "

Later in the narrative, the characterization of Astrolabe — spoiled and egotistical but a child of parts — is true to the child mind and entertains us throughout. While the snare for the ducks was being woven, " he practised quacking, becoming quickly so skilful that his quacking deceived the nuns. " He wished to have a lute or a ribeck and was affronted for a day or two by being offered a pair of regals when he recovered his humour enough to ask for a gittern. " One has to learn these instruments early when one is young just as I am, else it is difficult to learn them later. But I heard thee say thou wert going to be a Crusader. Can't I be both, mother, gleeman and Crusader ? " His mind was like a genie in a box demanding freedom. " And Héloïse was jealous of Abélard and asked why he should have possessed himself so completely of his offspring. "

Of equal distinction with these characterizations are Mr. Moore's descriptions of nature. The Comte de Rodeboeuf says of a parrot, " I bought a grey bird, whose wrinkled eyelid fell over an eye that seemed to know all things ; " the sense of Argenteuil's remoteness from Paris is felt and its lack of austerity, in " the nuns . . . walking in their convent garden finding young spiders weaving glittering threads from spray to spray. " We have an epitome of bird life in the " tall boles rising fifty or sixty feet from the roadway, the nests in the high branches, and a great clamour about them. The wayfarers stopped to admire the parent rook crawling gingerly into the nest with some snail or grub for the squeakers within it, " in the swallows at dusk " flying more madly than ever, as if to lose a minute were a loss. " In the description of the snowstorm, we have a unified, perfectly fused fragment of atmosphere — in " the sky copper and sulphur. . . along the horizon, betokening more snow, " in " the thin wintry day, a small passage of daylight between the long nights " and " people walking in the middle of the street to avoid the drip. " Abélard's reference to his life in the monastery of Saint-Gildas remains in the mind as vividly as the longer description does of the forest — " Saint-Gildas among the rocks where the tides are moaning always if they are not crashing. " To Madelon, discoursing of the practical properties of the oak, " Thou'rt forgetting, Madelon, the power of the oak over the mind, said Abélard ; the oak grove was the cathedral of our ancestors. Not a whit does that surprise me, said Madelon, for who can walk in these shades without awe ? " Abélard remarks that " the silence of the forest is different from any other " for " the forest is never silent " and we are told how they " rode beneath the boughs not yet in full leaf, following the path as it wound through hollows, losing it and finding it amid rocks, pushing their way through thickets that seemed impenetrable at a distance but did not prove so hard to force through as they had appeared, " — of how " stooping low in their saddles, they broke through somehow, " of how Abélard " pointed to a dark ragged line of pines flowing down the northern sky " and of " the fringe of birch-trees that encircled with their pallor the great district of pines that showed in black masses over against Étampes. . . the pines rising up naked and bare some fifty or sixty feet, some straight, some leaning, in endless aisles. " " Like the spears, Héloïse said, of Crusaders going into battle. " What one does not like in Mr. Moore is not what one thinks of as one reverts to these verisimilitudes ; one honours genius which is able to spin out of itself, the fabric of its illusions. As Fulbert says : " We must not ask more of paganism than it can give ; its gift is beauty. "

MARIANNE MOORE

RICHARD SEEWALD — Sailboats

MOUNTAIN FARM

I watched the agony of a mountain farm,
a gangrenous decay;
the farm died with the pines that sheltered it;
the farm died when the woodshed rotted away.

It died to the beat of a loose board on the barn
that flapped in the wind all night;
nobody thought to drive a nail in it.
The farm died in a broken window light,

a broken pane upstairs in the double bedroom
through which the autumn rain
beat down all night on the mouldy turkey carpet;
nobody thought to putty another pane.

Nobody thought to nail a slat on the corncrib,
nobody mowed the hay,
nobody came to mend the rotting fences.
The farm died when the two boys went away,

or lived, perhaps, till the lone old man was buried,
but after it was dead I loved it more,
though poison sumac grew in the empty pastures,
though ridgepoles fell, and though the fall winds whistled
all the night through an open and empty door.

MALCOLM COWLEY

THE RAKEOFF AND THE GETAWAY

" Shall we come back ? " the gamblers asked.
" If you want to, if you feel that way, " was the answer.

And they must have wanted to,
they must have felt that way ;
for they came back,
hats pulled down over their eyes
as though the rain or the policemen
or the shadows of a sneaking scar-face Nemesis
followed their tracks and hunted them down.

" What was the clean-up ? Let's see the rakeoff, "
somebody asked them, looking into their eyes
far under the pulled-down hat rims ;
and their eyes had only the laugh of the rain in them,
lights of escape from a sneaking scare-face Nemesis
hunting their tracks, hunting them down.

Anvils, pincers, mosquitoes, anguish, raspberries,
steaks and gravy, remorse, ragtime, slang,
a woman's looking glass to be held in the hand
for looking at the face and the face make-up,
blackwing birds fitted onto slits
of the sunsets they were flying into,
bitter green waters, clear running waters,
standing pools ringing the changes
of all the triangles of the equinoxes of the sky.
and a woman's slipper
with a tarnished buckle,
a tarnished Chinese silver buckle.

The gamblers snatched their hats off babbling,
" Some layout—take your pick, kid. "
And their eyes had yet in them
the laugh of the rain
and the lights of their getaway
from a sneaking scar-face Nemesis.

CARL SANDBURG

RICHARD SEEWALD

Ascona

HE DECEIVED HER

With a yawning, moistly bedaubed grayness began that March day which was to provide the provincial town with an exciting occurrence There seemed to be a chilly shower ; then came a brief crackle of hail, unexpectedly, and with abruptness it stopped again. A few minutes after seven o'clock an officer made his appearance on the stone bridge ; he was walking from the outskirts, and with rapid puffs he was finishing a cigarette. A few paces in front of him went a butcher's cart, covered with a white awning ; otherwise, the bridge was empty at this moment. It was not until the butcher's cart had just about passed the middle of the bridge, that a man approached the bridge from the other side, and knocked out a pipe as he walked ; his gait was shambling and his knees were thrust forward. A red-faced boy, sitting on the butcher's cart, looked fixedly at this man, feeling perhaps the need of something to rally his drowsy eyes. The man came on a level with him ; suddenly, he thrust his knees still further forwards and shouted : " He's jumping. " The boy felt as if someone had twisted his head backwards with a single jerk, and this is what he saw. On the parapet of the bridge stood the officer and made a curious dragging movement with his right hand as if he were freeing it from something. Suddenly his hand became motionless, it became motionless against his breast, for an instant everything became motionless in a sort of horror ; the officer glanced in the direction of the cart, he frowned, said something, and just then a muffled shot was heard ; his body floundered on the parapet, he waved his arms and slid from the bridge into the river ; a cloudlet of smoke drifted to the other side of the bridge . . .

That day the pale, slender officer visited all the dwellings in the town. On the left side of his breast his tunic was scorched ; and under the scorched tunic was the dark trace of a well-aimed wound, unerring and compact, like the full stop at the end of a sentence. It seemed as if he were a little proud of his deed ; he discovered his name upon everyone's lips, the women breathed more quickly and the men puckered their brows uneasily. And perhaps also because the spring was just at hand, the town was groping, as it were, in a romantic twilight ; two girl pupils of a music teacher, suddenly and for no obvious reason, burst into tears at the piano, and in the grammar school a number of boys were sitting at their desks with completely vacant eyes.

People made a pilgrimage to the stone bridge. Under the bridge the ice was cut through in several places; it was in one of these openings that Lieutenant Bartl had probably wished to disappear, twice shutting the door behind him; but by chance he had fallen close beside one of them and had been left lying on the ice. A large, rust-coloured stain was left there, and the people leaned over the parapet to catch a glimpse of it. There was a nodding of heads; each looked at the other's lips in expectation of kind-hearted words. And they were duly uttered. "He was a nice fellow, good-natured as could be, the soldiers in the barracks shed tears over him; and there was no comforting his servant."

A bugle sounded in the barracks near by; there was more stealthy eyeing of the rust-coloured stain; something both attractive and mournful came into the minds of the onlookers. "Why did he do it?" All necks were craned forward and the silence seemed to swell into a profound sigh. "Why? Nobody knows. Only this morning he sent two letters off. Nobody knows."

In the course of the forenoon a little more hail came down; but in the afternoon there was a warm waft of spring, a downpour of rain, and towards evening a gust of stormy wind which set the gables and street lamps rattling. The river seemed to be roaring with unusual loudness. And the people, listening to the noise of the wind and water, heard these sounds as if they were a tune composed especially for this particular day and moment. And while glances sought the darkest corner of the room, here and there somebody said: "Two letters, fancy. Where? To whom?"

All night long a tempestuous fiddler stood above the town and played. But towards morning he became somehow uneasy; there was something in the east which disturbed him. He glanced there for a moment, then closed his eyes and played afresh. His playing became wilder, and he let loose the strains of his fiddle upon the town like horses stampeding on the pampas. But when he inquisitively half-opened his left eye and peeped for an instant towards the east, the sun was rising there; and then he stopped playing, uttered a brief, scornful chuckle in the direction of the sun, and swiftly departed. And so it came about that the town awoke that morning amid peaceful springtide sunshine which lay upon all objects like very fragile gossamer. On the eastward side the windows opened betimes, and the women leaned out from them, beckoning to the men who were on their way to work. Throughout the day the sun was shining. And disagreeably affected by this springtide sun, the shadow of the pale, slender officer wandered through the streets, entered the houses to get a close view, it seemed, of the changed situation, and in this way he lost much of his yesterday's self-assurance; he really resembled someone who has lived a day too long, and is seeking to put matters right by making off with all possible speed. On that day the first violets were taken to the market.

On the following day also, the weather was fine and spring-like ; it was sportive and glimmering as if with the presence of many bridesmaids, and for a while there stood a large, luminous cloud above the town, as if welded from molten silver bells. And beneath the springtide firmament of this day they carried Lieutenant Bartl to his grave ; the town once more opened its hearts, that it might let the hearse and coffin pass through their midst. The women blenched a little when the music began. The officers marched in a solemn and beautiful manner, as if they were going to their deaths. Then appeared the coffin and there was a strong fragrance of blossoms. The people suddenly began to crowd forward, as is their custom, by force of habit The curtain had fallen a little too quickly, leaving a distinct feeling of disappointment. " And who followed the coffin ? " " An old gentleman, it may have been his father. Probably he only had the one son . . " " A said affair, in truth. But on the whole, — are we not all somehow disappointed ? " And the people, glancing for another moment as the curtain which had fallen somewhat quickly at last shrugged their shoulders and waved their hands. On the house-tops the sparrows, wild with spring, were causing an uproar. " Ah, you wise creatures, " said the people, looking at the house-tops ; and they smiled.

The town shrugged its shoulders and waved its hands. It was ready to forget the latest event as quickly as possible. But soon afterwards there was fresh talk about the officer who had shot himself. Certainly, in a rather odd connection, which evoked mirth. The fact was that Miss Erna Slabochova had on several occasions been observed at Lieutenant Bartl's grave. " There she stands, you know, at the grave, distracted and pale, just like a widow, you might say ? " The people laughed. For Miss Erna Slabochova was now really not the sort of woman for whom a young lieutenant would take his own life ; she was one of the town's sorry, cast off incumbrances, and that is why the people laughed. Several years ago, oh yes, things were different.

The Slabochovas — the widow of an officer in the army service corps, with her daughter — lived then in a street through which the soldiers marched on their way to the parade-ground ; when they were returning, the officers used to salute Miss Erna at the window with their swords, and Miss Erna slightly inclined her head in a queenly manner. Mrs. Slabochova would stand behind the curtain, impressed and proud ; she was as radiant as if she had plunged both her hands in a pile of ducats. Then they both left the window, Miss Erna gave a passing glance into the mirror, as if she were half-listening to someone reporting themselves to her, and Mrs. Slabochova began to turn over the leaves of a photograph album. " A handsome man " she would then say, gazing at one of them. She would wait a moment, no, Miss Erna did not swallow the proffered bait. She sat down in a rocking-chair, stretched out her slender, shapely legs beneath

her dress, which produced the effect of a lengthy, dallying stroke with a violin-bow, and watched her mother with half-closed, slightly mocking eyes.

" Lieutenant Vacka turned remarkably pale when he saluted . . . didn't you notice ? " said Mrs. Slabochova again. But Miss Erna only shrugged her shoulders.

There was silence for a moment. The handsome man in the album did not blush. Then :

" How happy you are, my child. "

Miss Erna's expression suddenly became very weary. Mrs. Slabochova sighed deeply : she stroked the album with her hand ; she sighed once more, and softly went from the room into the kitchen. She had forgotten the range, the dinner, everything ; she smiled towards some radiant dream, upon the topmost summits of which stood Erna, victorious and beautiful. Then, for an obscure reason, she began to cry ; but letting her tears flow, she wrote in pencil on a piece of paper one of her occasional notes to her brother the major, which overflowed with adoration for her daughter, like a room with the cries of a canary, and concluded with a plea for money.

But one day later on, when Mrs. Slabochova had consummated her silent rapture with the outcry : " How happy you are, my child, " — Miss Erna, contrary to her custom, gave a curt laugh. Mrs Slabochova looked up in surprise, and encountered Erna's glance, beneath which she suddenly felt so strangely ridiculous, as if someone had daubed a charcoal beard on her face. She was seized with alarm, and all at once something evil filled the air between her and Erna.

There sat Erna and kept looking at her mother with half-closed eyes.

" Mamma — " she then said, and after apparently hesitating a little, she strengthened her resolve and threw her head back. " I — wasn't at the theatre yesterday . . . "

Mrs. Slabochova did not appear to understand properly.

" I was with Lieutenant Lerk. Where he lodges. In his rooms. "

" With Lieutenant . . . Lerk . . . in his rooms . . . What a thing to make up . . . " mumbled Mrs. Slabochova.

" It isn't made up. "

But Miss Erna had to repeat it all again. " Sooner or later it was bound to come to that " she added lightly, singingly almost. Mrs. Slabochova went gray in the face. Then she reddened. Suddenly she stood up and began to dress herself hastily.

" Where are you going, mamma ? "

" To Lerk, of course. I'll talk to him. The wretch . . . "

Miss Erna watched her mother ; a curious smile hovered round her lips.

She said nothing. But when her mother was dressed, she went up to her and said tenderly: "Take your things off, mamma . . ."

"No, it's impossible, I'll give the wretch a talking to . . ."

"Take your things off, mamma. What has it to do with Lerk? I went of my own accord."

Mrs. Slabochova burst out crying. "Oh, my child .. . poor little Erna. . . how soft-hearted you are . . ."

There was now something cruel in Miss Erna's smile. "Anyhow he's . . . a handsome man, mama" she said with relish, as if she were eating a grape.

And softly, laying her face against her shoulder, Mrs. Slabochova asked: "Does he want you?"

Miss Erna closed her eyes for an instant. "Ah no . . ." she said, and then laid her hand on her mother's mouth.

Mrs. Slabochova burst out crying. She understood nothing of what had occurred, but she did not venture to ask any more questions, Erna, was unwilling. And if she was weeping now, she was really weeping a little with happiness because Erna was holding her arms around her, was smoothing her hair and speaking so tenderly to her. Not for an instant did she level any accusation against Erna, nor did she regard her as in any way sullied; as if suddenly oblivious of all prejudices, and carried away by this oblivion, she looked upon Erna merely as the heroine of some painfully beautiful episode, around which she wished to walk on tiptoe, without saying a word about it.

And only to show that she was entirely reconciled and assented to everything, she raised her head, and gazing blissfully at Erna, she said softly: "So it's Lerk . . . Lerk . . ."

Erna turned her head away slightly. "Oh, the name doesn't matter, mamma . . ."

The bell rang outside, the postman had brought a letter for the young lady. She opened it absently and read; Mrs. Slabochova held her breath and left the room on tiptoe. "He's lost his wits — after yesterday" sighed Erna when she had read the letter, and began to tear it into small pieces.

She returned from the afternoon promenade concert at the recreation ground in a somewhat nervous frame of mind. She unpinned and let down her hair, and for a moment rubbed her forehead and eyes.

Mrs. Slabochova was alarmed. "Does your head pain you, darling?"

"No, no. Only it's tiring . . . to walk round with so many people staring. . . She drew herself together as if she felt a chill, and her smile wavered like a candle-flame in a draught. "There's a student who's awfully fond of me, I know. It's very silly of him, though . . ."

"And how vilely, spitefully they stare" she laughed nervously. "I

won't deprive the young ladies of their clerks, attorneys, school-teachers . . . I'm not jealous of them . . . but . . . "

She turned rather pale and closed her eyes for a moment. " But . . . it makes you feel, mamma, somehow as if . . . as if you were sitting on a black horse and galloping dreadfully fast without caring where . . . "

Mrs. Slabochova hurriedly spoke a few consoling words. But when Erna looked at her closely, she turned red and became confused. Erna looked at her closely for a moment, and then burst out laughing.

" I suppose you'd like to ask about someone, eh ? About Lerk ? "

There was a sudden tearful glimmer in Mrs. Slabochova's eyes. But Erna shook her head. " No, Lerk wasn't there. I suppose he had no time, he has to write stupid letters. Well, anyhow, he wasn't there. The others were. " Her eyes flashed, she joined her hands behind her head and said softly and tenderly : " Come now, mama, give me a kiss . . . "

When, two days later, Erna, who had gone out before nightfall, returned early the following morning, exhibiting in all her movements and in the expression of her face an unashamed avowal, as it were, of a joyous, light-hearted sin, and answered the unspoken question of her mother's startled, eyes with a shrug of the shoulders and a raffish clicking of the heels, and when the eyes went on questioning, and she had said singingly, shaking her head in a gay manner : " No, no, mama . . . this time it wasn't Lerk . . . " — then, Mrs. Slabochova, thoroughly upset by this behaviour and, as it was, exhausted by her sleepless night, began at first to stagger and would perhaps have fallen over ; but Erna having laid her on the couch, she was soon assuaged by her caresses, and when she opened her eyes and fixed them devotedly upon Erna, the clear message they conveyed was, that she was reconciled with everything for always, and assented to everything, while her lips whispered : " How lovely you are. How lovely you are. " While she was still lying down, the bell rang outside. Erna went out and immediately returned with a small parcel, the mystery of which was solved in a few moments, and evoked a cry of admiration from Mrs. Slabochova. She examined the gold bracelet, but suddenly her hand began to tremble beyond concealment, she gulped quickly, and did not venture to look at Erna, and when Erna, as if in jest, wanted to fasten the bracelet on her arm, she did not resist, and she turned very red and looked elsewhere, blinking her eyes the while. Erna's face remained motionless.

This gold bracelet was not the last gift which Erna received. For three or four years the town whispered, there was a rustling in the track of her name, like yellow leaves caught in the hem of her dress. " Erna of the regiment " said the town. But when all of a sudden she had somehow squandered her beauty too rapidly, the town rubbed its hands with malicious relish, and those who

had been fulsome, now became abusive ; it was then that Miss Erna's passage through the streets looked too much as if she were escaping from something.

After that they stayed at home, she and her mother, each in her corner, scarcely ever speaking, and if they raised their heads, it was to exchange glances of astonishment. Erna, reading a German novel, gave a dry laugh from time to time. " Liar, liar, " she then muttered.

Her mother looked up : " What ? "

" Liar. "

And her mother nodded. " Yes . . . they tell lies. "

Erna at last stopped reading German novels. From now onwards she just sat there vacantly, looked at the rings on her fingers and moved her lips inaudibly.

" You know, mamma, you were just asking me about Lerk — " she suddenly said one day.

But her mother had asked her nothing, and so she looked up in surprise.

" Poor Lerk. " And Erna thrust her ringed hand before her eyes. " He kept begging of me. I couldn't help it, I said no. I wouldn't he his wife. And he feels it terribly, he's awfully fond of me. He's sure to commit suicide . . . "

Her mother shook her head. " But Lerk has been married for quite a long time " she said softly.

Erna first of all turned red, and then cast a spiteful glance at her mother. But an instant later she laughed softly : " Don't believe it, mamma. Those are slanders, intrigues. Intrigues. We have many enemies, Lerk and I. "

Her mother sighed.

And when in the following days Erna kept coming back to Lerk, her mother raised no more objections and herself helped to weave this legend. And both spoke about Lerk, as if this were not the last islet on which the last, belated dream had taken refuge.

And so there arrived that March day which provided the town with an exciting occurrence. Lieutenant Bartl, Bartl, Mrs. Slabochova turned the name over in her memory, she could not recall it, but she wept nevertheless. Erna's face was parched by a spiteful expression. A lot to cry about, she said, and left the room slamming the door ; all day long she went about with the same spiteful expression, pursed up her lips contemptuously and slammed the doors. But when she heard that it was entirely unknown why Lieutenant Bartl had shot himself, she seemed to change completely ; she sat about and walked about, she appeared to keep laboriously pondering about something, and her mother grew uneasy at the steady fixedness of her glance.

When on the third day Mrs. Slabochova went to the lieutenants's funeral.

Erna took some black clothes from the wardrobe, put them on, and sat down in an arm-chair by the open window. She sat there with her eyes closed, her lips moved slightly.

When the sound of the funeral march reached her, Erna opened her eyes and looked through the window at the sky, in which rested, a large silvery cloud ; tears began to flow freely over her face.

The belated dream was entering a fair haven.

She was sitting in the same place when her mother returned.

" And why did he do it, don't they know yet ? " she asked, looking through the window.

" No, they don't. "

She repeated softly after her mother : " No, they don't. " But then, still more softly : " But I do. "

And looking by turns at her black clothes and at her mother, she was silent for a moment.

Then she lowered her head a little : " All that about Lerk, mama, wasn't true. It wasn't Lerk. It was Bartl. Bartl shot himself because of me. "

Her mother said nothing . She looked sternly at Erna. Then she sighed and left the room.

" What can she be thinking of now ? " she whispered. " Perhaps we're both off our heads. " She remained standing behind the door and listened, shaking her head strangely ; fear froze in her face.

But Erna began to visit the cemetery. When she returned, she used to have dilated and tranquil eyes.

" Now he's all right. Now he's happy. He knows I'm fond of him, and that I'm always thinking about him " she used to say, and would dally tenderly with her voice, as with white doves.

She did not notice that the people who met her on the way to the cemetery used to point significantly to their foreheads. She lived happily with this last legend of hers. She was now the widow of someone who had shot himself for love of her. White doves gleamed daintily snow-white on her dark widow's weeds.

One day, as she was returning, she met a strange lady at the cemetery gates, who was asking the sexton about something. But he did not seem to understand her, judging by the puzzled look in his face. The lady had a veil, but even so, it could be seen that she was very beautiful. Erna did not like beautiful women, and so she lowered her head, but at the same instant she heard the name of Lieutenant Bartl, uttered by the strange lady, in a curious foreign accent. Now at last the sexton appeared to understand, for he said something, and the footsteps of them both crunched on the sand of the cemetery pathway

as they went off towards Bartl's grave. The lady bowed her head lower and lower as she went. Perhaps she was weeping into her handkerchief.

When Erna returned that day, she frightened Mrs. Slabochova by the expression in her face. Erna stopped immediately at the door, and leaning back upon it, with upturned head and flattened palms she murmured icily: "He deceived me."

And immediately afterwards, falling to the ground and beating her head against it, she shrieked horribly, as though she were shrieking for her very life:

"He deceived me. He deceived me."

(*Translated from the Czech of* Prána Srámek *by* P. Silver).

Joseph Huber. Woodcut.

THREE UNITED STATES SONNETS

I.

when you rang at Dick Mid's place
the madam was a bulb stuck in the door.
a fang of wincing gas showed how
hair, in two fists of shrill colour
clutched the dull volume of her tumbling face
scribbled with a big grin. her sow-
eyes clicking mischief from thick lids.
the chunklike nose on which always the four
tablets of perspiration erectly sitting.
— if they knew you at Dick Mid's
the three trickling chins began to traipse
into the cheeks " eet smeestare steevensun
kum een, dare ease Bet, an Leelee, an dee beeg wun "
her handless wrists did gooey severe shapes.

II.

the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls
are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds
(also, with the church's protestant blessings
daughters, unscented shapeless spirited)
they believe in Christ and Longfellow, both dead,
are invariably interested in so many things —
at the present writing one still finds
delighted fingers knitting for the is it Poles?

perhaps. While permanent faces coyly bandy
scandal of Mrs. N and Professor D
. . . the Cambridge ladies do not care, above
Cambridge if sometimes in its box of
sky lavender and cornerless, the
moon rattles like a fragment of angry candy

III.

by god i want above fourteenth
fifth's deep purring biceps, the mystic screech
of Broadway, the trivial stink of rich
frail firm asinine life
(i pant
for what's below. the singer. Wall. i want
the perpendicular lips the insane teeth
the vertical grin
give me the Square in spring.
the little barbarous Greenwich perfumed fake

And most, the futile fooling labyrinth
where noisy colours stroll . . . and the Baboon
sniggering insipidities while. i sit, sipping
singular anisettes as. One opaque
big girl jiggles thickly hips to the canoun
but Hassan chuckles seeing the Greeks breathe).

E. E. Cummings

HEAVENS

(*Concluded*)

SECOND INTERMISSION

(*"Well, what do you say?" urged my guide. "Is it to be the Heaven of Mr. H. G. Wells?"*

"No, no," I shuddered, "I simply could not stand it. When I was below, it seemed so perfect and inevitable in print; but up here..." I shuddered again. "It is cool and logical enough, I suppose, but even machinery palls after the first hundred thousand years and the thought of endless colloquies upon the future of a mechanistic society is really too terrible!"

He seemed to regard me with an amusement in which commendation and contempt were equally mixed. "What then, would you prefer?"

"I know I am captious and ungrateful and fickle and all that," I stammered, "but, although I am half ashamed to admit it, I want something more colorful, more downright romantic — more tropical and bewildering and bizarre, more governed by fine writing than by fine thinking. Have you nothing in that line?"

"Indeed we have", answered the patient being. "There are two or three of which we are actually proud. Unfortunately, I cannot show you one of our most picturesque Nirvanas. It is closed temporarily for repairs or research, or something of the sort. There are rumors abroad that certain factors have conspired to bring about its temporary suspension; on the one hand, it is accused of being unauthentic, on the other, it is said to be immoral. Being angelic, none of us are able to judge. Frankly, I am sorry I cannot give you an opportunity to determine for yourself."

"But can't you give me a picture of the place — something a little more definite?" I pleaded.

"Very possibly. Let me see" He drew a thin bundle of papers from the folds of a cerulean mantle." I have here part of a manuscript which was rescued from the super-terrestrial waste-basket of one of its chief inhabitants. It purports to be a translation from certain pre-Provençal Poets, but several contradictory anachronisms make me question the existence of the original. At any rate it is an indubitably accurate portrait of the rich though restricted region I was about to describe. All that I have of this work is a rejected chapter and a title page which reads Runes of Life: A Tragedy of Disappearances'/Adapted from Les Milles Gestes de Deodric/*by R. E. Landsend/Edited by James Branch Cabell... If you like, I will read it to you."*

He did. I listened).

THE HEAVEN ABOVE STORISENDE

They of Poictesme tell the tale of how, in the days when the impossible was the one thing that was always happening, Ortnitz rode forth to the battlements of Heaven. They narrate how Duke Ortnitz (who later was to be known in Ostrogoth as Waldere, in Rossland as Vidigoia and in far Scandia as Hrolfdeodric) set out with a company of scribes, minstrels, poets and other vagabonds. For nine and ninety days and no one knows how many nights, according to the ancient rune, they travelled. Past Pechlarn they rode, through the doubtful country of the Gjuki, skirting the forest of Niflhel where the trees move about miserably in a wailing twilight. At last, after certain adventures which are rather more unmentionable than not, Ortnitz and his companions arrived, as had been predicted, at a pool surrounded by young hazel trees. The circle of green was unbroken save where one half-stripped and aging birch held out its mottled arms in a remarkable gesture that is not to be talked about. Ortnitz dismounted, advanced to the foot of this obscene tree and, after having performed that which was requisite, cried out:

"Now, for the love of that high glamour seen before birth and beyond the grave, we stretch our puny arms to the moon and stammer intolerably some battered stave. Yet, driven by hungers beyond the yearning for what men take as a surety, I have come to the road that has no turning and call on the Léshy to answer me. I call on Hogni and Mersin-Apollo, careless of whether they choose to descend; for I am Ortnitz and I follow after the unattainable end."

He waited awhile, during which interval a little headless bird flew three times over the pool, and, there being no answer, Ortnitz continued:

"Now, for the dust of that dying beacon wavering still in the tattered shrine of autumn, now that the old lusts weaken and the night is only spilled dregs of wine—drown, in its ineffectual juices, whatever persists of the memories of burning thirsts and the forgotten uses of lips that reveal their inconstancies. Here, on the rim of your magic hollow I have abandoned father and friend; for I am Ortnitz and I follow after the unattainable end."

There was a thin sobbing as a purple mouse perched on the back of a salamander ran in and out of the jewel-weeds. Twice the salamander shed his skin into the waters and twice a faint mist rose from the ripples. Then cried Ortnitz:

"Now for the end of that final glory I wait and bend a complaisant back here, where a livid aurora borealis makes all demoniac. Spurning the threat of

the headless swallow, I neither doubt, nor deny nor defend ; for I am Ortnitz and I — "

These sonorous strophes were broken by a rumble of voices that issued from his retinue. And Ortnitz, realizing that the spell was broken beyond promise of repair, retraced his steps ruefully. It may be that he felt betrayed by those who should have understood him best ; it is indisputable that his high mood was bedwarfed and, impatient at such belittlement, he turned on his companions.

" Do you tell me now without dubiety or odd by-ends of metaphor, what may this turgescible clatter portend ? "

" Messire, " spoke one of them, a lad called Arnaut Daniel, " we are but men ; nevertheless we are poets. And as such we hold, not only to ourselves, a dread responsibility. Look you, the record of these days and unguessed years is in our hands. The world lives only as we tell of it. The lurch of seas, the stealthy footsteps of the grass, the huge strides of the sun across the sky, the mystery and mastery of flesh, this snatch and blaze and insolence of life — who it to know of it save that we sing ; how can men learn of it except through us ? Therefore, subject to what limitations are placed upon us by our eyes and ears, are we bound to record only the Good, the Beautiful and the True. And therefore, Messire, must we, who though poets are nevertheless men, be bound to differ in the interpretation of these three beatitudes. "

Said Ortnitz :

" Ey, but wherein can there be so noisy and divergent an opinion ; the good, so runs the ancient cantrap, is always beautiful, the beautiful is true. "

Daniel returned :

" Good only for the time being, messire ; beautiful only as a challenge to egotism : in the I of the beholder ; true only to the question of Pilate. "

" I find that an obscure saying, " Ortnitz considered.

" It is an untrue saying, sir," broke in a gaunt fellow with a pair of cold green eyes and a sharp garden utensil which he carried in lieu of an instrument. " There is only one Truth and that is the real truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. All the rest is Romanticism. I have not seen the Soul that my friends here prate of, so I can not call it my own ; but I can call this spade a spade. If you will only listen to it, it will dig up the very roots of song. With it, I will unearth for you the bowels of time. With it I will go down as deep as hell. "

" And as high as heaven ? " questioned Ortnitz, not very mirthfully.

The Realist answered nothing, but with a gesture of despair mounted his horse and followed by his adherents, departed toward the West.

Then Ortnitz turned to a far more timid being whose dented and flimsy shield bore the device of a crumbling ivory tower. A single white poppy lay

sheathed in his scabbard, and he was continually discarding and readjusting variously coloured spectacles.

" Do you not heed him, beau sire, " exclaimed this woeful but still militant minnesinger, " do you not heed a syllable of his mangled prose. For that which lives today is only an echo of what has died — eh, how many times — and all this that seems so permanent is nothing more than the echo of its ghost. For — look you, messire, what is reality but the shadow of romance, a shadow that most men take for the substance ? These actual adventures, physical encounters, journeyings of the flesh — they are pallid things compared to the imagined odysseys. Give up this brutal and flagitious search. Come back with me, master, and behold grass that never fades, love that never deceives, a world without smirch or squalor. Come back with me, master, and you shall scale insurmountable summits, swim lakes of blood, plunge through hurricanes of fire, possess all women, surpass all heroes without leaving your hearth. "

" And what potent agency will you summon to accomplish these not undistinguished miracles ? " inquired Ortnitz.

He answered : " The myths and annals of the past. "

" An indubitable magic. Yet I am bound for present dangers, newer hazards. For I am Ortnitz and I follow after the unattainable end of which no man ever has had cognizance. Will you, therefore, not throw away your variously coloured spectacles and follow me who am not altogether blind ? "

The Romanticist answered nothing but, with a gesture of dismay, mounted his horse and, followed by his adherents, departed toward the East.

" Nay, — ho, and even were the fellow less pitifully his own fool, you answered him rightly, messire, and you are well rid of him and his wistful tribe. " This one was a lank individual with womanish hands and rouged lips. He was clad in a brocaded golden stuff that shimmered upon him like scales on a yellow serpent and from time to time he sipped at a small vial labelled ' Poison '.

Said this one : " Hah, what should such a maudlin evader know of Beauty ? This luke-warm world has none of it. Come back with *me*, master, and you shall live not unmoved among extraordinary hungers, strange and perverse desires. In my demesne day never dawns and sunlight is unknown ; but great flowers, undreamed of here, add their hot fragrance to the spicy night. There our bodies, capable of new and curious pleasures, will lie among lace and lilies, caressed by queens and the hands of queens' daughters. Virgin harlots with breasts like boys ', will dance for us beneath a ring of moons while nightingales go mad. " Come ", he cried with a wan rapture, " we shall hear black masses sung in forests whose design was Time's contemporary and where all uncreated loveliness lies hidden. There, by the Terrible Tree, will we find red Lilith who, rejected by Adam for a white and simpering Eve, assumed the form of a snake and

thus rid Paradise of the children of these tepid usurpers. There, master, you shall never grow sane and temperate and old but pass from fever to fever, fed by fantastic cravings, roused and rejuvenated by sin."

For a moment Ortnitz meditated, while a shadow no larger than a crow's foot crept into the corner of his eyes. "Pardieu," he answered at length, "but I am no longer young enough for such a high-flying eternity. These are pretty passions you offer me, to be sure and I would be the last to examine them too circumspectly, but still", Ortnitz estimated drily, "but still it is not sin alone will bring me to a heaven, however scarlet it may prove to be. What stock have you of innocence? Can you not show me an unaffected virtue or two and a paltry halfdozen of assorted simplicities?".

The Decadent answered nothing but, with gesture of disdain, mounted his horse and, followed by his adherents, departed toward the South.

Then up spoke the last and youngest leader of them, sweeping a *viola d'amore* that had but one string. His face was smooth and asexual as an angel's and his thick hair shone like a tossing golden flame.

Sang this one:

"Goodness and beauty and truth... Where? Well, but only in song?... Virtue, Nobility, Youth, Goodness and Beauty — and Truth — shrink from man's clutches. In sooth, leave them, ah, where they belong... Goodness and Beauty and Truth wear well. But only in Song!"

"A skeptical though neatly-joined triolet," smiled Ortnitz, "but you talk in riddles, my fine young poet, for all your cynically smooth generalities. And for what, more specifically, would you have me abandon my quest for truth, justice and those ultimates that are the pavement and the pillars of heaven?"

Thus answered the minstrel:

"I offer you more than earthly riches in coin that none but the poet pays: Freedom from all the stings and itches of every trivial splutter and blaze; a cup of healing; a stirrup of praise; a mood to meet the challenge of pleasure; a lilt to the feet of dragging days — all in the heart of a minstrel's measure."

Said Ortnitz: "That is indeed much to promise."

But the youth continued:

"I offer you more. I offer you niches where a sour world's grumbling never strays, where ripples a mirthful music which is an echo of man's first laugh that plays in various keys and secret ways... There waits a land of Light and Leisure (if you will pardon so mouldy a phrase) all in the heart of a minstrel's measure."

Said Ortnitz: "A great deal, to be sure. At the same time —" His interjection was interrupted by the poet who pursued his rhapsody, crying:

"I offer all that ever bewitches the mind of man from its yeas and nays: to the poet, immortal hemistitches; to the soldier, conquest crowned with the

bays; to the lover, the breath of a thousand Mays; to the boy, a jingle of buried treasure; to the cheated and broken, a merciful haze — all in the heart of a minstrel's measure".

"Master, I offer what never decays though all else wither. Master, what says your will to the magics that quicken and raise all in the heart of a minstrel's measure"

He paused.

"My will says no, although my heart approves the purport as well as the burden of your ballade," replied Ortnitz not dispassionately. "But I must go further than this place, even after the unattainable end, and I find little comfort and less pleasure in the doing of it, and I would you were coming with me."

The Lyricist answered nothing but, without lowering his eyes, came close to Ortnitz. And Ortnitz saw why he would have to make the journey without him, so he spoke:

"And so, farewell, you who dream in rhyme for I see your heaven will always be here — an overwordy and somewhat silly nirvana but — God help me! — a lovelier place than I have ever known."

And the last poet answered: "Farewell, Duke Ortnitz, farewell, unhappy clay that seeks what he can never find. Farewell, dreamer whose dreams are ten times more pitiful than mine for that yours have neither reason nor rhyme. Surely you will go for awhile — as long as this niggardly life will allow, it may be — half-disillusioned, half-desperately, questing some comforting finality some assurance in a world of illimitable perplexities and contradictions. Surely you will be buffeted here and there, searching vainly for the secret of those cryptic platitudes that enliven religion, wars, persecutions, lynchings and all other such high crusades. And to what end? Eh sirs, you will go down a bitterer man than you are now — a preposterous but not unheroic creature. And so I cry farewell with laughing pity, but with envy too."

Now the tale tells that Ortnitz was quite alone amid the circle of hazel trees. And, after he had stood until the great wings of the Lyricist's white horse were no longer discernible in the sky, Ortnitz went about his last conjuration with a sadder but no less determined expression. It was a blasphemous and appalling ritual, which it is neither essential nor wise to record. But, after the final ceremonies had been performed with a queerly constructed crystal of sphalerite and the *jintsan* root shaped like a man had come to life and set about that which was necessary, the waters of the pool were lifted. They grew solid, formed into steps, one ripple following another, until Ortnitz beheld an extraordinary glassy staircase leading straight toward the zenith. With a not unnatural wonder, he ascended.

For nine and ninety days and no one knows how many nights, Ortnitz climbed those watery stairs. At length he came to the threshold of heaven. He knocked. There was no answer. Then, raising his voice, he cried, "I am Ortnitz, and I have come to learn of what miraculous composition and in what unlikely manner were designed those elements of truth, justice and goodness which are the pavement and the pillars of heaven." There was no answer.

Then Ortnitz noticed that the hinges of the gate were rusty and that the huge door itself stood slightly ajar. Leaning his body against it, he pushed it open and entered while space rang with an insane creaking. Ortnitz stood astounded. The place was empty; a few spiders were spinning in what seemed to be an abandoned and primitive courtyard. There were neither pillars nor pavement. And Ortnitz, according to the Völundarkvidha, returned to Storisende.

Thus it was in the old days.

THIRD INTERMISSION

"You do not look as enthusiastic as I had hoped," said my guiding spirit after he had stopped reading.

"No," I answered, "I have not lost my admiration for this web of words but I am fraid I am not mediaeval enough to live comfortably in such a tapestry. I have not sufficient poetry in my nature for such highly colored prose; mine is too dull a doggerel."

"Granting that," he murmured with a benign tolerance, "what would you have?"

"I don't know exactly," I hesitated, rubbing an astral chin, "I am sure I could never learn to talk this language. I do not understand its signs and symbolic vellcities; the whole thing seems perversely cryptic and cabalistic. You see, I'm an American to begin with — much too provincial for Provençe — and, coming from the state of Missouri, I..."

"Wait — I have an idea" interrupted the angel with no little animation. "I think I know the very place for you. How would you like to try the Middle Western Heaven?"

"You don't mean to tell me that you have a special heaven for mid-westerners" I gasped.

"Not for strictly geographical mid-westerners," he replied with the suspicion of a smile, "But ever since the success of your Main Street, Moon Calf, Poor White, Miss Lulu Bett *and others, that region has become fixed in the literary firmament. There was nothing else to do but recognize it officially and make the*

necessary arrangements. The structure, I warn you, is by no means completed; the architecture is rather sketchy, and the material itself is not distinguished by its finish but you, doubtless, are not over-particular. If you will step this way. . .

THE HEAVEN OF MEAN STREETS

A place of crude color and primitive contrasts. A place indefinite in area and uncertain in its geography, that looked like the meeting-ground and battle-field of a hundred cultures. This apotheosis of the Middle West seemed reared indifferently upon the black mud banks of the Missouri river, the blare and windy energy of northern Illinois, the gaunt stretches of Minnesota, the epic prairies of Nebraska. A helter-skelter combination of parochial village, clean country-side and cheap, gritty industrial towns — the triumph of the booster over the backwoodsman, the pioneer supplanted by the press-agent. Even the ground had no uniformity. Here ran a wooden pavement with several boards broken and clumps of weeds sprouting in the irregular gaps between the planks; beyond it was trampled dirt, a yellow soil, untilled and stony; opposite, a smug concreted sidewalk, with a "parking" of grass, was lined with sickly trees on which the *apis* had been at work.

The architecture — if one could call it that — was similarly nondescript. Ramshackle, unpainted, box-like houses stood among garish, two-story brick groceries with signs of the B. P. O. E. and Knights of Pythias above the bleached awnings or leaned apathetically against The Eureka Garage with its grease-blackened, slippery floor. A third generation farmhouse squirmed between The Nemo Moving Picture Palace with its tawdry electric sign in which eight of the bulbs were missing, and the Paris Emporium whose half-washed windows displayed assorted fly-spotted packages of garden-seeds, faded cotton blankets, overalls with the metal buckles showing a film of rust, gray hot-water bottles, a tray of tarnished plated-post link buttons, several bolts of plaid ginghams and two strips of wrinkled fly-paper on one of which a large wasp was buzzing incongruously.

One could see the interior of these houses. . . The musty bedrooms with their broken rocking-chairs, the chromo-lithographs of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair" on one wall and a water-stained engraving of General Lee's surrender on the other. The dining room with tasteless food gulped noisily by people to whom taste was an effeminate affectation, its shoddily upholstered chairs with the imitation leather peeling off at the corners, its broken cuckoo-clock with its listless pendulum, its plated-silver fruit dish standing with a dull dignity and eternal

emptiness on a rickety side-board. The parlor with its dirty portieres, its green plush sofa from which the nap had long since been worn, the bright mahogany upright piano, metallically out of tune and the false ivory missing from the lowest C sharp key, the curio cabinet, a nightmare of scrolls with its five shelves of souvenirs, card-board jewel-boxes encrusted with shells, pewter spoons showing a bas-relief view of the Washington monument, a filigree-wire brooch that spelled " Minnie, " a Columbian half-dollar mounted in a bezel as a charm, a thick red glass tumbler with the words " Greetings from Sioux City Fair " etched in white. . .

" And for this, " a voice was saying with a ghostly shudder, " Davy Crockett tamed the wilderness and Ponce de Leon died to discover the fountain of eternal youth. For this shrine of sodden respectability and standardized negation, Sappho burned, Rome fell and Da Vinci planned his most fantastic dreams ! "

It was a girlish figure that spoke. Trig, bright-eyed, poised like a hummingbird ready to dart off at a tangent, with a rather sentimental chin and a *batik* blouse, she seemed like a cross between a sublimated sophomore and an enthusiastic catalogue of the Roycrofters Arts and Crafts Association.

" I imagine — er — it must be, " I stammered, " surely you are Mrs. Carol Kenicott ? "

" How did you know ? " she answered, with a ripple of surprise. " But that doesn't matter. Of course I am. And I'm frightfully glad to see you. When did you come ? And can I show you around ? "

" Thanks. I'd be delighted. And this is your heaven ? "

" Heaven forbid! " she shuddered visibly, " This is the place we transplanted Middle Westerners keep as an Awful Example. We only come here when we are in danger of slipping into our mundane apathy or when we need material for our celestial novels. You see the realistic method has its penalties. Now our real heaven — But do come along and let me show you. "

We walked past several greasy cross streets, littered with unshaded " community buildings, " tin cans and asthmatic Fords. And then, suddenly — !

" . . .and that structure which looks like the Parthenon remodelled by Robert Edmund Jones, " she was saying as I emerged from a dazzled unconsciousness, " is Axel Egge's General Music Store with the loveliest assortment of Self Playing Harps you ever saw. We have two at home. You ought to see Will working the pedals while he runs off " The Rosary ." That replica of St. Mark's, ornamented with busts of Pestalozzi, Dalcroze, Montessori, Froebel and Freud, is the school building erected by the Sacred Seventeen. That large octagonal field, flanked by Ionic columns, is the Isadora Duncan Stadium where we have our weekly meetings of the Y. P. A. A. A. A. — the Young People's Aesthetic

and Athletic Association, you know. The bath of Caracalla? Oh, you mean Ezra Stowbody's First Celestial Bank. Impressive, don't you think? That row of Devonshire cottages? We're rather proud of that bit — it is 'Ye Streets of Lyttle Shoppes,' full of quaint things and the loveliest reproductions of real antiques. That vista of Oriental arcades is our parking space for fiery chariots designed by Lee Simonson. The fountain is by Rodin after a sketch by Raymie Witherspoon. That heroic statue is the work of Paul Darde, 'The Pipes of Pan-America.' So symbolic isn't it? And that group of neo-Aztec residences by Frank Wright — "

"Why — hello, Carrie! Didn't know you were out for a stroll. How's tricks today — huh?" It was a gruff, kindly voice emanating from a tied-and-dyed toga.

"Oh, Will, how you startled me! I had no idea — oh, allow me to present my husband, Dr. Kennicott."

"Glad t'meet any friend of Carrie's. How're you making out? Been here long? Aint it a dream of a place? Greatest little spot in all creation, I'll say. Darn artistic, every inch of it and not a plank walk in miles. Full of up-and-coming people, too. Lewis — you know — the famous author of — what's the name of that book, Carrie, the one you and the Thanatopsis Club enjoyed so much? — well, he lives here. Wouldn't change, he says, for any place in Heaven. Tried'em all but he's back here to stay — you can see him most any time floating along the avenue talking to the real estate boys — just plain folks. And say, has Carrie shown you our new shack? What? Well, you come right along and — "

"But don't you think," I stammered, "that if I accepted your kind offer — "

"Why, Lord love you, brother, don't worry yourself about that. You just hop along and take pot luck with us. No trouble at all — not by a long shot! We'll shake up a cup of nectar and some boiled ambrosia if there's nothing else. You come right — Well, look who's here! If it ain't Juanita Haydock and Rita Simons all dressed up and no place to go. Where you been, ladies? Stand and deliver — an open confession, you know, is good for the soul."

"Oh, it's nothing very improper," giggled Rita, "we've been over to the Bernard Shaw Heaven to hear him read the preface to his latest drama of religion and the race, Back to the Protoplasm, he calls it. An awful bore. Shaw is getting frightfully dull, don't you think? And so sentimental!"

"It isn't his old-fashioned sentiment that I object to," Juanita Haydock contributed in her high cackle, "it does him credit, poor dear. It's his public-school ideas! I suppose there was a time when the man was amusing but his trick of stating the obvious in terms of the scandalous (you remember the phrase in *The Smart Set*) is really too provincial."

" That's true, " Carol hurriedly assented, " his influence on the Neighborhood Heaven has been anything but the best. It used to be such a lovely, experimental centre for newly-incubated prose poems and plastiques. But ever since he and Dunsany have been helping them put on their bills, there's practically no chance for the younger writer — not that I am in any hurry to see my few things produced (and I would simply *have* to have the right atmosphere), — but it's too bad to see how they are pandering to the most commonplace and conventional tastes. "

" Yes ! " chimed in Rita " could anything be more *bourgeois* than those Schnitzler plays they gave last week ? "

" Or those hackneyed monodramas by Evreinof, " flung out Juanita, " with outmoded settings by Gordon Craig. Next, I suppose they'll trot out a back number like Reinhardt and have him put on things that have been done to death like Hardy's old Dynasts' ! If it weren't for you, Carol, they'd be trying to foist that sort of half-baked fare on our own Drama League. "

" Yes, " agreed Rita, " if it weren't for you — "

" I suppose, Mrs. Kennicott, " I interrupted, " that you are the god— I should say the goddess — of this particular Nirvana. "

" I — er — "

" She certainly ought to be if she isn't, " Carol's henchwomen chorused.

" The fact is, " added the doctor, " you've opened up a rather sore topic that's just coming to a head. As things are, there're too many claimants to the so-to-speak throne. 'Course there's no question who's entitled to it. Before Carrie came here, what sort of place was this, anyway ? A kidney-colored, slab-sided dump that might have been a Paradise to a poor white like Hugh McVey but hopeless for any live, art-loving guys. Beauty, hell ! None in a million miles and no one around with enough nerve, gumption or sticktuitiveness to find any. Along comes this little lady, stirs up a lot of old Scandahoofians, puts pep into a bunch of hexes and grinds that only think of getting the world's work done, fills this dried-up burg with a real honest-to-God pride in itself, puts her shoulder to the job and digs in and today — Welll ! " He waved a proud and comprehensive arm with a gesture that lost a little of its confidence as its sweep met the figure of a tall, lean man with a shambling gait and a long, serious face. " Sorry, Mc Vey, didn't see you coming. "

" That's all right, " said Hugh. " That's all right. " A lump arose in his throat and for a moment he was torn with silence and self-pity. He thought of the old days in heaven before the coming of Carol and of the old days on earth before the coming of industry, before the time of the mad activities, before the Winesburgs and Pickleville had grown into the Daytons, the Akrons, and all the shrill new towns scattered over the flat lands. He thought of the time when

a quiet light and color used to play over the men and women walking on country roads and moonlit hills, working in the fields, hooking rag rugs, making shoes, believing in a God and dreaming great and serious dreams. From all sides, today, he heard the clamor of a swifter age shouting at him in a voice that spoke of huge numbers in a terrible, mechanical definiteness. He witnessed the erection of new systems and movements that were demolished as fast as they were put up. He saw men, massed in some gigantic machine, cutting and grinding their way through other men. He saw the crushed bodies, heard the unuttered cries of the defeated and trampled millions.

" I guess you're right, " he said at last, " It's your place, not mine. I ain't fitten for it. It's too much for me down there. And too fancy up here. I ain't fitten for it. "

" But surely, Mr. McVey, " I objected, " you don't intend to renounce your claim so lightly. If you were the presiding Genius of this Heaven you could easily invent something that would turn these mean streets into ambling roads as quickly as Mrs. Kennicott has changed them into brisk boulevards. "

" Thanks. But it wouldn't be right. I ain't much of a hand at running things.

Besides, I promised Clara to get out of politics. I ain't fitten fer it. Clara and I are pulling for someone we can understand.

" Which means ? "

" Meaning that I'm withdrawing in favor of this lady here — " he indicated an olive woman, once handsome, with a flat chest and eyes that wavered between being wistful and determined, a woman who had drifted noiselessly to where they were standing — " Miss Lulu Bett. "

The other members of the group gasped. Carol shuddered. " Uh-but dear Lulu doesn't know a thing about city-planning or eugenics or community kitchens or Keats or intensive recreation or how to put on a Morris Dance or Motherhood Endowment or Pageants for the Poor or — "

" Oh, no " Lulu disclaimed. " Of course I don't know anything about such things. I suppose there's lots of other things I better know, too. But I did see some dances. It was in Savannah. Savannah, Georgia. I don't know the names of all the different dances they did but there were a good many. And they were real pretty. " Never a skilled conversationalist, Lulu paused, conscious of the fact that the topic was not quite exhausted. Then she gulped and went on, ' There was a large band playing, too. I don't know how many musicians they had in it, but there were a good many. It was in a big hotel and the room was too crowded. We — " she flushed suddenly — " my first husband and I — I think it was my first husband, although the play and the book the lady wrote about me mixed me up, sort of, about myself — we were watching the

dancing. I was ashamed at first. I started to get up. Then I set down. I made up my mind to see what there was. I said I was going to learn all I could from Savannah, Georgia. I did."

"And is that all you learned?" Carol smiled, not without a thin coating of ice about the question.

"Oh, no," Lulu answered with even more of her usual innocence. "After my second marriage —" she gulped again, turning a dull brick color, "I either married Mr. Cornish who kept music or I re-married Mr. Deacon — the lady got me confused about it and I'm not sure which — Well, we came to New York City, New York. We stayed there five days. I liked it. They had some lovely views there and there were a lot of people in the streets all the time. And it was too hot."

"And the result of your metropolitan researches —" Carol proceeded, remorselessly.

"Well, we went to a lot of little places to eat. Mostly down in cellars with candles. They had queer names. One of them was like a ship and the waiters were dressed like pirates. It was just like a play. And everybody talked. They didn't do anything. They talked about what you said. About pageants" (Lulu pronounced it "payjunts") "and the state's babies and why the City Hall should be done over by a — I think they said Compressionist, and —',

"She's right." This was Felix Fay, a slim young man, careless as to dress and yet both conscious and proud of his carelessness. A shock of insurgent hair and the eyes of a dreamer coming slowly face to face with reality.

"She's right. Main Street or Greenwich Village; it is only a difference of longitude and — in both senses of the word — latitude. You flatter yourselves that you are 'advanced', that you have acquired social contacts or social consciousness. But what are you underneath this veneer of culture? Carol adrift on a rose-water sea of dreams. Hugh stumbling darkly among his own machines. Moon-calves, all of you — even poor Lulu, lost in her childish fantasies. Worst of all, Carol! Crying not only for the moon — you see, even here, the significant symbol — but wailing for a new earth and a whole new set of constellations! If you really want a god —"

"I suppose, young man, you could suggest the candidate," sneered Dr. Kennicott.

"I could," returned Felix unabashed, "and I will. What we need in this place is air — lots of it — salt breezes to sweep out these musty fantasies. We need a harsher, more pragmastic realism; a combination, if you can stand it, of Karl Marx, Rabelais and Friedrich Nietzsche.

"And you got the nerve to suggest that you —"

" Not at all, " calmly continued Felix, " I propose H. L. Mencken, late of America and *The Smart Set.* "

" Mencken ? " gasped the others and " Mencken ? " spluttered Kennicott with sudden exasperation, " Why — that's impossible. He's too — er — vulgar, he aint got the right idea at all. He's clever enough — oh, I'll admit that — but when it comes to the things that count, the big things like reverence and uplift and respect for women and civic pride and patriotism, why, he isn't there at all ! Besides, what right has he got in a Middle Western Heaven ? Ain't he from Baltimore ? "

" And if I am, " retorted a voice, well oiled with indignation and Pilsner, a voice that emanated from a heavy-set individual who looked like a cross between a visiting *privat-docent* and a seraphic butcher-boy, " What if I am, my masters, originally a citizen of the great Sahara of the South ? Did I not bang the drum for every Westerner who lifted himself by sheer mule power above the run of jackasses and old maids of both sexes ? Did I not champion Dreiser's Illinoise before he suffered from delusions of grandeur, when anyone engaged in such a crusade was howled down and accused of sedition, free love, *héligoabalisme*, obstructing the traffic in cheap fiction, obscenity, loss of critical manhood, moral turpitude, anarchy, inciting to riot and mayhem ? Finally, did I not *trek* through the sodden hinterland to discover Chicago and hail it as America's literary center ? "

" But, " I interposed, " Dr. Kennicott thinks that your standards might find more appreciative audiences in — er — the other place than in heaven. "

" Bah ! " snapped Mencken, " Even Brander Matthews would know better than that ! What this place needs is a little *force majeure* to free it from its blubbering *Sklavenmoral.* It would be vastly more dignified and downright entertaining if we could get rid of the rumble-bumble of the pious snouters, the gaudy bombast of the malignant moralists, the obtuse and snivelling tara-diddle, the absurd hogwallowing, the balderdash, the pishposh, the abracadabra, the hocus-pocus, the blaa-blaa and cavortings of all whoopers and snorters, of the rabble-rousers, bogus rosicrucians, kukluxers, well-greased tear-squeezers, parlor pundits, boob-bumpers. The quackery, hugger-mugger idealism, and bumptiousness of a so-called democratic heaven is pathetic. Worse, it is grotesque. In the course of a mere score of years we have been lamentably intrigued by a dozen messianic delusions ; we have allowed ourselves to be caressed impartially and in turn by the shibboleths of Tolstoy, Pastor Wagner, Drs. Palladino, Maeterlinck, Metchnikoff, Bergson, the Emanuel Movement, Eucken, Veblen, Dalcroze, Isadora Duncan, Tagore, Freud and half a hundred other visiting boudoir-swamis, studio-psychics, jitney messiahs. . . We are constantly being bemused by the hopelessly mediocre. We have a prodigious

appetite to be fooled, tricked, bamboozled and double-crossed; in short, to be ignominiously but thoroughly hornswoggled. Hence, we swallow, with unconcealed gusto, the pious garglings of the Sunday afternoon sentimentalists, the windy platitudes and hollow stuff of any gaudy romanticism as long as it is soothing. Hence, the local peasantry grows more and more inclined to the cackle and clowning of every cheap-jack, punchinello, mountebank and booby, and hence sinks in its own soughs of booming and asinine fol-de-rol. The boobery has a positive genius for scorning whatever is genuine or first-rate ; it holds beauty to be unbusiness-like, decorative, distracting and hence immoral ; its anaesthesia to the arts is invariably one hundred percent. It is as unintelligent as a senator or a boy-orator fresh from the Chautauquas; it is the chief-actor in a bawdy farce, a *seborrhea* on the face of Nature, a gawky villager who sees Love only as the divine *Shadchen*, a tragic dill-pickle, a snitcher, a smut-hound, in brief, an ass. Consider the way it has consistently lauded the adenoidal tenors of American literature and has shut the door in the faces of such rare but indubitable genii as Poe, Hearn, Whitman and the serious side of — God save the Mark ! — Twain. Consider the reception accorded Dreiser's " Sister Carrie ". Or Norris's " McTeague ". Or Conrad's " Heart of Darkness. " Or Sandburg's " Chicago Poems. " The thing is incredible, stupendous, fantastic, *unglaublich*, gargantuan, *kolossal* — but nevertheless true. "

" And what, " Kennicott rejoined with more than the suspicion of a sneer, " are you going to do about it ? ".

" First, " replied Mencken, " I shall pay a visit to the presiding *Stammvater* and lay before him my plans for draining the body politic of its virulent *glycosuria*. Next I will broach — somewhat gingerly — a scheme to plough through the ranks, and weed out all those who suffer from comstockery, megalomania, right- thinking, the itch-to-reform, chemical purity, belief in the soul or share, in any way, the bovine honor and complacency of the herd. I have various suggestions as to a sweet and soulful euthanasia. I, myself, once proposed wholesale lynchings, volunteering to string up half the community of a small town in Maryland at the local opera house and sell tickets to the other half at five dollars *per capita*. It promised to be a profitable venture and a good show. . . I throw out the suggestion and pass on. Next, I will exhibit a machine, designed by myself and Bernard Shaw out of Nietzsche, which will effectually apply the slapstick to the posterior elevation of poets, *cabots*, Shakespearian cuties, Southerners and other such pretty fellows and, as General Grant has it somewhere, give them a kick in the *kishgiss*. For one thing, I will make everybody listen to daily concerts confined to the quartets of Papa Haydn, the *lieder* of Richard Strauss, the nine symphonies of the immortal Ludwig. For another, I will show them that man, for all his flashy chivalry which invariably bites in the clin-

ches, is capable of appreciating fine letters, the sensuous ebb and flow of syllables, the beautiful if polygamous marriage of nouns and adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, exclamations, articles, participles, infinitives, possessives, conjunctions. I will read them the files of *The Smart Set* and strike a responsive chord of E major in the dumb breasts of janitors, soda-clerks, *mouzhiks* Methodists, book-salesmen, officers of the Elks and duly elected members of the House of Representatives. Even the college professors will feel a stir of life. I do not say that I can pump up sufficient energy to destroy at one blow, all the malaises and bugabocs that inhibit these provinces. I do say that, once my campaign is in full swing, I will tear off the tin halos and false whiskers of the Puritan. . . "

He got no further. The last word seemed to inflame them with amazing vigor. Although a unanimity of opinion was evident, each one was so eager to pay his tribute of invectives that the air thickened with fragments like. . . " glib dunderheads " . . . " pious hypocrites " . . . " You've got a Puritan complex yourself " . . " filthy and blackmailing crusaders — God save us all ! " . . . " drown them in cold tea " — in Puritanic acid — " . . . " consider, also " . . . " To the Puritan all things are impure ! "

The crowd was growing larger, the exclamations louder. Mencken banging a bass-drum which he had hidden beneath his overcoat, began whistling the *Marche des " Davidsbundler " contre les Philistins*. Carol unfurled a screaming banner while Hugh McVey tore off his jacket to display a flaming red undershirt. A shot was fired — then others. Possibly, they were blank cartridges ; but I was taking no chances. " If this is Heaven, " I gasped to my companion, " Give me — ".

But my mentor had vanished. My heart lost several beats before I saw him. He was slipping out the back-door. I agreed with him. He was an excellent guide.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

OCTOBER

We trample filial reverence under foot.
Hat on head,
We sit down impudently,
Legs crossed and heels kicked up.

You do not like our bloody laughter,
Our refusal to wash again the rags already washed a million times,

Our sudden daring
To bark a deafening bow-wow!

Ya-a, backbone
Upright like a telegraph pole,
Not mine alone,
All Russians, hunchbacked for centuries.

Who on earth is now more clamorous than we?
Bedlam, you say,
No mile-stones nor signposts —
To Hell! Our red cancan is a splendid sight.

You would not believe it: multitudes,
Droves of clouds under human orders,
And the sky spread out like a woman's wrap,
And not a single sunray . . .

Christ is on the Cross again, and Barabbas
Promenading over Iversky . . .
Who can stop — who? — galloping Scythian steeds?
Bowstrings singing the Marseillaise?

Did any hear of blacksmith
Forging railtrack bracelets for the Globe,
Puffing his cheap plug with the air
Of an officer clicking spurs?
You ask: What next?
Next — dancing centuries,
We break into every door,
And no one dares threaten: Here take that!

We! We! We're everywhere,
At the very footlights of the stage;
No quiet lyricists,
But flaming clowns.

Rubbish, all rubbish into a heap
And, singing like Savonarola, chuck it
Into the fire.... No matter! Who is there to fear
When tiny worlds of petty souls are vast spheres now?
Every day — a new chapter in the Bible,
Every page — an inspiration to a thousand generations.
It will be said about us:
Happy they who lived in 1917.
And still you whine: We are lost!
And still you whimper!
Blockheads,
Is not yesterday squashed like a pigeon
Under an automobile
Rushing madly from a garage?

(*Translated from the Russian of*)
ANATOLY MARYNGOFF *by* L. LOZOWICK

RICHARD SEEWALD — Village Street with Cat

PETALS

Petals of flowers from unending trees
Sink down, and soft, inexhaustible,
Great flakes of noiseless snow.
Birds sink in swarms. The shivering fluttering
Butterflies tumble out of a deep gray Heaven
About me and pass . . .

Foam spills noiselessly from high fountains.
All the books in the world torn into tatters
And strewn by a giant hand through space . . .

Tear pearls, glass and clearer than glass,
All the thoughts fall. Sand and dust
Trickling after . . .

RAIN

A thousand little feet will come
To build the silvery pillars,
And wet snakes rustle through the leaves.

A symphony that rippling sings us in
Behind its bars to loneliness.
The heaven's a sieve for tears,
A shaking wonder holds the woods and fields.

A faint sounding horn from afar,
And the years are swept together.
The earth breathes it in with its broad green lungs
And beneath lies the sacred black heart . . .

WILHELM KLEMM
(*Translated from the German by Olive Sclarf*)

MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

During the period of William II, that colossus with feet of clay, German literature was ever his faithful mirror, even when it twisted his image with ingenious or satirical grimaces.

The opposition was always a loyal opposition, possessing an official character. In 1914, when the defiant "Simplicissimus" became "Kaiser true", only the most superficial observer was astonished, for in its heart it was ever true, it loved its enemy, jeered only at the "beauty failings", teased only where it loved. Ludwig Thoma, the satirist of "Simplicissimus", was what one calls a "Spiessbürger" of the purest alloy.

What has happened to this literature of "William", now that every imperial assumption of his lies in ruins? When this man, who compensated both physically and morally the deformity of his lame arm by refusing to remove his military tunic, when this sabre-rattler mounted the throne, the socialistic legislation was enacted. The labouring classes became at once literary material. Writers made a discovery which they called "Naturalism", though nowhere in the world was it less natural than in Germany, that lyric and musical land. The movement, young at that time, declaimed against the tyranny of poverty and confronted the plush suites of the "parlour" with the cane chairs of the kitchen; champagne with schnaps; this vice against that. That the kitchen used slang could not conceal the fact that the salons uttered drivel. This "parade of poverty" culminated in Hauptmann's "Weavers", some scenes of which were undoubtedly wild and strong, but the Weavers' rebellion of the forties was served up as material, though the miseries of labour in 1893 were no longer topical. Wages had risen with exports, and the "Lasalle communist manifesto" labourer had grown into a little middle class voting socialist, not a fit subject any longer for literary rhetoric. Sudermann really changed his "milieu" before Hauptmann. He became fascinated with the spectacle of the middle class turning into a great super middle class with the stamp of William upon it. One grew more than rich, and the world was not only open to German commerce, but to every German eccentricity as well. German "Naturalism" gave up its short lived career, and became eclectic. The writers fumbled about

in every style, old and new, their own, and that of strangers, becoming in their declining strength the mirror of a second hand internationalism. Hauptmann slipped with his " Versunkene Glocke " into the so called poetic manner, like the young girls of the seventies who strolled about dreaming with albums under their arms. The verse in the " Versunkene Glocke " is as spurious as old German house furniture in the parlours of the seventies. Nevertheless he established himself with " Die Versunkene Glocke " as the representative poet of the day. He stretched the jocose and idyllic talent given him by nature to such dimensions, that one could hear its limbs crack. After that he wandered about uneasily, seeking here and there for material and new forms of expression. Only now and then, perhaps in an instinct of self defence, he narrowed himself to the natural measures of his talent, as in " Biberpelz " " Pipa tanzt " and " Ratten ". The growing wealth of the mighty German realm, its international status, export total and the size of its army, forced his poetry and prose to extend itself to keep up with them. Just as the Empire in its development grew out of its legitimate boundaries, so did the Empire's official poets. Hauptmann believed that " Der arme Heinrich ", " Griseldis ", " Kaiser Karl ", and " Florian Geyer " were duties required of him in his capacity as the first dramatist of the folk that had at last succeeded in fighting its way to a proper place in the sun. One can search through the length and breadth of Hauptmann's works and find no trace of doubt over this miracle of William's Empire, no tendency ever to view it problematically. Still the naïvety with which he, untroubled by any scruples watever, gave himself over to the spinning out of his drama fables, has something so childlike and touching in it that one is disarmed. This last year, 1921, he published a short play, which he tells us was conceived in 1911. It is an example of how completely unable he was to produce anything in the nature of genuine comedy, better than that of Kotzebue. This, no more childlike, but definitely childish " swan song " is both epilogue and epigram on the whole of Hauptmann's creation. The Hauptmann theatre was a theatre like William's Empire, mere scenery and side wings, but without central action. Even as this Empire gave to its commerce an iron fist that shattered it, so did the Empire's most representative poet, with a feeling for sentiment and hilly landscape, stretch himself out to the dimensions of a Cimborasso, perishing thereby.

It will not interest the foreign reader to hear the names of the numerous writers who paced their beats near by and about Hauptmann. Each year they laid their little opus, and thought themselves poets. Those that are dead, are already forgotten. Those that are still alive, have lived longer than their works. They may interest the historian perhaps, but no other living man. I am selecting the typical only from this epoch. The past is past, even if writers

who are living beyond their time still sow seeds in the void. At the same time as Hauptmann, the contrasting message of Wedekind slowly came to the fore. The prevailing hypocrisy in the so called " upper circles " over sex relationship provided trumps for his hand that was not always absolutely clean. His good intentions were not unjustly mistrusted. It was not without bias, that he established himself as advocate for sexual and other freedoms; it put lively blood in his work, livelier than one had been accustomed to. His role of bad boy was more played at than experienced, and much more readily accepted by the public than was truly comfortable for him, even in his younger days. Wedekind's cynicism was never complete, many times it reached no farther than a good " bluff ". He prayed to God " Lead me into temptation ", and was very glad when the dear God ignored his plea. He lost with the years much of his invention and spirit, and wrote plays that are little more than a justification of himself to the public, whom he deemed mistook him for a pig, when he was merely a prophet. The boredom in the latter plays should not blind one, however, to the genuine vitality in the earlier works such as " Frühlings Erwachen ", " Lulu ", (though this is unbearably long) and his " Schloss Wetterstein ". At any rate, Wedekind was the only one among the dramatists of the William epoch who had a genuine feeling for form, and a sense for the lying brittle falseness of this period of German history. He is at his best when he utilises his sound shapely undecorative gift of words, not when he writes in iambics.

Now I come to the third literary figure of this period, Stephan George. Though the symbolist would like to make him French, he is quite German in spirit, but of a newer alloy. For nearly two thirds of the William period he stood apart, as an unknown rather mysterious poet surrounded by an admiring circle of fastidious youths, who made a cult of honouring him in order to lend themselves an importance which they by no means possessed The formal purity and intensity of his poetic insight became a challenge and incitement to those among them who where free from the prevailing impulse to use the stage as a forum, and to others who, from an intuitive artistic perception, refrained from writing anything at all; and lastly to those few real poets, with a penetration that belonged to them and to them alone. We shall only mention Hoffmannsthal and Borchardt, not because they had already written fine poems, but because they were themselves the creators of new ideas. Neither of them took any outer part in this " Williamism "; Hoffmannsthal, the Austrian, for another reason than the Berliner Borchardt. George, their master, was not quite as innocent as the others in this respect. He erected a scaffolding of praise including in it a tribute to the " imperial idea " for a Klinger and a Boeklin. This was not only a sign of bad taste, it was worse, it was compromise. Hoff-

mannsthal was as free from this as Borchardt, the former as a result of his southern temperament, sensibility, and inherited good taste ; the latter from a self disciplined and wise perception, and also an austere leaning to classicism: qualities which armed him sufficiently against the romantic as well as the pseudo-romantic.

Stephan George — that means thirty beautiful poems, a permanent heritage for the German people. Stephan George — that means, no person, no spirit, no programme, for when one rightly understands him, Stephan George is a myth that has given life to two children of God: — Hoffmannsthal, and Borchardt. It is not an accident that Hoffmannsthal only now writes his ripest things, " The Frau ohne Shatten " that deep poem in prose, and " Der Schwierige " the most discreet of all comedies, nor that Borchardt has witheld from the public till now, the work of his last fifteen years. William's ridiculous façades, aping marble, have shown themselves for cheap painted stucco. A poet like Borchardt could not hang his bronzes on them, would not, did not. And if nothing at all now hangs where those tawdry pillars stood, at least, the place is free.

Too strident still, are the voices of those who helped to bring about the final collapse of William ; unconquerable time has done the most. I allude to Sternheim and Heinrich Mann, to mention two of them. As the building showed cracks, and the prophets, long conscious of its appointed doom, had ceased talking about a fact so evident, Sternheim came along with his comedies, the first one in so called verse, satirising every manner of " Spiessbürger " from the labourer to the capitalist. They are very amusing, very drastic, and very intelligently built for the theatre, where the people whom he jeered at, had at all events their pleasure, perceiving in them chiefly a good chance to make money — a perception that did not disappoint them. Sternheim was responsible for a great deal of the new life in the German theatre. If he is inclined to see in this service, a gift to the world, to the German language, to the cultural heritage of Europe, and God knows what else, who will blame him in these mad days ? If a man feels well in his own Heaven, we have no legitimate call to prove to him, that his Heaven is only in his own imagination.

Some years ago Thomas Mann wrote the story of a German family. It was a story of decadence. He possessed at that time more political insight than his nervous and excitable brother Heinrich, who seems ever in a state of fury because Germans are not Frenchmen. Thomas, having lost some of his former clarity of vision, believes that the Germans are as sound as they ever were. Heinrich, Utopian, swears by 1789 ; and Thomas, also Utopian, by the time of Fredericus Rex or 1813.

During the time Hauptmann poeticized with emotions, and Wedekind with sex, the Mann brothers and Sternheim became critics of their time. The

last three however are only the bridges, none of them will have anything to say to the next generation. The old bourgeoisie has awakened with a very bad head, and the new one of the money sharks, must first learn to read with the help of the stock exchange bulletins. Even were it otherwise, they have said and repeated all they had to say. Dismayed in secret that their enemy is dead, they wander through a strange country peddling chance wares.

An important feature will be missing in my picture, if I fail to mention a well established fact; namely, that with the increased comforts and luxurious possibilities of living, the cultural standard in Germany has improved considerably, slowly, for the first twenty years after the 'seventies, more stormily in the second. One does not only gather this by the particular literature demanded by the reading public of any particular period, though perhaps most of all by it. Put on the same scales, a novel by Wassermann or Schnitzler is far more civilized than the novels of Storm, Spielhagen, etc. who occupied the leisure hours of the generation before 1870. Also typical of the higher cultural demands of the reading public after '70', is this fact: Turgeniev and Daudet were forgotten at the beginning of the 'eighties, Zola read intensely, if falsely, for a span, to be followed, from the 'nineties on, with Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, and Flaubert. Now all of these writers would be unreadable to the general public before the 'seventies; the mental horizons were too narrow then, the social conditions not sufficiently civilized.

During the last years before the war, the hunger for foreign literature in Germany grew so indiscriminating and voracious, that soon the symptoms of an overloaded stomach became evident; for instance, a monstrous over-estimation of Wilde, a failure to discover Meredith and Hardy, a gobbling at Strindberg while they neglected Ibsen whom they have never really understood. Claudel and Rimbaud were discovered here only shortly before the war when they could have been found in 1908. Rimbaud was boomed here after the war began to give the stuttering Expressionism a bodily father; though Heaven only knows why Rimbaud should be chosen for such a post. A fever for travel and material advantages attacked the Germans in 1900, and reached up to their brains. They went out of bounds, as newly rich people are inclined to do. A people happier in serving than in commanding, for the spirit of the lackey dwells in their soul. It makes the German the most sought after waiter in the world. He has the talent of feeling comfortable in humble circumstances to an abominable extent.

Thus, with growing Industrialism, and its accompanying wealth, the modestly commercial class grew up to be a very rich one, with increased cultural demands, never very deep perhaps, but still — weighed against the cultural demands of other times and other folks — showing evidence of a certain quality

of discrimination. For instance, the average German, even if he is rich enough to renounce effort, has a strong inclination to improve his mind and outlook on life. This must appear strange to the American. What an American can read and digest in the way of small literature, would be rejected by the German as too stupid to be palatable in nine cases out of ten. The novels of Schnitzler would appear to the average American reader as being none of his business, in fact, " highbrow " ; which they are not when one takes Flaubert as the standard. Schnitzler then, is about the standard every day reading of the German public. Not that Schnitzler has any call to be considered fine literature either. He occupies himself with the endless psychology of love, observed from a liberal bourgeois angle. He has learned much from Balzac, Dostoievsky, and Flaubert, and I must say utilizes it intelligently within his limits.

Just when it would seem, after the war, that the moment had arrived, definitely to raise the reading level, it is curious to observe how it has fallen. During the war Heinrich Mann wrote a novel describing official Germany, known by us already to stupefaction ; after the war he wrote another. He called it " Die Armen ", in which we discovered with some astonishment, that he knew nothing whatever of the working poor, neither their lives, nor their aims. It is the boring book of a dreamer, affecting realism, without any reality. The war has robbed many writers of their " milieu ", for whom and out of which they wrote. Their civilizing influences vanish with the whole class that they worked upon. The class that succeeds them reads exclusively, so far as it reads at all, the books of Courths-Mahler, the most idiotic literature conceivable. Now this condition may be extraordinarily favourable for the new men. They will not be impelled to entertain a public, which does not exist for them as yet ; and they need not continue to pay a price for their success with conscious service. They can be themselves at last. This is pure gain, even if all forms of diletantism and bluffing swindle also find the situation convenient enough to relieve themselves of doubtful burdens.

Those youngsters who believed themselves called upon to exercise lyricism at the expense of good sense and the German language, must find sooner or later, the situation unworkable. To earn at least a comfortable living, they will be forced to become bank clerks or something or other of this nature. The number of genuine ones that are left will be small, much smaller than in 1913, when almost every better class family, merely because they could afford such a luxury, had at least one son who was a poet. Only a sacred few will remain. They will take the chalice from the hands of those whose care had been to see that no drop of the precious liquid was spilled,— for no literary period can begin quite anew; at the best it brings the buds, the breaking flowers, or the fruit of seeds that had been sown before ; or completes the development of those that

have slipped through, and become rank before they were ripe. In this way Hoffmannsthal would have exerted as small an influence on earlier times as he does on this. The deliberate compression of his style, and its all too clear nature, exclude the possibility of a great response in any period, notwithstanding a capacity, which stretches itself to the very boundaries of wisdom. His thoughts appear to him first as pictures, then he makes his way back again to the original image of thought before he can express it ; a painful creative process like the boiling of glycerine, which does not bubble at 80 degrees, like water, but at 400°R. Borchardt is luckier in the shaping of his material. One traces already his influences on the younger generation, a notable achievement for a man well over forty. The voices have become steadier since Borchardt's verse appeared. Nigger poems are no longer the ideals of the group that made them. The forgotten Walser turns up again ; a book of his poems appeared without attracting attention in the 'nineties. Konrad Weiss, the catholic poet, sings in his own voice once more. Däubler scrapes himself clean from the clay and weeds that have been hiding him. Rilke cannot read the new lyrics without a smile. They seem to him merely lyrical arts and crafts for decoration only. Paul Kraft I should mention here, Friedrich Schnack too, Berthold Viertel, also Werfel, his comrade from Prague. With his brittle boy's soul, Werfel brings intense moments sometimes to the surface ; sorrowful lines that remain, somewhat in the nature of diary extracts, mounting with luck to poetry. He is too moved himself to move others, too dissolved in softness to bring his form through, and his verse is rarely the crystal that it should be. Not like Browning whose own form was law. We have such a prose Browning here now, Franz Kafka.

Our youngsters have been observing Borchardt very intently of late, in spite of differing temperaments, aims, and natures. His unequalled capacity to crystallise the fleeting lyrical moment makes careless accidental methods seem vain and stammering ; stuttering when one should speak, sighing when one should cry out, playing with vain fingers in the air, when one should cast in bronze.

I come now to the third great figure in our literary future, Robert Musil. Before the war a novel appeared by him, called " Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Töless ". The poetic possibilities of this book received scant notice at the time. Its original methods of psychology, undreamt of by the knights of the day, were ignored. A psychology that brings out of characters the same riddles that are put into them, so that they are proof against any unforeseen development, is mere child's play. To show the functioning of the " born naive ", the " born criminal ", the " born officer " is easy enough for a dramatist. Riddles like this are always solved ; that is they remain where they were at the beginning ; for characters born in cement cannot move. Musil

has now conquered with a drama a whole thousand mile territory of new ground. In his play " Schärmen " in every respect suitable for the theatre, — there are six figures, and none of them " born ", all of them are at one and the same time, yes and no, black and white. It is not a problem play as one interprets such today, for in itself it has no special problem. Problematic only by the nature of its characters who act, live, and work each other up in the play to culminating decisions — a conception, dramatically and poetically new.

One scarcely sees how far from the accepted path such a track can carry one. And neither is one certain if the temperature of the new climate is 50 degrees below, or above zero. One thing is certain however. It is a different temperature.

This drama of Musil stands alone with the verse of Borchardt as a measure for the younger generation of writers. One will no longer have the courage to swindle a way through psychological labyrinths, by mere cinema-like abreviations. One need not stand the scenery on its head, nor use again the old dreary declamatory methods in order to bring new life into the theatre. One need not rob the German grammar of its articles, nor deliberately change the normal word sequences to appear new. If one really has nothing to say, then surely the already so mutilated German language is good enough to say it in.

This article is no more than a bird's-eye view of the subject, the typical alone is mentioned. The new post-William literature can be specialised later, perhaps. The foreign reader would count it no gain to have a catalogue of names shaken before his eyes. A general orientation, I think, serves the purpose better.

FRANZ BLEI

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Literature, as well as finance, is sensible to the trade balance. Exports from the United States are at a minimum, for which the depreciation in foreign exchange is held responsible. But one commodity, sometimes overlooked, is reversely affected — that of improvident artists. Never before has their exodus attained to the present proportions, and already the reader of the more experimental American reviews may have noticed the existence of a new literary *milieu* which may be the beginning of a new literary movement. A group of writers, bound together by similar reactions to their environment, is being allotted increasing space. Another settlement of pilgrims is finding its voice, for, like the Mayflower excursionists, they have crossed the ocean to escape economic oppression and spiritual coercion.

The nation of their birth pays the highest rates known to man for certain special qualities. Bankers and promoters are so exuberantly rewarded that great industries are founded for the sole purpose of helping them disburse their annual accretion. And their servants are remunerated according to the laws of supply and demand, even down to their clowns and laundresses.

But the talents of some men cannot or will not serve. Unfortunately the artist pioneer usually belongs to this class. For it would not be kind to demand of the hard-working business man that he make the mental effort necessary to understand artists who do not follow the rules laid down in the primary schools. Thus we find men of the greatest importance to the cultural progress of America faced with the dilemma of deadening hack work or flight. Since the war and the depreciation in foreign exchange, the latter alternative has become practical and alluring, and those who can rely on even a few dollars from America find life in Europe a possibility. The majority of these seek refuge in Paris, and now form a considerable colony.

There is another reason for this efflux. America, sweet land of liberty, has, by a curious inversion, become despotic. Originally the theory of democracy, of control by the majority, was planned to protect the rights of individuals, to act as a check against the encroachment of tyrannies of all kinds. Later, its significance was widened ; it became a more general restraint but still negative.

Lincoln well expressed it in his aphorism : " You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all of the time. " The rule of the majority protected rather than initiated.

But in late years, all this is changed. Common belief now holds that the thought of the majority is the wisest, their taste the best, their morals the most virtuous. The ideal state is supposed to be the one which efficiently and immediately reflects their will. The initiative, referendum and recall are all measures destined to accomplish this end. In the light of this belief it is interesting to read in the " Atlantic Monthly " that according to the U. S. Army tests 47 % of the draft were morons, adults below the mental age of thirteen.

The result of the extension of the theory of majority rule has been one curtailment of individual liberty after another. The most prominent example is, of course, national prohibition. In Kansas city cigarette smoking is prohibited. We have heard that one locality is considering the curtailment of intercourse between husband and wife except for the procreation of children ; but we have been unable to verify this rumour. In New York State the licence to teach is refused to any one who advocates " a form of government other than the government of the United States or of this State. " As the " New Republic " points out, this would have prevented Woodrow Wilson from teaching, as he once recommended a Cabinet Government for the United States.

The legal restraints of this character dally far behind the social pressures. These often extend to ridiculous extremes. Breathing space can be found in a few scattered oases, but many find emigration to Paris more congenial.

The effect of the proximity of foreign culture upon these emigrants is more relevant to contemporary literature than the cause of their expatriation. Although the social customs of the considerable American colony in Paris would be a study both interesting and astounding, we shall only consider the literary reactions of the writers to the French environment.

Two main influences predominate.

The first reveals itself in a meticulous attention to form. Inspired by the French literature of Flaubert and his time, these expatriates concentrate on finding the " mot juste ", not in quite the same sense as the original seekers for the one and only word which fits exactly, but with consideration for the later revision of this concept as effected by Remy de Gourmont. Though a word or a phrase may satisfy the intellect and give the meaning more exactly than any other, still it may be lifeless because of overuse. It is dead like the catch word or popular song of a year ago. This occurrence is continuous, inevitable and important. The author who forgets it, writes himself out. It explains why the preceeding literary epoch is always scorned by the present, though a future generation may read again its masterpieces and marvel that any one could have

been so blind as not to appreciate their worth. — It explains why the most cultivated and specialised connoisseurs study the very old or the very new. For lapse of time revives sick language. Emphasis on this phenomenon is a recent development, and some writers strain the English, French, German and Russian languages to the limit of understanding in their terror of the cliché. The work of the Americans in Paris is characterized by this fastidiousness, the prose as well as the poetry. At home it is conspicuous in the verse of Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore, as well as in that of Eliot and Pound who have lived abroad for many years. It is not so noticeable in prose.

The second and more important influence on the new pilgrims, is a revaluation of America. The distance partially explains the changed mental picture of the country of their birth. A farmer who has spent all of his life on the shore of a lake, has paddled on its surface, dived to its depths, ruminated over its vagaries till he believes he notices the changing voices of its frogs as they grow up, suddenly moves his home to the slope of its highest hill. With astonishment he finds that this lake known from childhood is not the lake he had known, but a polished mirror with a geometrical shape. Still it has moods, but they are different. So America regarded from France is not the same America that bustles one from subway to elevator. The revaluation is accelerated and assisted by the curious attitude of admiration prevalent among French artists. The apologetic American writer, who tries to make up by his modesty for the outrageous bluster of the tourist American, will get a big shock, if, on meeting Blaise Cendrars, he tries to praise the perfection, the grace, the form of French life and literature while deprecating the crudeness and strain of his own country. " Your intellectual America, yes, it bores me, but that other America of the skyscrapers, of the movies, of the streets, that is admirable. " And Cendrars will go on and describe his arrival at New York in the steerage with a kopek and a quarter in his pocket. How he spent his first night in a slaughter-house killing beef to get a little money. How during four months he wished to die and, in reaction against all the clean collars and shaved faces, let his beard grow and remained aloof. When suddenly he understood and stopped fighting. The barber in the Brevort extracted his whiskers, he bought an Arrow collar, became like an American, and has never been the same since. This is a conspicuous example of the French attitude but not isolated. Frenchmen who have never smiled at the statue of liberty still share this enthusiasm for the land of hustle, with the lack of discrimination that comes from hearsay knowledge, it is true. The ambitious American writer who wishes to hear the new literary revival acknowledged, will be told that American advertising, moving pictures, and architecture lead the world. He asks: " Have you read Anderson ? ", and is answered : " I love O'Henry. "

Such an upsetting of preconceptions has its effect on the Americans in Paris.

But not the effect one would expect. The Americans parallel the French authors by attempting to align their form with the new age, but leave their subject matter as it was. The French naturally cannot express the American civilization in their creations. What they can do is to disregard the classic search for perfection and balance, and attempt to give instead the crudeness of the amazing contrasts of the age and the speed of its mechanisms. This direction is obvious in the writings of Cocteau, Morand, Salmon, Cendrars, etc., and is critically expressed by Epstein.

Its effects on the Americans is adequately brought out in the following letter recently forwarded from Paris:

"You may note that my story bears no positive ethical message, and locates at the opposite pole to the Sherwood-Anderson, Russian-realism, American soil spirit. The influence of the cinema as well as that of other mechanical marvels of the age has scarcely begun to show any repercussion in literature, which lags far behind the other arts, lead by Picasso, Lipchitz, Satie, Schoenberg. I refer especially to the elements of surprise, novelty, electricity, closeup, single-light."

And the story lived up to the definition. Its locale was Paris, its narrative of no importance. The nationality of the author inconsequential. The definition could have equally applied to a story by Paul Morand, and the author could have been any foreigner living in Paris and well read in French. Yet it was exceedingly well done.

In general it is true that the transplanted American writers study the product of a recent and prominent school of French authors in order to learn how to apply the lesson of the new American civilization to literature. This is not the economical or the shortest route to the goal; however it might be of advantage if they would not also attempt to express the French state of mind and to adopt its view-points and conventions. If they could remain Americans, not narrow or bigoted Americans, and acquire French clarity, ease, and style, it would be all to the good, but to write bad French stories in good English is little gain.

The Parisian school of American letters could perform an invaluable service. A gap exists between America and literary America. This is dimly sensed on the West shore of the Atlantic and clearly perceived on the East shore. The separation between "high brow" and "low brow" which isolates the artist from the community must be bridged if American literature is to become more than surface ornamentation. Great writing expresses its time. American literary prose records frustrated ideals, inhibited sex, petty squalor. Our civilization is more than these. A realization of this divergence is obligated by contact with French thought.

The opinions of Cendrars and Fay are typical of the most influential group

of post-war artists in Germany and Russia as well as in France. They only differ from others in that they know by personal experience that which many accept from hearsay. Both have lived and worked without money or friends, in that ghoulish nightmare of struggling industries over which the American novelists shudder. They liked it. Cendrars longs to return, but first wishes to capture King Menelik on a film. To both the work of the American literati is of no interest, while the natural and unconscious products of our civilization are the marvels of the century.

Mr. Edmund Wilson Jr. in " Vanity Fair " adequately voices the other point of view. He solemnly warns France : " Do not try to make pets of the machines ! Be careful that the elephants do not crush you !... The buildings are flattening us out ; the machines are tearing us to pieces ; our ideals are formed by the posters and the jazz. . . Your attempts at the barbarous and the harsh are the most horrible things imaginable. The Electric Signs in Time Square make the Dadaists look timid ; it is the masterpiece of Dadaism, produced naturally by our race and without the premeditation which makes your own horrors self-conscious. "

But who can tell what France may not accomplish even in a direction distinctly American ? And she would probably not have to confess as does " Vanity Fair " in the heading of the illustrated page opposite Mr. Wilson's article.

THE NEW GENERATION IN LITERATURE. A GROUP OF YOUNG WRITERS WHO HAVE COME UPON OLD AGE WHILE STILL IN THEIR TWENTIES.

Mr. Wilson has placed his thumb on the shortcoming of the American intellectual, though his interpretation of French tendencies is inadequate.

" The buildings are flattening us out; the machines are tearing us to pieces. "

To day's environment is different from yesterday's. Man has had to change with it or drop out of the running. The practical man has moved with the time, is part of the new world and has kept his health. The visionary, the idealist, from inertia or sentimentality or weakness, has stayed behind and finds himself out of sorts with a hostile world, which in his eyes is exceedingly ugly. He is sick and finds relief by expressing his pain on the printed page. A good therapeutic measure according to psycho-analytic theory.

Many a writer of American novels and stories belongs to this category, and resembles a maimed pedestrian gazing up at the intestines of the auto truck which is crushing his leg rather than the scientist studying a decapitated ant hill. Such a posture is liable to narrow one's vision.

The authors of the past generation failed in a different way. They were physically stronger and morally weaker. Mark Twain is perhaps its outstanding figure. A genius, no one will ever know how great, for he accepted the prevailing " good taste " and never realized how it stubbed his pen. Though he saw

truly, only a part of his vision was ever depicted. O'Henry also knew America but accepted its moral fables. Though his detail was truthful, his philosophy was stereotyped. Holmes wore blinders which guarded his eyes from passion.

Writers of a lesser rank share this wider comprehension of America. Jack London, Richard Harding Davis, Booth Tarkington and many another have written books of great interest to the stranger as they delineate an amazing and novel civilization. But the American is right in asking for more, in demanding truth and depth and style as well as observation and good humour.

The novelists of to-day do not lack for courage. Crusaders against the evils of society, they smash idols and ideals with equal indifference. Plot, character portrayal, logical sequence, everything is sacrificed to iteration of their plea for themselves versus American civilization. Charles Reade and greater writers have married propaganda to narrative, but they did not subordinate story to thesis, to any such extent. The so-called American realists are in effect extremely romantic, adequately voicing little more than their own stomach-aches, and using the external scene but to show cause for their peculiar sufferings. The impression left by many of the novelists is of young people who read deeply in Horatio Alger at the age of ten, discovered his falsity when they were twelve and grieve over the consequent disillusionment ever after.

However, in the last few years a number of books have appeared in which both reaction and progress are observable. The autobiographical form is deserted for the more impersonal story, and the iconoclastic spirit is sufficiently curbed to permit of accurate description and acute delineation.

The transplanted American writers, those already well known as well as the younger nucleus now centering in Paris, have a greater importance for contemporary literature than possibly their combined or individual talents warrant, in as much as they represent a direction diametrically opposed to the main current of American prose. Objectivity, restraint, experimentation with form, is contrasted in their work with the subjectivity, looseness, and waste of the prevailing literature of revolt. The former assail the tradition of writing, while the latter attack the conventions of living. The former concentrate on an ideal of art, the latter on expressing themselves.

Perhaps from the fusion and interaction of these contrary ideals will come the artist or school of artists who will combine truth of vision, perfection of form, courage of conviction with a wide comprehension of a civilization too marvellous to be entirely hateful.

H. A. L.

COMMENT

Ramon Gomez is on the way to become the greatest living Spanish writer. His work is abundant and touches on everything which surrounds us, the uncouth as well as the friendly. He has sung of cafés, of their tables, their gas fixtures, their sugar bowls, of daily exploits, of shop windows. He has sung of the streets of Madrid, the breasts of its women, the heads of his friends, the jokes of the circus, of all the bric-à-brac of modern life. He is a humorist full of the unforseen and the droll, his nerves are extraordinarily sensitive, his eyesight of an unbelievable acuteness. Besides, no morbidity. On the contrary, a health, a deep-seated gaiety, a sincere love of life and of humanity. A stupendous optimism underlies this exuberance.

The sketches which are given in this number of *Broom* are selections from his last book, " Disparates. " The word " disparate " can be translated by fantasy or extravaganza. They characterize well enough the singular art of Ramon Gomez of Serna.

JEAN CASSOU

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We have to acknowledge the receipt of " Genius, " a monumental magazine of the arts, printed in Leipzig and published in Munich by the firm of Kurt Wolff. This German production, which is one of the handsomest things of the kind we have seen for some time, may be described as a kind of anthology of the arts of painting and sculpture. In it are to found in a juxtaposition that is sometimes really bewildering the latest manifestations of modernist art side by side with examples of antique sculpture and architecture. The whole production which is in large quarto format is luxurious to a degree ; paper and reproductions of the finest.

To give an example of the catholicity of the production — a catholicity which is indeed on occasion overwhelning — we have in one and the same volume Archipenko and reproductions of the interiors of the cathedrals of Carcassone and Poitiers, Georg Kolbe and Romain Rolland, an article on Charles-Louis Philippe, and another on barocco German poetry of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries.

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In a forthcoming number of *Broom* we have arranged to begin the publication of one of the most remarkable of modern Italian plays — Luigi Pirandello's " Six Characters in Search of an Author. " The work was given in London last month at two private performances of the Stage Society, and will in all probability be seen at a New York theatre in the fall. Pirandello is the leader of the so-called " grotesque " school of the modern Italian comedy, and is in every way a notable figure in the modern dramatic world. Although he is not a young man, his influence is only just now beginning to be felt outside the confines of his own country. And even in Italy his brilliant plays still encounter hostility from the conservative public. When " Six Characters " was done in Rome last year, there was nearly a riot in the theatre.

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The second number of *Tyro* comes to us from London (Egoist Press). Among the contributors are: Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Jessie Dismorr, John Rodker, Waldemar George, Herbert Read and Wyndham Lewis again. In a " tyronic dialogue " which is sprightly enough, Mr Lewis writes a kind of Macchiavelli's *Prince* for modern artists, warning them to beware of each other, exposing some of the egoistic mainsprings of their action and hinting at how a man who would bear the title of modern artist should comport himself in this more or less dirty old world. Among the reproductions are examples of the work of Lipchitz, Dobson, Wadsworth and Lewis.

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The acitivity of modern Russia in the sphere of art is really remarkable, especially that of expatriated Russia and more particularly still of that large portion of it which centers in Berlin and other German cities.

E pur si muove is an expression of this spirit of restless modern Russia, like that other fine production *L'Oiseau de feu* which is published in Berlin. Curious in *E pur si muove* are the illustrations. Side by side with reproductions of Lipchitz's sculptures we have pages showing ten different kinds of London made pipes. Then again we have Rodchenko's *Project d'un kiosque* and a photograph of a steam crane at work by the dockside. Picasso is represented by a design for a ballet - rather old material, dating back to 1917.

It appears that a *Chapliniad* exists in Russia. Léger has illustrated this work with Chaplin drawings, some of which, our readers will remember, have already appeared in *Broom*. Pictures of hydroplanes, floating docks, snow ploughs etc. enliven the pages of this Russian magazine.

ERNESTO FRATONI, *Gerente responsabile.*

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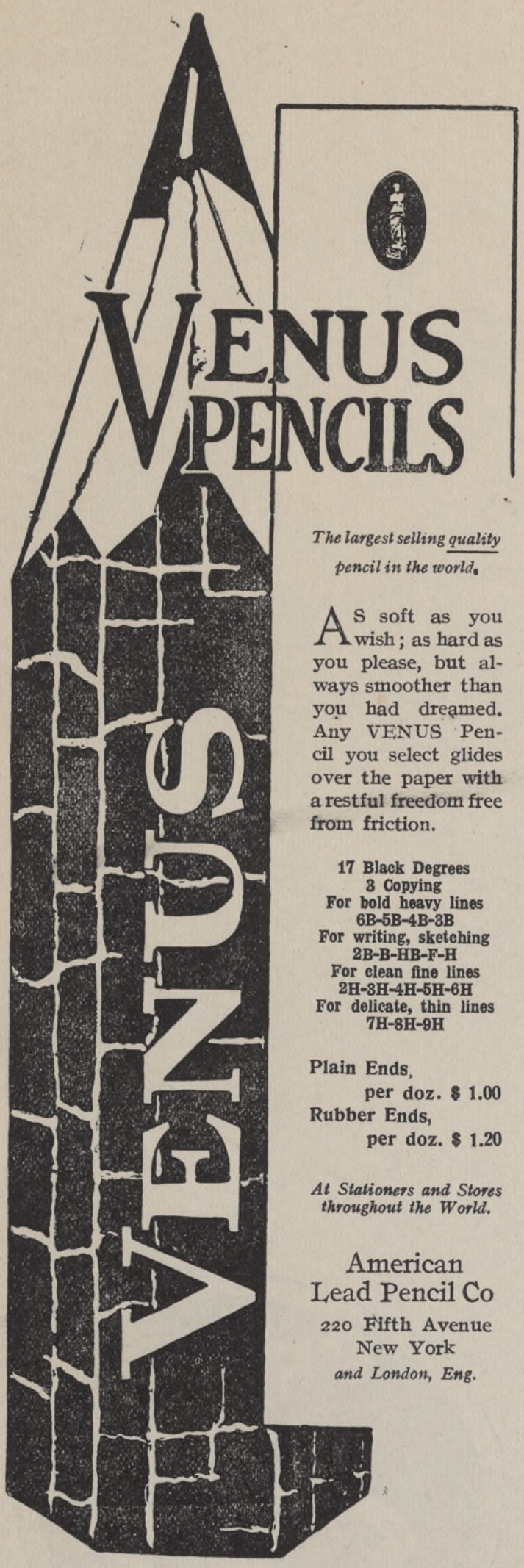

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