BROOM

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SUNSET

stinging
gold swarms
upon the spires
silver

  chants the litanies the
great bells are ringing with rose
the lewd fat bells
                and a tall

wind
is dragging
the
sea
with
dream
-s

E. E. CUMMINGS

PICASSO — Drawing

Courtesy Paul Rosenberg Gallery — Paris.

THE SUN RISES IN DARKNESS

McDowell awoke in the darkness and lay thinking of the light. To be sure the day is a hard time, and tiring to the eyes, for all day long, and pinched in the bitter spray of sunlight, the eyeballs must be continually at work, striving to settle into order the swaying masses about. Battered shuttlecocklike as ray impinging on mirror-surface darts back to mirror-surface, the eyeballs must still be pushing — holding back the jostling houses — trying to prevent a man in a green overcoat from becoming a bubble of red-shot yellow as he reaches a corner — from merging into a tree that blooms indistinctly, elbowing its zig-zag into the declining angle of a wall when a great house of concrete, wood, stone, steel collapses as gently as a deflated balloon. The road that must be trodden heaving, huge purple masses poising over it, and he with his eyeballs straining and stinging, striving to hold a way open.

At night, usually, the darkness abolished this; and at night usually, it was sweet to lie as if in space, unsurrounded, unsupported — to stare into the darkness and in that deep presence find the release of utter blindness. Yes, at night, usually, one could know the quiet comfort of the blind.

And McDowell lay trying to grasp the thought, but to-night he could not. And though he struggled almost physically with it — besought it almost tenderly as an amorous intruder, with sweating disarray of the bed clothes, the darkness disappeared in the night and he cowered again, dwarfed before the towering walls of his room, the imminent ceiling above, the crowded, beetling houses without.

He felt his heart quickening. With it the rythm of the masses clouded about him accelerated; swaying toward him; pending ba-

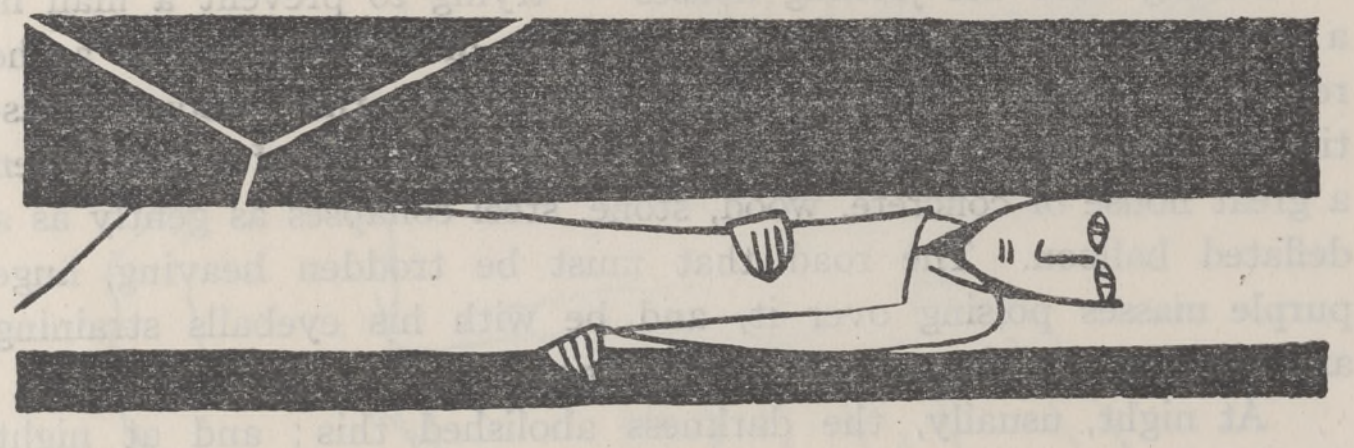
lanced over him... a breathless snatch of time... they were rushing back, back to a pin-point of distance to begin again the onset.

The muscles of his eyeballs strained to combat them through the clouding shadows but he could not hold them and in fear he flung up his arms to ward off the crushing walls. He beat his hands into space above his head, striving to reach the ceiling that descended to an inch above his finger-tips. He could almost feel its weight settling against his braced arms, but it poised tantalizingly and swept up again with a rush that nearly sucked him after it.

He was out of bed and pacing the room, knocking among the unsteady chairs.

" I'll get out of here," he said. " I'll get out of here."

. . . .



McDowell found the street and it was the same as always. He could hold the houses near at hand — if his eyeballs smarted and cracked he could hold them. But what good if a block away the street twisted like wax in flame and blurred itself into flaring curves, swelling yeasty whorls turning dizzily on bubbling outlines evaporating smokily — window panes that would splinter before your fist hazily made out distending like taffy not a block away.

And a man must make his way through. No need to mention the effect on a man's head, but was everything under puffing pressure ? Sky-high and weighing tons, no architect would admit that masses of concrete and stone could stand at such an angle and he defenceless must get under and through.

. . . .

He had walked a long time. The moonlight was very acute.

. . . .

The darkness delivered a woman before him, standing looking at him.

" Come with me, dearie ? " she intoned, and tried to fasten their eyes together. He refused to be a hole for a buttonhook while he said, " Are you a prostitute ? " and then found everything spinning on their rod-like glance as he met her eye.

She answered candidly.

" What were you thinking of in the darkness there, before I came along ? " he asked. McDowell was a tall man, and the girl found that his gaze penetrated hers. She felt herself swept into his being, pulled on the line of his glance, enclosing on herself like a handkerchief tied at its center to a string.

" Why," she hesitated in replying. " I don't know."

" Of nothing, certainly," McDowell went on, not speaking to her, but gazing at her. " Do prostitutes ever have thoughts ? " The woman saw no reason for replying and the tall man whose eye centered in hers went on speaking. " I should like to know. And why do you stand in the darkness ?" — " I fear it," said the woman. — " I should certainly like to be a prostitute for a while. And I like to look in your eyes, for I can hold them steadily, though I cannot make out when your face is beautiful and when it is plain."

He spoke further, but the woman had lost herself. She heard him say, " Why do I speak of myself so much ? It must be that I love you," and when he took her hand she recognized the cool, crackling sensation she had expected with herself.

" Come along with me," said McDowell, " I can't find my way very well alone."

" Don't you know the city ?" she asked as they started along, and anyone looking out of his window, perhaps to rest in the moonlight after dreaming, would have seen these two figures, black against

the white light of the moon, progressing up the shining street. He might have heard thinly the voice of McDowell replying :

"I never know it well."

"Where, then ?"

"I have had too much of these white walls and black shadows. I want to find a place where it is all light or all darkness. We shall go to see the sun rise." This perhaps before the little figures vanished.

. . . . . .

They were still walking hand in hand, when a man rose from beside a black pile and a red lantern. As far as McDowell was concerned, the man had been created there.

"Look out there, you !" he cried suddenly. "You'll fall in the hole."

"I see nothing but a patch of darkness," McDowell replied. "I've had to walk through many of those. It makes you afraid, but you always get through all right."

" Look out, I say ! " the man shouted, beginning to climb over the pile. " Go around. It's ten feet deep."

McDowell could not help laughing at this. " Who measured it ? " he demanded. " You, fool ? Are you a metaphysician, then ? You need more courage, friend." He started forward and fell in the hole.

The man rushed with the lantern to where the girl stood at the edge of the darkness. " Are you hurt ? " he called.

" Not yet," they heard McDowell reply. " But take that lantern away. It's dark here."

..." I wouldn't care," the man kept saying as they dragged him out, protesting testily. " But it's my job to watch here. I'd get fired here."

McDowell was brushing his clothes, when he said to the girl at last, " Why didn't you come, too ? "

She had been expecting it. " I tried to, but your hand slipped and I was afraid. If you had held me."

" You were afraid of the darkness ? " asked McDowell. Before she could answer he spoke again. " I know what is in your mind. You know the joy I feel in looking in your eyes. And in the darkness you might lose me again." She nodded, and McDowell paused.

" Well... " he said at length. " I hesitate to combat your theory. But it is undeniable that one projects one's self in the darkness unhindered by the influence of so-called reality. It follows, then, that the bottom of that hole would have been our supreme test. If we had each projected ourselves commingled with the other — if I am you equally as myself... Do you follow me ? " he interrupted himself to ask.

" Yes," she said. — " It's madness," he remarked joyously. — " I follow you there," she replied, and at the edge of the hole they embraced. " We are at the edge of the darkness," he whispered to her. " Come, let us make the test again — together."

But the man with the lantern hastily interposed. " No you don't," he said surlily. " I don't care, but I'd lose my job."

McDowell was dumbfounded. "This changing thing they call reality," he said to the girl with the accent of a Sunday School superintendent in his tall embracing figure. "That's the madness of it. For example, here he is again!"

"Complete light is the same thing as complete darkness," the girl reached his ear to say. "That was settled years ago."

"I know," McDowell nodded. "Extremes are the same point on a circle... Well, then," he agreed. "Let us find the sunrise. — You come too," he added, turning to the man with the lantern. "Evidently you were meant to influence me."

The man hesitated and was ashamed. "I'd lose my job," he said, diminuendo.

"I forbid that travesty, then," McDowell was polite enough to say, and with a quick foot smashed the red lantern. "Admit your fear." And taking the girls' hand he started his long legs in vacillatory motion.

... The man with the lantern was a shadow that had ceased to exist when they heard a panting breath behind them. "Who is that?" asked McDowell, rolling his eyeballs toward the girl.

"It's me," the man replied. "I'm coming with you. You said I needed courage and I got more than you ever thought of."

"Besides," added McDowell maliciously in a low voice. "When I smashed your lantern."

The man's voice rose menacingly. "By God! I'd smash your face."

"What good in that, friend? Death would make my understanding kinetic. I have you. Submit. And, to comfort you, we all have our symbolical red lanterns."

. . . .

So the three of them were walking.

A man in a high hat, opera cape and patent leather shoes was leaning over a bridge. He did not notice the three passersby, and even when the man (whose name was Cleary) ran up and knocked his hat off, saying "It glitters," he continued to lean bareheaded over the stream.

McDowell went and leaned by his side, and the man in the opera cape heard him say, "It's dark down there," in an understandably satisfied tone. It was the first comprehensible thing he had heard in weeks among the concatenation of sounds he had been subjected to, and only lassitude kept him from replying.

"But we are going to see the sun rise," McDowell went on, showing that he undertood the unspoken reply. "Come along, too."

. . . . . .

McDowell looked down on the city from a hill. Beyond the floating grayness of the valley it lay, indefinitely remote, a blurring glimmer of blooming surfaces, over which the remaining night lights circled and drifted lazily. One could not tell whether it had depth or height and it changed, so that one could only say that, in the heaving landscape, it was like some tentacled, scale-surfaced fish of unknown character, laxly billowing with the waves. It glimmered as it lifted, clouding as it dropped and, all floating it made one a trifle dizzy and he turned to the girl's eyes for relief.

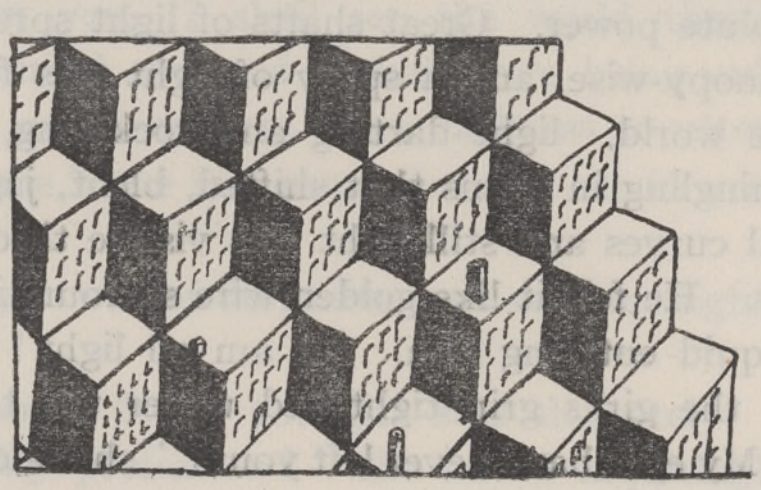
"Did you ever wish you were blind?" he asked.

"You know that I have," she answered, and they sat down while the man in the opera cape conversed quietly with Cleary. "It's nearly dawn," said McDowell.

"I'm not afraid," said the girl.

"You know how much I love to look in your eyes. It is because when my eye centers in yours the ray becomes the axis of the world."

...There was a pause, in which the sky gradually paling made each



blade of the young grass separately visible to Cleary and the other man as they leaned against the same tree-trunk, talking.

"It's all the same color. I wish it would never change," said Cleary in a low voice.

The other man nodded. "I thought that as I looked in the stream. *This* is the same thing as darkness. There's no action in it; it only waits, and you feel it ready to receive you. But the sunrise will impel. It will reach out around you; it will enter into you and act for you." He twitched his bare head toward McDowell. "*He's* never thought of that. He's a fool."

"He's a great man," replied Cleary, with the same intonation.

McDowell and the girl, a little way off, had been sitting for a long time, hand glued to hand, eye and eye run on the same thread-ray of vision, for each the eye of the other the pin-center on which like a Catherine wheel all the world rotated in spokes of changing color.

Then there was a great shout behind them. "It's the sun!" yelled Cleary crazily, and the bank shuddered beneath the beat of his wild feet. "The sun! The sun! It's the sun!"

For a moment, as the great sun leaped over the horizon, McDowell saw it, and his eyeballs strained as he tore them from the girl's and centered them on the flaming sun. For a moment it seemed his gaze would cut through its core and get beyond. For a moment his senses were confounded and he saw the red, throbbing roar of it. But the flame grew more intense; it widened slowly, with the tremendous majesty of absolute power. Great shafts of light spread up the sky and mingled canopy-wise, and a spray of light was falling sparklike to burst on the world, light darting and rocketing, color on color changing and mingling in forms that shifted, blent, jagged and swept again on eternal curves and still light was visible through more light and still it grew. He felt it like golden wire surrounding him; he felt it like a rich liquid entering him. "I am all light!" he cried in a loud voice and the girl's grip tightened under the terrible pressure of his hand. "My eyes have never left yours," she said, and the sound

was like a brighter flame across the terrible chaos of light he beheld. And it widened yet and grew stronger, until the whole world came before his eyes as he gazed on the sun — the whole world a speck that floated for a moment and vanished.

He turned his eyes to where the girl was and it was very quiet save for the sound of Cleary behind them, who had stopped running and was making the sound of iron against earth.

"Where is the man with the opera cape? asked McDowell.

"Vanished," replied Cleary, and his voice was thick as if with effort.

"That is better than jumping in the river, is it not?" asked McDowell. "And you?"

"I am digging a grave," Cleary answered in short sentences, as if he grudged the breath for speaking. "It will be a thousand feet long and a thousand feet deep. I must hurry. Soon the dead people will begin coming along the road. I must have it ready to put them in."

The sound of earth and iron, and the flop of earth on earth resumed. "You have a shovel?" McDowell inquired.

"I brought it with me."

"I hadn't noticed it," said McDowell.

"It wasn't necessary to see it before," the girl interposed.

"You teach me," McDowell said tenderly. "I am blind now, you know."

"Yes," said the girl.

"Henceforth," McDowell continued in a voice low and level. "I shall live in you. I shall see the world through you. Your eyes have consumed me, and I shall have being only through you. I have gone in one step from utter darkness to utter light."

"We are one," the girl responded. "I could not tell which part of you is me."

"I begot you out of darkness, and now the light gives me birth within you."

"But we must live," the girl said delicately. McDowell had no answer. "My profession?" she added inquiringly.

"Oh! You are right. You always teach me. We shall live from the blind. The dead shall feed us."

"I'm going to bury the dead in this grave," Cleary interrupted as he paused a moment. "The towns and cities are awakening and soon the dead will be trooping along the road."

McDowell and the girl had not heard him speak as they started down the hillside, but Cleary shouted after them. "I'll snatch them off their carts. I'll pick them from their market baskets. They'll be coming soon. I'll bury them here."

He leaned a moment longer on his shovel, watching the two until they passed beyond a knoll. Then he turned vigorously to his work again.

ROBERT M. COATES

FABLE

A knight lay dead in Senlac:
One white raven stood
Where his breast-bone showed a crack:
She dipped her beak in blood.

The old man's lean and carven head
Was severed under the chin:
The raven's beak was varnished red
Where the veins ran small and thin.

Empty sockets sucked the light
Where the great gold eyes had shone:
O, but the raven's eyes were bright
With fire she supped upon!

The old man's beard was ravelled up
In stiff and webby skeins:
From his broad skull's broken cup
The raven sipped his brains.

Insensate with that burning draught
Her feathers turned to flame:
Like a cruel silver shaft
Across the sun she came.

She flew straight into God's house;
She drank the virtuous air.
A knight lay dead: his gutted brows
Gaped hollow under his hair.

ELINOR WYLLIE

NIKE

(On reading H. D.)

You, on a sea-rock, swift through the dawn
In the emptiness of morning :
Harsher,
More beautiful than the light which blinded your stone eyes,
Your face, upraised.
Was it joy that killed you,
Or was the small cold ivory flower,
You held against your breast,
Too white ?

EVELYN SCOTT

FOURTH OF JULY FIRE CRACKERS

The heat wave has been slowly swelling — for many many days.
It is a monstrous wicked heat — assaulting the body, stupefying the mind. Instead of air a thick foul substance chokes the lungs.
— It is night. Millions and millions of people keep swarming and crawling about — listlessly — dazed with heat. There are dark rings under the eyes of children and adults alike ; and their cheeks are turned sallow. In the steam heat of summer (after the steam heat of winter in tiny cooped up rooms and offices) all freshness and all color have oozed out of them — all bloom has vanished. . .

Now they inhale the dust, the filth, the smoke, the suffocating fumes of gasolene. Everywhere their sweating bodies are being crushed together — their elbows touch — their breaths mingle. In the streets; in the cars that shake and jolt and throw them hither and thither, banging and clanging, dashing and crashing along — underfoot, overhead, on the surface — with their snarling heat-crazed nervous motormen ; in the long long lines where they stand waiting, on tired swollen feet, for their turn on the busses ; on the benches in the city squares where they sit close together in straight rows like herrings or beads on a string — forming a human fringe instead of flowers for the mangy yellowing plots of grass ; in the soda fountain places where, in the intolerable dead white glare, they sit dangling their legs on high stools and swallow iced things in a hurry — to make room for others pushing from behind. This strong white glare, this screaming light of signs and arc-lamps, of stores and movie halls intensifies the heat. . .
And everywhere — everywhere — the bodies packed — the human numbers. On the harbor ferries, on the river steamers, on the outing coaches, on the strips of beaches soiled with rubbish, papers, food ; in " amusement " parks. Everywhere America's creation : the Crowd — the crowd life — the crowd unit. Everywhere the crowd sensations and crowd tendencies. Crowds that have learned to model both their toil and their " amusement ", their toil and relaxation, on the brutal extremes of the climate — taking refuge from its strain in " strenuous " stimulants of insane noise, fierce glares and lights, incessant motion.

Along the river the heat is smothering as in the streets downtown. Without a pause the busses and the motor cars spin, whirr and rumble past — without a pause the strong flash of their headlights strikes the eyes that long for peace and darkness. Without a pause the millions shove and saunter up and down. To fumes and dust and odors there is added the irritating pungent powder smell of fireworks on the other bank.

— The brain is drugged. But now and then it acts — with little sudden spurts, with nervous jerks of thought that seem to make a bit of crackling noise of pungent smoke — like rockets.
And all around, from thousands of lips, bastard sounds reach the ear. Hybrid mixtures of a score of tongues. — And these dishonored crippled tongues, this verbal patchwork, this absence of pure speech, offends the ear. It longs for a clean language as the soul and body long for a clean breeze.
Melting-pot sounds and melting-pot crowds, melting-pot conditions and melting-pot minds. . . The heterogeneous, the fluctuating, the promiscuous.
— It will not last forever, of course.
In they go — under the huge American steam roller — driven by the High Almighty Twins called Dollar and Democracy. In they go — to be flattened into useful gray concrete : the Average. In they go —

. . . . .

This being the Fourth of July, allowance must be made for " loyalty ". But even on other nights at the open air concert, we rise, obedient, compelled to have a national hymn forced down our throats as an appetizer to the Eroica or Pathetique. . .
How this race has faith in advertising !
Shriek it into their ears — flash it before their eyes — rub it into them — *make* 'em take it, no matter what — laxatives or " patriotism. " Advertise it — *advertise !* Tell 'em over and over again : this is the " greatest--that-ever-was-undertaking in the national line " — get your goods here — all guaranteed — none better. —

I scan the program. All music on it that is *music* comes, of course, from that benighted European world. Yet " over there " — except in times of war hysteria — they do not advertise a national " concern ". They do not start a program of great music by dinning into you some fact that has nothing to *do* with music. They do not see the link, the logical connection, between a patriotic statement and an art event.

Perhaps it is because they do not *fear* to be forgotten or ignored or held in disrespect — being present on their programs in the form of musical creation. . .

Perhaps — when America in *her* turn brings forth Eroicas, she will be able to dispense with *forcing* " love and loyalty " down alien throats. . .

Of course, it works — this advertising.
Being loud and crude it takes effect on what is loud and crude : the Crowd and Crowd Mind — unformed and wavering. The Crowd is like a little child stretching out its hand toward all that glares and dangles and makes noises. Children and crowds are easily imposed !
— The sweating, crushed and sweltering millions — not even on this night shall they be let alone. The new " Science, " the great " Art " of Advertising claim attention — and never mind the temperature !
In the Name of the Dollar, the Ever Rolling, Ever Restless ; in the Name of Democracy, knowing the value (in cash) of the Man in the Street — advertise ! Advertise your foods and fads and follies, your trouser belts and cigarettes and pills and pins and peaches, your morals, movies and machines — and advertise, *above all advertise* your substitutes ! — Your " just-as-goods " —.
Just-as-goods for wine and sugar, coffee, butter — just-as-goods for eatables and drinkables — for peace and for passion, for beauty and for laughter. — Advertise your just-as-goods for *Life :* the Dollar and Democracy. . .
The Crowd will take them. The Crowd takes anything.

. . . . .

" Whottayewant ? "
The sales " lady " throws it at me from a distance. Then, as I stand silent, waiting, approaches with reluctant steps.
She has been under the steam roller. Has come from under it — as chockful of the little liberties as an almond bar is of almonds. She, too, is " just as good " as anybody.
No — she is not. She is better than I am. For she has, or thinks she has, more cash. She has started to " size me up " at once.
According to our modern female custom she looks, first, at my feet.
Once upon a time the soul was believed to be lodged in the diaphragm; since then it has descended to the pedic extremities — at least as far as women are concerned.
Then her glance travels slowly up the skirt — then higher ; missing no item of my wearing apparel. But it stops at the face. With mouth or eyes (except in regard to make-up) it has nothing to do. . .

The result of her investigation is not satisfactory. I wear no French or Chinese instruments of torture; and my clothes do not evidence an earning capacity of any interest. So she treats me accordingly.
For to her has been given the new American crowd mind — to her have been accorded the many little liberties. The little liberties — which are mistaken for the one great freedom. The concrete liberties contained in laws, in "rights", in jobs, in opportunity for practical experiments with a view to bread and butter. What have such things to do with freedom — which is a state of mind, which is an attitude, an *atmosphere?*
Where the *atmosphere* is one of narrow orthodox autocracy, of strict conformity to certain rules of conduct, certain modes of thinking, certain ways of acting — no laws or rights or jobs will give you "freedom." Freedom, the essential part of it, is too etherial, too subtly pervading and evading a thing to be caught in written concrete regulations.
The pursuit of life, liberty and happiness...
Yes. Provided that "life, that liberty, that happiness," are of a certain preconceived type! The type allowing, not for the presence, but for the absence of Thought — of Art —.
Absence of Art is the *proof* of Absence of Freedom. For where there is Freedom — for the mind, the soul, for self manifestation, for *spiritual* beside the practical experiments, and for creative emotion — there Art *must* grow.

— Europe had freedom — but no liberties. America had liberties — no freedom. It is best to have both —
But if you must choose —
The Crowd Mind chooses liberties, of course. "Whottayewant?"
Meanwhile the Lady on her little island lifts her torch.
Liberties — ye Nations of the Earth!
Liberties — "as advertised"...

. . . . .

The heat is paralyzing. The millions move and move —
Sky rockets — thought flashes —
I, too, dangle legs on a stool, swallow iced things in a hurry, in the fierce white glare. Everywhere electric fans are whirring, humming, turning, blowing. They, too, are substitutes. They stir the foul thick air — always the same foul air — to create the *illusion* of a clean fresh breeze full of ozone. Just as perpetual motion in the same dull spot creates the *illusion* of change. Just as the adulterated food of sensationalism creates the *illusion* of psychic nourishment.

But, of course, the fans are a blessing — for those that cannot get the real air —
It is all a matter of living " unanimistically ", of being a crowd thing, a thing of averages — compromises —
And that again is a matter of " central plants ".
You love fire, the living golden flame ? We shall give you radiators. We shall regulate your heat supply in dead gray pipes of iron. Useful, labor-saving and convenient.
You love air ? Deep cooling draughts of it into the lungs ? We shall give you wire screens and ventilators, we shall speak of cubic inches and statistics, we secure to every democrat a certain average of comfort — neither less — nor more —
You love the feel of soil under your feet ? We shall give you asphalt in our parks, boardwalks on our sea shores.
You want knowledge, food for mind and soul ? See our dinner tables !
See the many little plates and dishes — one for bread and one for butter, one for salad, one for meat, one for rice, one for beets, one for squashes, one for every one of many things (for we live well!). And now you pick a little here, you take a taste of this, a lick of that, a spoonful of each or a sip. An average small portion of a score of kinds of food — an average little bit of information on a score of subjects. We teach as we eat : democratically —
And now then — you want " life and liberty and happiness ? " We shall give you regulation quantities and regulation qualities from central plants. . .
We shall give you averages of " virtue ". Useful and convenient ! — And you want direct contacts — with flame and soil and air — with human *life ?*
We shall lead " life " to you — in iron pipes. . .

. . . . .

It is not the broad lines that count, but the details.
It is the small, often imponderable things, the tiny strokes and dots and dashes that decide of wrong and right ; that have wrecking or redeeming power. It is the little acts, shades of behavior, aspect, attitude. It is the thousand little traits together, the daily incidents, the " atmosphere " that tell one what an individual is — a nation is —
The American world — which is the crowd world — has no sense of detail, no interest in detail, no love for it. Detail is the artist's affair ; not the crowd's. The American spectacle, to keep its glamor, must be seen from afar. Its effect is calculated on distance. An effect of things " en masse ".
But the American spectacle is no longer bounded geographically. Nor polit-

ically — as an aspiration of certain " rights ". It has become — indeed, T. R ! — alas, T. R ! — a state of mind. And as such it is everywhere — in Europe — in Japan — and soon among the South Pole penguins.
Call it America, Democracy, the Crowd Mind, Rule and Worship of the Average, the Lower Middle Class Condition — names do not matter. It is the Spirit of *Numbers* as over against the Spirit. It is the spirit that believes in advertising and in advertising values ; in anything that you can din into the ears of " numbers ".
Build your advertising around " anything. " Then build your civilization around advertising.
In Hoc Signe — avanti !

Thus says the Crowd, the million-headed metropolitan and continental monster — from whom *Nature* is taken away — to whom *Culture* is not given. . .
But instead of Nature and of Culture the three substitutes :
Liberties, Conveniences and Information.
Just as good —

EMMY VERONICA SANDERS

GALANIS — Woodcut

THE WORD

I have a facile beauty that is sweet
I skate on the roofs of the winds
I skate on the roofs of the seas
I am become sentimental
I no longer know the conductor
I stir no more silk clinging to ice
I am ill flowers and pebbles
I like the most Chinese of the naked ones
I like the most naked in the flock of birds
I am old but here I am beautiful
And the shadows that fall from profound windows
Spare each night the dark heart of my eyes.

SUITE

Sleep, the moon in one eye and the sun in the other
A young love in thy mouth, a bird in thy hair,
Ornate as the fields, the woods, the roads and the sea
Beautiful and ornate as the wheel of the world.

Fly across the landscape,
Among the branches of smoke and all the fruit of the wind,
Legs of stone with stockings of sand
Taken by the waist, with all the muscles of the river
And the last frown on a visage transformed.

NIL

He who says to himself : I crossed the street in order to get out of the sun. It is too warm, even in the shade. Here is a street, four floors and my window in the sunlight. A cap on his head, cap in hand, he just shook hands with me. Please don't yell like that ! Are you mad ?

***

The invisible blind prepare the linen of sleep. The night, the moon, and their hearts pursue each other.

***

In his turn he cries : " The trail, the trail, I don't see the trail any more. In short I can no longer count on you ! "

NIL

He puts a bird on the table and closes the shutters. He combs himself, the hair to his hands is sweeter than a bird.

***

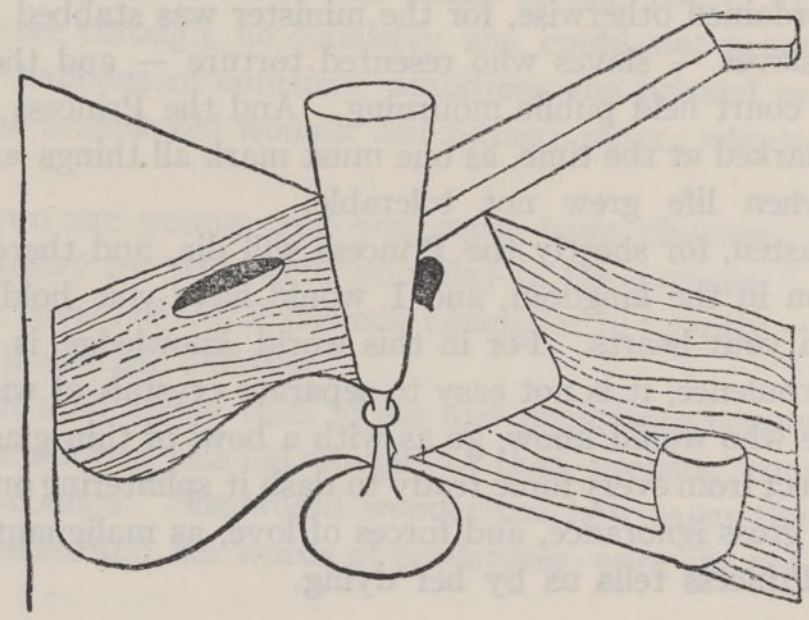
She tells the future. And I am commissioned to verify it.

***

The murdered heart, the doleful soul, the broken hands, the white hairs, the prisoners, the whole body of water is to me as a naked wound.

PAUL ELUARD

(*Translated by Matthew Josephson*)



THE PRINCESS TAKES A POTION

Rest your hand upon the heart of the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan, for it will not beat long. Rest your hand upon her heart, and I shall tell you why it is so soon to cease to beat. Even in this shadowed room you can see how young she is, young and beautiful. Fate would have been kinder to you, you might say, had you been allowed to see the eyes of the Princess. Yet perhaps it is better after all, and the more whole-heartedly will you give yourselves to science — never having looked into the eyes of the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan.

For you are young men, and earnest, and worthy of that great profession you have chosen — which I, as an old master, must shortly turn over to your guidance. So I would instruct you not only in the trickeries of physic, and the mysteries of potions, which too in this lady's dying and in this emptied cup you can detect, but also in the workings of the human heart, which is stranger in its ways. And, mind you, has much to do with our peculiar branch of learning.

This little draught our Princess has seen fit to take herself, I concocted for another altogether. That was months ago, and the Princess had grown pale, and I asked her why she was perplexed. She looked at me, and through the window then, at the garden, and after we had talked a while of the gilly-flowers and the new pink cabbages, she added gently, as recollecting some sweet memory, that there was a minister at court so shrewd he made her think too much. Whereat I hustled to my laboratories and contrived this neat arrangement of herbs and oils and unexpected acids. I have its recipe, my students, stored for you. The Princess thanked me, and sent me a delicate salad of pink cabbage leaves for supper. But it was ordained otherwise, for the minister was stabbed and thrown to the crocodiles by slaves — slaves who resented torture — and the Princess and myself and all the court held public mourning. And the Princess did not return my gift, which I marked at the time, as one must mark all things at court. Thus was she ready when life grew not tolerable.

But I must hasten, for shortly the Princess will die, and there will be much strife and confusion in the kingdom, and I would have you hold this kernel of wisdom hid well in your hearts. For in this world knowledge is difficult to secure, and in its turbulence, it is not easy to separate crystals of wisdom from the whirl of dust. We who would know, go as with a bowl of thin glass in our arms, which we need protect from every force ready to dash it splintering on the ground — forces of hate and gross ignorance, and forces of love, as malignant too to reason — as this dying Princess tells us by her dying.

Ten years ago — and I am hardly any older now than then — the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan came to rule this country. It was years before that that I ceased to grow older, an advantage in our profession, my students, for one must be ageless to love science properly. I saw at once that though she was but a girl, she was determined to be a queen in truth; and I was somewhat interested to see just how much of youth she would be willing to sacrifice to the holding of power. It was amazing, my sons, and has made me much wonder if in the future progress of the ages, we may not expect of women some general intervention in the affairs of state. However, that will be assuredly far in the future — to which I doubt not we can reconcile ourselves today.

It was amazing, as I say, to see this girl with her frail face in the council chamber. She outwitted old ministers. She was as sly as the priests of Isis. She was as firm as a general, and no statesman was so cruel. But to me she was kind. She gave me a library and a laboratory, and levied special taxes to make me a large allowance, taking only a slight part for her feasts. One day she said to me, — and she had been queen only a year:

"Dear father, good doctor, would any other ruler give as much to you as I?"

"Never," I answered sincerely, and bowed low.

"You never can expect as much from others as you can from me?" she asked.

"Never," I said again.

She gave me her hand and laughed as I bent over it:

"Then I am sure you will always be my friend, and I can trust you."

Ah — but she was admirable. I loved her. She too carried a thin glass bowl high above the heads of the mob. She often came to the library, and lying in the center, far from treacherous walls, we chatted merrily of the things of the court. We laughed often — laughed aloud at the antics of the court. There was no flattery she did not see through, no sophistry she could not penetrate — and all the pitiful bright balloons of courtiers' ambitions she pricked neatly with a phrase. There was the terrible old woman her father's sister, who would beguile her thus:

"Sweet Zu-pa-cat-lan, you are young, and you must have pleasure. Let me answer the ambassadors today for you, while you play in the gardens," and she would smoothe down the covers of the Princess's couch for her gently — as mothers are apt to do who love their children.

The Princess would laugh a bit wryly then to me, and conjecture how much power would be left her, if she allowed this old woman, or that pressing councillor, to take her place in the council. She would wonder too how eager the old woman would be with her caresses and her words of tenderness, were she not the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan.

So, too, with all the princes and men of rank who sought her hand in marriage, as to be sure quite a number did. The Princess and I would reckon up their properties, and laugh merrier than ever at the droll misproportion of it. Always her own kingdom was double, triple, theirs.

"So he gets half my throne," the Princess would say, "and all my towns and ports — and I receive in turn some little ploughland, some arid stretch of desert, some inconsiderable capital."

Very gracefully then she would dismiss each suitor's emissaries:

"Tell him, the Princess does not wish to wed."

Often later, she'd send a petty army and raze his city to the ground, and from her windows have opportunity to see the presumptuous suitor pass in chains — a turn we both found humorous enough.

Years — a number of years passed. I wondered how this prospect of appraisal pleased her. For mind you, I never did forget she was a woman, and not as we, scientists, doctors, removed from appraisal illusions altogether. Little by little, I saw her grow more and more a queen, and less the girl. Less of laughter, and ever more the reckoning, the accurate estimating. Sterner she grew, and her beauty needed more the fabric and the costly jewel. Many people feared her. Everyone had fear of her. She was very skilful. Her gifts demanded more than their value of those who received them — which, she said, was how a queen should give.

Now and then wars, as her whim decreed, made us richer. My libraries and laboratories grew. However, honoring me, one day, with her presence, she observed:

"Does all this learning make you happy?"

I was surprised, and had no answer. What answer is there to such a question? I quoted something of what a certain Jew from Uz had written of happiness, and its meaning. But she shook her shoulders impatiently, and said she'd like to learn a little, and I gave her the papyrus by this man of Uz. A very valuable papyrus, and rare, and without copies of it in any place else. By chance next morning, summoned to her chamber, I found her with some insignificant complaint, with her hair intricately interwound with my papyrus, twisted to produce, when removed, a certain spiral that was then the mode.

Ah — well, the Princess was bored. What had I to do with a Jew sage then? Discovering that a new group of prisoners had been brought in, I suggested to the Princess that it might be droll to have the artists of the court carve their faces and pinch their ears into whimsical shapes. She agreed, but as fate would have it, decided to oversee the process in person, having a certain vanity in her own taste and delicacy of fancy. By what logic of learning could I have forseen that one of the prisoners should do what no prince had ever done. Ishkar was his

name, and though not beautiful as our designers hold beauty, nor yet those of Cheops, there was a jauntiness about him, as he stood there with the others in the prison, that made him noticeable.

" He's droll enough as he is, " said the Princess. " Do you love our city ? " she asked him.

" If it loves me, I shall, " he answered, which, you know, was very pert.

She only looked at him however, and smiled :

" Do cities love you ? "

He looked at her very seriously.

" I was adored in Gomorrah, " he said, " and in Sidon was idolized, and rather cherished in Babylon. But in that city where your soldiers took me I wasn't considered a desirable citizen, " and he looked quite pettish about it. " So, " he went on audaciously, " I adore Gomorrah, idolize Sidon, rather cherish Babylon, " and he looked at her very curiously and spoke all at once, abruptly, " perhaps I shall love your city. "

It all seemed whimsical at the time, especially considering the rumors we had heard of the habits of these towns. So when the Princess laughed, we were all able to do likewise, heartily. All, at once, made way for Ishkar, and we quite forgot our artistic experimentings with the other prisoners, in the amusement of bathing him in the garden fountain, for he smelt foully after his days in prison.

The Queen ordained that each should give him some garment, she herself throwing a gold chain about his neck first, as he came up from the lily pads of the fountain, and stood bare and dripping before us. Too small-boned he was, I noticed, for a soldier. But no-one could deny his grace — that strange, powerful abstraction, grace — as he stood there in the palace garden by the water and the flowers, quite naked, quite unabashed, before the whole court, with the Princess's chain about his neck, and the Princess by his side. I remember when it came my turn to give something for his raiment, that the Princess cried at once he could not wear such rough, coarse stuff as I wore. He, a prisoner, a beggar dog ! Whereat the bold brat reached and seized the priceless scroll of vellum I had thrust into my belt, vellum the wisest exile in Goshen had written on, and — fool, this boy was — wiped with it the water dripping from his curls into his eyes, and flung it into the fountain.

" Thanks, old man, " he cried.

" That for your learning, " added the Princess, and the whole court lunged forward, and in their ribaldry flung me after the vellum into the water.

When they hauled me out, all of them sick with laughter, this new boy flung his new cloak about me, and fell on his knees and begged my pardon.

" I beg the Princess's pardon for you too, " he said. And I sank trembling,

for it it was a blasphemous thing he said. The Princess beg my pardon! This brat would be the ruin of us all.

"Forgive him, my Princess," I murmured, strangely enough, for he had caused all my indignity why should I have concern for him? But the Princess leaned over, and gave me her hand.

"He speaks the truth, this boy," she said, "I do beg your pardon, and the court's, as this boy says."

It seemed then, next month as though some madness seized the manners of the court. Always there were feasts, and all night, and even in the mornings, music. One heard laughter from the quarters of the slaves, which was not rebuked, and in the council chambers only was there silence. Even envy seemed dead in the perpetual riotings, except among the artists of the court. One and all they hated Ishkar, for it was he who at last devised such eccentric manipulation of the prisoners of whom he had once been one, that the Princess could not dance for laughter.

He was modest enough though, and said it was because he had had time in the dungeons to study their particular features, and had often beguiled a long hour imagining this one with split nostrils, or that one with the lobes of his ears threaded to a fringe.

But in the solitude of my laboratory I saw behind this merriment and these innocent childish pranks, the Princess growing less the queen and more the girl. Little time then had I to follow the frolic of the court. I withdrew to my libraries and laboratories. Doubly must I labor to be ready for the end of all this the end I knew must come. I made copies of my most precious manuscripts and sent them by secret envoys for keeping in the great cities by the sea. Portions of my rarest unguents and oils and essences I hid away in secret places where no enemy might find them. Days and nights I labored in this fashion, while the Princess grew young, and spies reported to their masters that our land was ruled by a girl — a girl in love with a fool.

So when Pit the Phoenician, he who sold me oil of sesame that was purple and not green, whispered to me how there were armies gathering on the north border, and strange parleyings and comings and goings on the east, I alone of all that court, was ready.

First thanking the various gods with a generous discrimination, and warning Pit the Phoenician to depart, I hastened to the rooms of the Princess — these rooms where we are now. Only Kou was here, the half-witted black woman who knows better than anyone in the world the pattern of the sinews and the muscles, their interlacing with the joints and the substance of the arteries, and how with just so much pressure and delicate application, a new resilience can be given them. She lead me then to the passage-way, and on tip-toe as one walks through royal rooms, I stole down to the ilex alleys.

It was dawn, not too late for there to be yet stars though ; and against the black ilex the silly new pink bird lately brought to the Princess from the farther cataracts, stood brilliantly, arching its extravagant glistening neck under the soft stroking of the Princess's hand. As brilliant too, as this bird, in his festal finery, this vagabond from Babylon, this off-scouring of Gomorrah, was saying :

" So it's love we've found. "

The Princess answered, while I shrank back into the shadows :

" Shall I make you king, Ishkar ? Since I love you, that's your penalty. I am very sorry, Ishkar, for you won't like being king. It will interfere with your pleasure. But I don't see any way out of it. I don't, at all. "

Then they both laughed, until he caught her to him, and they kissed, and the green lotus blossoms in her hair fell on the tiles, along with those trivial violet flowers the priests grow in their leisure — which is abundant.

Observing then that the pink bird was growing uneasy and alert from lack of his caress, I stole back a way in the corridor, and then with some semblance of bustling, retraced my steps to the lovers, and arrived upon them, as it were for the first time, finding, however, that this brief interlude had not affected their posture.

" Princess, " I said, ignoring the guttersnipe, " The enemy to the north is assembling, and there are strange parleyings, and comings and goings to the east. "

Whereat the Princess gave a cry, and threw her arms again about this wastrel, and kissed him on the mouth, which I made note of in silence. But at last the boy — it was the boy who held her from him — said :

" War ! And shall I lead your armies, Princess ? "

So I left them, not without finding a certain piquancy in the idea of the generals' chagrin when they had to take orders from this whippersnapper, this boy harlot from Gomorrah. I knew of course that he'd be disposed of in the end.

Being at the time occupied in building a secret crypt in the foundations of my laboratory I did not see the departure of the armies for the boundaries. But Kou told me how this Ishkar had gone, fantastically, astride a leopard. The Princess had wept, and was pale, but would not allow Kou's treatment. Though certainly Kou overvalues the treatment — which is all to her own profit of course.

My own foresight and prompt industry so rewarded me that when the first tidings of war reached us, I felt assured the loss to science could not be great at worst. As I expected the news was all of disaster.

But with copies of my manuscripts and a good portion of my medicines well secreted, I could face the evil prospect with a philosopher's equanimity, and remind the Princess, as we walked in the garden, followed by the pink bird, grown somewhat magenta from confinement, that the ways of the gods were not in

our hands — and such-like reflections, suitable for a woman. To which she answered :

" I should have kept Ishkar here. I should never have allowed him to go. "

Although I had no doubt myself of the boy's end, I reminded her that he was not inexperienced — had known the dungeons of the various important cities of the world, and their byways, as I politely put it.

I was a little weary of the rascal by the time the astounding information of what had happened came to us. The question of allies and enemies being always problematical, we had not suspected that the great King Bixnip of the forces of the East, with influence over those of the West, had been all the time our friend. It seems that as our forces turned to fly, this Bixnip had arrived, and in a trice, made a victory of the impending defeat.

" Now he marches to our city, to greet the Princess, " said the runner.

" And Ishkar ? " asked the Princess.

Of whom the runner knew nothing — nor when all the court returned, and the royal Bixnip, of a land ten times the wealth of ours, greeted her, was there a vestige of Ishkar.

But I knew there must be no moping now, so I let Kou hear a tale of how Ishkar had seen a slave girl in the osiers, and had left his leopard. This Kou contrived to tell the Princess — incidentally — as I perceived she had, when the Princess entered the great hall with eyes particularly bright. A hazardous trick for me, I knew, but the situation was critical.

Even in those distant cities you have just come from, my fellow scholars' you have heard of what happened here. You heard the truth, no doubt, for how the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan and the King Bixnip arranged their union, was a matter of public event and wide ceremony. As the feast days progressed, the Princess became more a queen than even in the days before Ishkar had made her laugh like a street girl.

Then King Bixnip took his place by her side at the councils, and I bargained again with Pit the Phoenician, assuring him that the gold at my disposal would be ten times as much as hitherto. As for Kou, she applied herself to the most abstruse studies of anatomy in preparation for the coming nuptials. She was a conscientious and scrupulous female, this Kou, as reliable as a spice purge.

I was glad to see my Princess regain her concern for matters of empire. By no means would it do for this Bixnip to control altogether. Little interest had he in libraries and laboratories. He was no man of learning. He had not been born a king. His forbears were but nomads.

" I shall be the greatest queen in the world, " said the Princess, " and shall be commented on in history. "

" And rightly, rightly, " I hastened to add.

It was the very day of the great feast of the betrothal, and Kou had admitted me to the Princess's rooms as I bore a gift, an unguent I guaranteed would remove all wrinklings and linings of the face. Slaves stood about holding the new jewels of ceremony, and in my honor the Princess fitted on the crown. A rare piece of work, tier and tier of gold, bronze and lead, set with unusual gems, carved with the images of the gods, the sacred beasts, and the sacred symbols, though without emblems of our own unrespected craft unless one interpret thus an arrangement of capsule-shaped pendants.

She turned to the steel mirrors, and beheld herself, and therein I saw her eyes grow suddenly overwide. With all her attendants I swung about to face the curious figure who had entered. For a moment I did not recognize Ishkar, so ragged he was, and filthy, and without grace or gallantry.

But when he saw the Princess, all of us could see in his eyes as in a dream pageant, the other days when he stood straight and slim by the fountain, dripping, strung with lily stems, when the Princess laughed like a street girl, and there was music even in the morning. Slowly he crossed the room, and even if the Princess had not been there, must have fallen where he fell then at her feet. At last the Princess spoke :

" Ishkar-Ishkar — now I shall laugh again. Shall I not, Ishkar ? Speak to me, Ishkar. Say something very droll to make me laugh. I am sure that all this time you have been away you have thought of the most whimsical things to say to me. Speak to me, Ishkar. "

And the boy opened his mouth, and it was evident at once that his tongue had been torn out.

" Who did that ? " said the Princess after a long silence.

With his finger, that was black and stained, he wrote on the white tiles :

" Bixnip. "

I might have guessed it. It was a due rebuke to such an upstart, and proved Bixnip a quick acting, efficient king. But my concern then was with the Princess. Slowly she spoke as though her thoughts were on far-off unknown matters :

" I shall not laugh again. "

It was indeed a queen's consideration. A low-born woman, with such a sentiment as the Princess doubtless felt for Ishkar, might have thought rather of the boy's pain and his maiming. Perhaps Ishkar too thought something of this sort ; incomprehensible lights shone in those eyes that could hold a pageant. When we spoke of the matter later, Kou and I agreed too that something like a smile had come across his face. Though there seemed very little to smile at, at that moment.

Some of the artists of the court carried Ishkar out. Though they had been his enemies he beckoned to them now. But I remained by the side of the Prin-

cess. I remained in the room all that night with the connivance of Kou, lest in some unqueenly moment Zu-pa-cat-lan should allow a momentary resentment at Bixnip's act to influence her to her permanent loss.

Indeed, I took occasion now and again as the night wore on to whisper telling items of the King's wealth, his palace with a hundred gates, and its fabulous contrivance, a secret invention of his own engineers, to loose at will a sudden, cleansing flush of water by means merely of a slim gold chain the most delicate hand could control.

Dawn's coming, with its attendant turmoil in the courtyards and the trumpeted orderings, revealed the resolute Princess. I hastened to my library to don my robes, worn only at this final ceremony, which, lasting as it does three days, requires especial vesture. Not that I should have felt obliged to attend each moment of the feast, what with my age and serious office, had I not felt still wary of the Princess's mood.

But as the feasting and the rioting progressed, with its customary distressing accompaniment of disorder and racket, I saw again in Zu-pa-cat-lan that princess I had known of old, so admirable, with the high crown, with the face as though of marble, on her throne beside Bixnip. Not that Bixnip always remained on his throne. Now and again he descended amongst the courtiers and drank with them — a manner affected by some monarchs. Not one I favor, though, on the other hand, I feared the Princess appeared stern, perhaps ungracious, and I whispered that a smile to the court might make a nation happy. Royalty enjoys such stress upon its personal activities. But she gave no sign of hearing me.

The feast at last approached the end of its third day, and it was as well, for the court was weary. Long ago I had resorted to an excellent stimulant suggested by Pit, which enabled me to keep my post by the side of the Princess. I had indeed offered it to her, but she refused it, no doubt feeling that a princess owes it to her people to keep awake — putting it bluntly — at such ceremony. An exhibition of royal endurance to be commended! So much could not be said of Bixnip who betrayed his nomadic origin off and on, to the consternation of the dancing girls who feared the Princess. But she never turned her head, nor seemed to see. Only at times I left her for a moment to make a round of the tables with my spice purge.

Unfortunately, the early hours of the feast had so exhausted the court that an ill-boding desolation threatened to overtake it now. Then hostile factions of the priests, and the spies, might play upon the people with rumors of how a gloom had descended upon the Princess on the third day, and how it portended ill for the future. It was therefore with great relief that I heard a sudden gale of laughter, fresh, unforced, rock the farther end of the hall, and spread down to us, so that even Bixnip who had been snoring on his throne, opened his eyes.

Truly a droll apparition had come upon us, and even those lying under the tables found time to turn and fling the bruised flowers they had at hand not too dejectedly at him. It had been a man I gathered almost at once, though there was little enough of the man left in that figure. Where should have been ears were but tufts, and his lips were slashed in the clown's grin and baked with dyes, and what had been scars upon his body had been altered, shaped and fashioned by cutting, by branding, and by the eatings of acids, into the likeness of those symbols and ribald writings unrestricted boys and girls scrawl on the walls and pavements of low, secluded by-places. Thus was he but a walking legend of all the foul wit of the world.

Before the throne he stood and made a humorous contraction which only his broken joints permitted, and Bixnip shook with laughter.

"Laugh, Zu-pa-cat-lan," Bixnip shouted, "laugh Zu-pa-cat-lan."

Again the fool whimsically distorted himself — very fanciful the gesture was, and with an outrageous innuendo. Whereat the whole court rocked again with laughter, and Bixnip also, and, glancing at the Princess, I observed her eyes rest on the fool, and then she smiled. Seeing the Princess smile the whole court stamped and shook again with laughter all the more heartily. But the maimed monster ceased his spinning, and fell before us.

This of course provoked greater humor, and Bixnip shouted to her again to laugh, and Zu-pa-cat-lan laughed. Then she looked again at the fool, and I behind her, over her shoulder, saw as she did also, at that moment that the eyes before, lidless and painted, were yet the eyes that had held pageants in them, were Ishkar's eyes. And the smile passed from the face of the Princess.

. . . . . .

All this is but an hour since, my sons. Only an hour! She had this cup ever ready since I earned my salad by it. What she saw in the maimed fool's eyes I know not, nor whether certain laughter being laughed makes life not worth the living I do not venture to assert. Man finds so many reasons for not living. That alone is enough for us.

Only an hour she came here from that great hall. Only an hour ago she drank this neat arrangement of herbs and oils and unexpected acids. Observe how potent it is. How valuable to man in his troubles. We can hope to make many an odd bit of gold by such a valuable concoction. It is very effective. Do you doubt it? Rest your hand then on the heart of the Princess Zu-pa-cat-lan. You will observe that it has ceased to beat.

JOHN MOSHER

THREE PORTRAITS

I. PIANIST

ta
ppin
g
toe

hip
popot
amus Back

gen
teel-ly
lugu-
bri ous

eyes
LOOPTHELOOP

as

fathandsbangrag

II. Caritas

the skinny voice

of the leatherfaced
woman with the crimson
nose and coquettishly-
cocked bonnet

having ceased the

captain
announces that as three
dimes seven nickels and ten
pennies have been deposited upon

the drum there is need

of just twenty five cents
dear friends
to make it an even
dollar whereupon

the Divine Average who was

attracted by the inspired
sister's howling moves
off
will anyone tell him why he should

blow two bits for the coming of Christ Jesus.

?
? ?
? ? ?
!

nix, kid

as usual i did not find him in cafes, the more dissolute atmosphere
of a street superimposing a numbing imperfectness upon such peri-
grinations as twilight spontaneously by inevitable tiredness of flang-
ing shop-girls impersonally affords furnished a soft first clue to
his innumerable whereabouts violet logic of annihilation demon-
strating from woolworthian pinnacle a capable millenium of faces
meshing with my curiously instant appreciation exposed his hiber-
native contours,
aimable immensity impeccably extending the courtesy of five o'clock
became the omen of his prescience it was spring by the way in
the soiled canary-cage of largest existence.

(when he would extemporise the innovation of muscularity upon the
most crimson assistance of my comforter a click of deciding glory
inflicted to the negative silence that primeval exposure whose elec-
tric solidity remembers some accurately profuse scratchings in a
recently discovered cave, the carouse of geometrical putrescence
whereto my invariably commendable room had been forever subject
his Earliest word wheeled out on the sunny dump of oblivion)

a tiny dust finely arising at the integration of my soul i coughed

, naturally.

E. E. Cummings

A NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT LITERATURE

The new conditions of life have determined a literature, a necessary and sufficient literature, a new literature. However, it is not necessary to believe that this modern literature has completely rejected all traditions, that it has broken completely with the past, that it has entirely created itself as a thing in no respect comparable with what has been. Even had it wished to do this, it would not have been able. Acquired knowledge lies profoundly rooted within us, and in the most " advanced modernism " there survives an abundant heredity. But aesthetic emotion was fatigued with the Symbolists, as it was fatigued with the Parnassians, and previously with the Romantics. So it was even much earlier, when Raçine succeeded Corneille. So it is again to day: in our modern literature a new molting season breaks out, and so rapidly that many of my remarks on it will appear out of date. Habit which deadens, renders blasé, fatigues and extinguishes aesthetic emotion, steadily demands that new details be superadded to the more durable characteristics of works of art replacing less durable characteristics, novel processes, and original ideas — a change corresponding to a change in the conditions of life. This is necessary if one wishes to awaken beauty from its torpor, to astonish, to strike the intelligence and stir the sensibility. The impression of the beautiful is a sort of " conditioned reflex " and undergoes the physiological law of all reflexes which eventuates at length in extinction. It becomes needful to introduce new conditions into the production of the phenomena of beauty in order to revive this " conditioned reflex. " This is the direction of the characteristics recently acquired by French literature. Not that I mean that the poets have thus, through faith in a scientific theory, voluntarily or even experimentally changed their manner of understanding poetry, or the prose writers, prose. The change has, of course, taken place unconsciously and spontaneously.

I shall rapidly glance at these new characteristics of modern French literature determined by the new conditions of life which I essayed to recapitulate in the preceeding article ([1]).

I.

Speed in space, then, has created cosmopolites and diffused the knowledge of foreign languages. Take a man who knows French (naturally), English, German and Latin ; the last from his classical studies. His travels put him in a position to utilize his knowledge, to hear and to speak some of these diverse

([1]) BROOM, April 1922.

tongues, to read them. Involuntarily he will come to transpose the metaphors of one language into another, to transpose special turns of speech, idioms as they are called, from German or English into French. Or, if he is a German, he will transpose Gallicisms into German. Not that these men suddenly set themselves to speaking gibberish with innumerable solecisms. The contribution of new turns, of foreign logics of expression, is made as slowly as a geological stratum. This excites the protests of purists. But usage, of course, gets the better of grammatical theories, if they be inert. Language slowly, very slowly, is modified. I do not mean to say that French ceases to be French and becomes the idiom of the porters of Mediterranean hotels: the French language of today and, I dare to predict, that of tomorrow, remains French, my tongue which I prefer above all others. But it would be indeed puerile to deny that in 1920 it is not quite what it was in 1820 or even in 1900. Its grammar and syntax are sometimes simplified, sometimes made suppler.

The French sentence has been simplified in that, with a few exceptions like that of Marcel Proust's writing, it has grown shorter. If it still admits, though less than formerly, development by coordinates, it does not any longer generally admit development by a flood of subordinates. The law of least resistance, the diminution of Latin culture explains this particular modification quite as well as the use of foreign tongues. There is no doubt that beginners in German or in English are advised, in order to acquire correctness more easily, to express themselves by short sentences and the habit of speaking and thinking in short sentences is attained very quickly.

On the other hand, the French sentence has been made supple; it has become more malleable, more flexible, — familiar with astonishing inversions, with agile leaps. I am not reproaching it. I state something which I believe has been very useful for exactitude of expression. As well as the sentence, thinking processes have naturally also been made supple. Furthermore, it is not necessary that the writer himself should know foreign languages; he can still mediately experience their influence which is widespread; the author forming part of the intellectual *élite* of his epoch. Thus Arthur Rimbaud knew — having learned them with a stupefying facility — English, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, German, etc.; Guillaume Apollinaire, whose erudition was so vast, was also conversant with very many tongues; Blaise Cendrars must speak nearly half the languages of the globe. Jean Cocteau knows at least German. I deduce it from his syntax, perhaps wrongly since I have no definite grounds for speaking with certainty on this point, and I am going rather far in my deductions. Jean Giraudaux also must know a good deal of German, Greek and Latin: he was a pupil of the Normale Supérieure.

All these writers have been travellers. They have known the cosmopol-

itan spirit, that spirit of nostalgic familiarity with the world, of exiles voluntarily torn to pieces between the continents.

This influence of foreign languages upon the mother tongue of men thus educated needs no exposition. The man who speaks German, is accustomed to certain inversions, and will inevitably more than once express the reflexion, weakened no doubt, of these inversions in his French phrases, because his thought, which is equally at the base of his German, his English and his French, will have acquired this habit. Likewise with all other linguistic peculiarities.

But if you read attentively modern French authors, you will note a mobility of syntax, a remarkable laxity of grammar, approaching at moments an apparent disappearance of grammar and grammatical logic. To a grammarian this is a misdemeanor. For a writer this is a quality in the sense that it permits him to express his thought more exactly, to trace better with words the undulating, illogical and mobile contour of thought.

But the use of foreign languages is not the sole cause of this suppleness of the French sentence. We shall examine other reasons for this modification at once.

Thanks to spatial speed and the cosmopolitan spirit, a new consciousness has entered French literature : the consciousness of the world. The earth is no longer an abstraction of astronomy. People have made its circuit often enough to feel its roundness. And if it is true that the earth has been round, peopled, lukewarm, and living for a long time back, from the sentimental point of view this lukewarmness and this life date only from yesterday, only from the day when man, thanks to the promiscuity of speed, saw his desires and his fears absorb space, nourish themselves in it, and depend on it.

As an example of this we may take certain very beautiful poems from the *Fond de Cantine* of Pierre Drieu La Rochelle.

II.

I believe this conception of the consciousness of the world is also responsible for a small literary, philosophical and even social school which is born, assuredly, from the new conditions created by spatial speed. If this school has only a small number of adepts (that is why I call it small), it possesses a leader of high merit in the person of Jules Romains who has baptized his system : " Unanimism. " (There is also a pictorial Unanimism but it is outside my scope.) Unanimism can be summarized thus : all for one, one for all. At bottom it is an exasperated conception of human solidarity, of the unity of thought which can, at certain moments, make brothers, and friends of all the

individuals of a crowd, an army, a group. Unanimism insists upon the individuality, compact, collective, unique, which a crowd can acquire from the fact that it is a crowd, an individuality quite different from the characters of each of its members considered separately. Dr. Gustave Le Bon has studied this phenomenon of collective consciousness under the head of "the soul of the crowd." I believe that this soul of the crowd can be explained in a simple enough fashion, almost algebraically. Take a thousand men. In their characters the thousand men have certain traits which one recognizes to be nearly the same in each of the thousand individuals and certain different traits of character peculiar to each, which his neighbour does not possess because he has others. One can then say algebraically that there are a certain number of character-traits which have the same sign and a certain number of character-traits which have different or opposed signs. A crowd is a sum of individuals: the crowd's energy is a totalling-up of particular energies. In this addition as in all additions elements of the same sign join and reinforce each other and elements of contrary signs destroy each other. So that the crowd-soul will be the sum of the common traits of character of all the members of the crowd, those traits, multiplied, subsisting almost alone, while the differing traits of character, those peculiar to such and such an individual, will have fought and destroyed each other.

What is interesting and active in a man is not what he has in common with all men which can at best be but banal and moral, but what a man possesses peculiarly for himself, what one does not find elsewhere, what is rare, special, exceptional. Civilization knows this quite well, since it talks only of specialization, specialists and specialities. The difference is everything. The artist should be personal, the writer should be original, the savant should turn aside from the travelled intellectual route and strike out new roads which commence always as paths in which one walks alone. And Jules Romains, like every individual, goes counter to the unanimist theory, counter to all theories, since theory is essentially anti-individualistic and since he is eminently personal.

Whatever unanimism may be, the unanimist, Jules Romains, has written some remarkable works, living, intense, and strong. I shall return to them again. But this exquisite conception of the mutual dependence of men, carried so far as it is today, thanks to cables, routes, rails which link peoples and attach individuals to each other, so that the earth resembles those puzzles in which one cannot move a pawn which it is nevertheless necessary to move, without necessitating corresponding complicated and uninterrupted movements, of all the other pawns, this conception, if it be not idolatrous, remains just and true.

With Jules Romains, love of the crowd becomes love of the rabble, love of

the group, love of the meeting, where feverish hands clap their applause, where a thousand faces are strained towards a face which is their face, where a thousand thoughts revolve around the same word, where elbows rub, torsos crush and espouse each other with their reciprocal concavities and convexities, love of the street where there is a crowd, love of the words of the crowd, the lisping of a monstrous child, love of the ideas of the crowd, simple ideas, yet avalanches which roll and make the overburdened galleries shake, love of the seasons of the crowd, of the eternity of the crowd. No, it is not love ; it is idolatry, or deification. Jules Romains is right. All this exists and he is again right in saying that there are diverse crowds : the army, loafers, the cortege, the salon, the church... And each of the crowds of which we happen to form part has its own life, which is profoundly capable of poetry.

Furthermore, all those who feel life a little keenly are more or less unanimist. Blaise Cendrars has felt this contiguity of men ; read *Profond aujourd'hui*. Jean Cocteau has written : " All of us have the same soul, or rather, are of the same soul, of the same element.

Fragmentary God. "

III.

Whoever reads the works of Rimbaud, Apollinaire, Cendrars, Cocteau, Drieu La Rochelle, Aragon and others, even if he is their fellow in race, culture, language and their kin in thought, will not understand them at the first glance.

The unwarned reader will stumble upon :

" Towards a lady of the antipodes the plumb line becomes my favorite locomotion. " — Cocteau.

" The first one arrived at the bottom of the corridor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 DEAD. " — Aragon.

" When the newspaper ferments like an imprisoned lightning flash. " — Cendrars.

" I was at the foot of the baldachin supporting her adored jewels and her physical masterpieces, a great bear with violet gums and hair hoary with chagrin, my eyes on the crystal and silver consoles. " — Rimbaud.

Of course, the extraction of these phrases from their context augments further the difficulties of understanding them.

Some readers have not understood these sentences at the first glance — I believe that it is impossible to fully comprehend thoughts thus schematized right off without practice, and not for this must we reproach these readers — but — and here they are to blame — they have not wished to reflect that an author who signs his name does not generally write balderdash for the pleasure of trying out his pen or his ink, that there is, beneath this apparent bizarrerie, a mea-

ning, perhaps a very interesting meaning, that in fact there is somethingto comprehend. Indeed, there is something to comprehend, — much to comprehend.

Cocteau, on a day of idleness in the country, in the course of a siesta, in the shade which failed to refresh, a siesta broken by sentences exchanged slowly, in a low voice, with an absent-minded friend, an afternoon — on which the ideas uttered and the thoughts get confused, become disconnected, compose themselves into little poems, lose themselves in projects, in regrets, in memories, in anecdotes, suddenly reflected that underneath the grass upon which he was reposing.

" There is the earth,
And still the earth
In a straight line,
And rock and mineral,
And lava,
And incandescences
And the central fire.
Think while continuing the descent,
That there is still fire and more fire,
Then incandescent lava,
Then rock and mineral,
Then earth
And still earth,
And gradually,
Earth which the air penetrates,
And grass,
And night for a moment,
And a woman who sleeps in New Zealand
With the abyss above her,
Above her roof ... "

(*Le Potomak*, by Jean Cocteau).

And 262 pages BEFORE the explanation, he condenses that idea in the short sentence we read above: " Towards a lady of the antipodes... etc. " Here, the author explains, although very much later, his abridgment. In general, almost always, one must find for one's self immediately, in a fraction of a second, the development, the explanation, the analogy which permits the explanation and be ready, immediately, to hear, develop, and understand a fresh abridgement. You see with what speed of thought it is necessary to move. I avow, without shame, that I have never entirely understood such a book at the first reading, but I have understood sufficiently to like it greatly, and what I did not understand, I say it with pride, I did not proclaim stupid, but I re-

read, and in re-reading up to four times, I found pleasure in understanding further, in seeing new things, so that *Le Potomak* by Cocteau is not one book for me but four books ; perhaps it will be five. And the *Dix-neuf Poèmes Elastiques* of Blaise Cendrars, I affirm to you, is a volume of eight hundred pages accompagnied by thirteen hundred full page plates.

I have not the space to develop the other abridgments cited. They can be explained and understood quite as clearly. When we are free to work these things out by ourselves, we have still more pleasure in expanding them. Besides, you see well enough the process which, it is necessary to remark, exacts of the reader a very important complementary work, a work almost of parallel creation with that of the author. I am not astonished, either, to note that the few intelligent persons who still disesteem modern letters are intellectually lazy.

This process calls for a considerable speed in thinking. The poem of Arthur Rimbaud, one of his simplest, of which I cited a few lines above, presents in fifteen lines, nineteen abridgments. You see what a gallop the thought must take in order to understand this poem during a reading aloud. *Aux cinq coins,* a poem of Blaise Cendrars, contains sixteen abridgments in ten lines, in ten half-lines, without counting the title which is, for all that, a meteor.

Further, even when there are no metaphors, a description is composed of a few selected details, a few indications which, in truth, do not describe, but permit the reader to describe. That is to say, they suggest a description. There also the thought must pick itself up, bound, and construct quickly the *décor* to receive the characters and their sentiments. Once more speed of thinking is put to the test. The reader must have " imagination. " As soon as one scene, which four words have suggested, ten have utilized and two have swept away without even the trouble of punctuation, has finished, it becomes necessary to prepare another because suggestions follow each other with the speed of dreams, as in those nightmares in which the alarm-clock rings for two seconds, but these seconds permit the dream to construct upon this alarum an entire complicated story which has seemed to last three days.

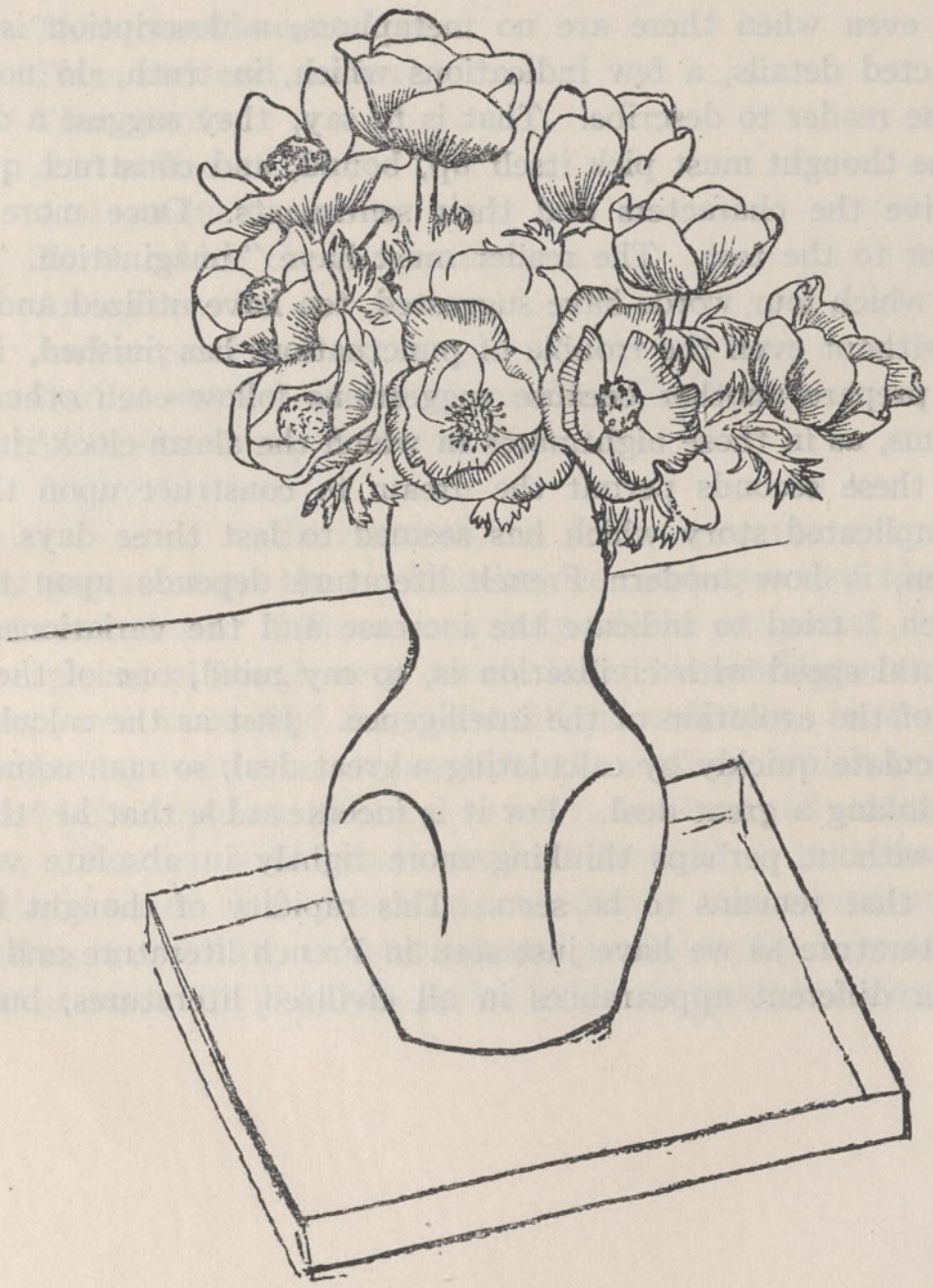
This, then, is how modern French literature depends upon the mental speed of which I tried to indicate the increase and the variations. This increase of mental speed with civilization is, to my mind, one of the most important laws of the evolution of the intelligence. Just as the calculator trains himself to calculate quickly by calculating a great deal, so man comes to think quickly by thinking a great deal. For it is incontestable that he thinks very much today without perhaps thinking more rightly in absolute values than formerly, but that remains to be seen. This rapidity of thought is reflected not only in literature as we have just seen in French literature and as we can perceive under different appearances in all civilized literatures, but again in

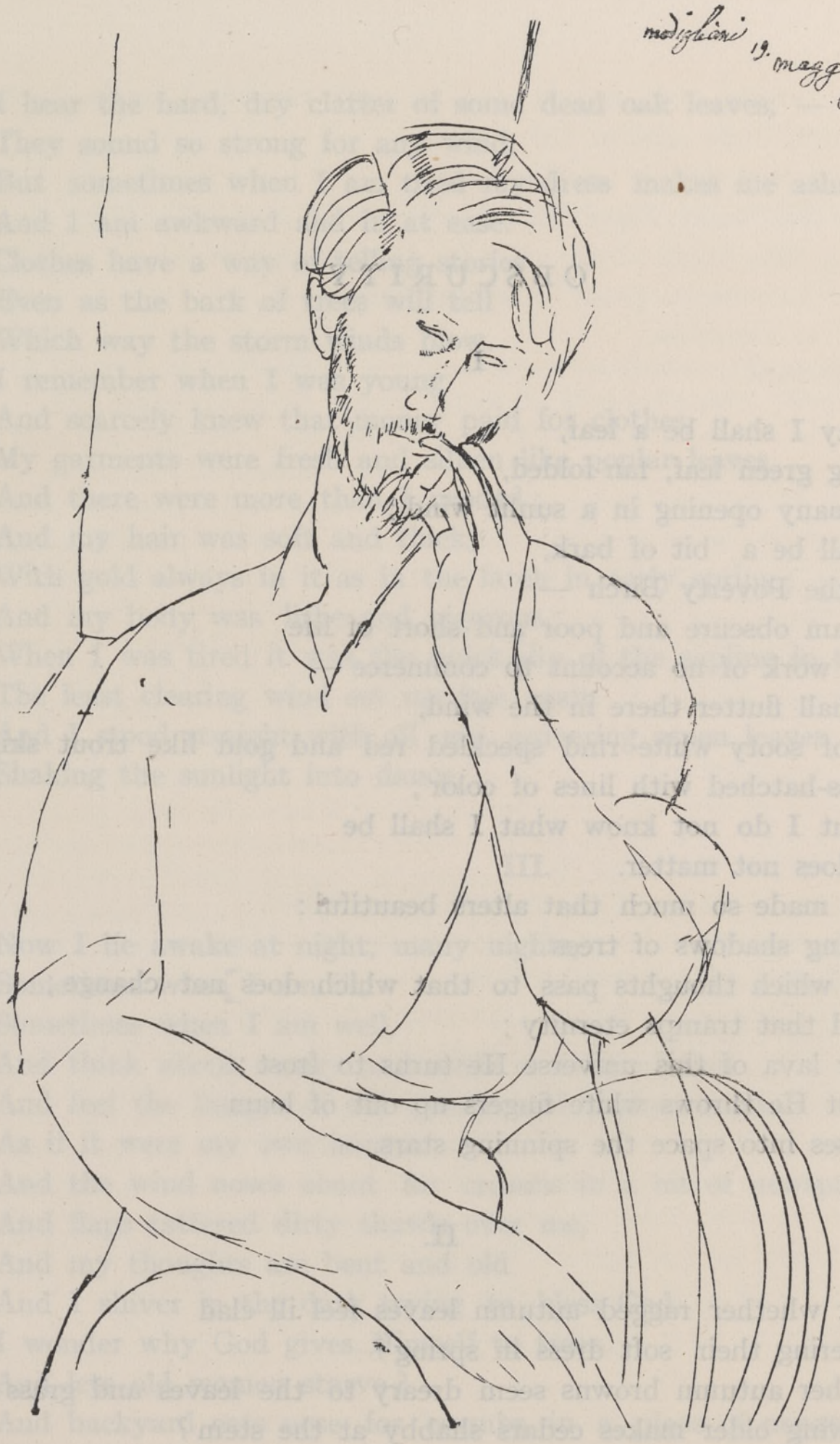
the whole intellectual apparatus of civilization. Viewing the chronology of literary schools which are only emotional systems, we note that the intelligence today traverses more rapidly than formerly the stages of its variations. If there was a time when a literary school sufficed to nourish abundantly one, or perhaps two generations, it is no longer so nowadays. Beauty appears to have become more unstable and to change her coiffure every ten years. This too depends on the augmentation of the thought speed which makes the tour of its stopping-places, sees in a short time everything there is to see from one point of view, both merits and defects, and departs. Thus modern French literature, spoken of here according to a plan quite other than chronological, will, if studied chronologically, reveal two stages : the past one on which we can discourse precisely enough, and the present one which is growing and budding, growling a thousand contradictions to the theoreticians. Very many of my remarks apply especially to the stage just passed and to the period of transition between two crises.

JEAN EPSTEIN

(Translated By B. Gorham Munson)

(To be continued).





MODIGLIANI

Pen and Ink Drawing

OBSCURITY

I.

Some day I shall be a leaf,
A shining green leaf, fan-folded,
One of many opening in a sunlit wind;
Or I shall be a bit of bark,
Say on the Poverty Birch —
Since I am obscure and poor and short of life
And my work of no account to commerce —
And I shall flutter there in the wind,
My bit of sooty white rind speckled red and gold like trout skin
And cross-hatched with lines of color;
Or — but I do not know what I shall be
And it does not matter.
God has made so much that alters beautiful:
The jigging shadows of trees
Through which thoughts pass to that which does not change;
The wind that tramps eternity;
The very lava of this universe He turns to frost;
Like frost He throws white fingers up out of loam
And tosses into space the spinning stars.

II.

I wonder whether ragged autumn leaves feel ill clad
Remembering their soft dress in spring?
Or whether autumn browns seem dreary to the leaves and grass?
And growing older makes cedars shabby at the stem?

I hear the hard, dry clatter of some dead oak leaves, —
They sound so strong for any wind.
But sometimes when I am tired my dress makes me ashamed.
And I am awkward and ill at ease.
Clothes have a way of telling stories
Even as the bark of trees will tell
Which way the storm winds blow.
I remember when I was young
And scarcely knew that money paid for clothes,
My garments were fresh and silken like poplar leaves
And there were more than I needed ;
And my hair was soft and thick,
With gold always in it as in the larch in early spring ;
And my body was lithe and vigorous ;
When I was tired it was the quick dip of the sapling in the storm,
The least clearing wind set me free again
And I stood straight with all my quivering aspen leaves
Shaking the sunlight into dance.

III.

Now I lie awake at night, many nights,
Sometimes when I am ill,
Sometimes when I am well,
And think about money and rents in worn clothes
And feel the hunger of old women and backyard cats
As if it were my own hunger ;
And the wind noses about for crumbs in a bit of newspaper
And flaps tattered dirty shawls over me,
And my thoughts are bent and old
And I shiver in the dark trying to bless God.
I wonder why God gives Himself to trees
And lets old women starve ?
And backyard cats nose for crumbs in a piece of newspaper ?

And why certain rich people are as well varnished against cold
As fat beech buds against the frost?
Do you suppose God is a Merchant
And sells this warm lustre from the stars
Stars hung like bright drops of water in a big night wind —
And plans to make a profit from the rich? . . .
I am not an anarchist
Except in stars.

IV.

When the dawn comes it brings the crows.
Caw! Caw! Caw! The crows!
The crow sleeps east but west he blows
To pick some carrion that he knows
Caw! Caw! Caw! It blows!

V.

I travel East to meet the sun
With a gray heron battling up against the wind,
Above the nests that know the ravens in their sleep,
Above the trees that toss the light,
Above the rocks that blossom into rose,
On towards the sun!
It does not matter now how I am clothed;
For my mind glitters with a thousand thoughts,
Star-sown, moon-shaped, sun-colored,
Amber-shining like polished foliage in a great dawn wind,
And the lustre on the heron's breast
Is now God and now the Morning Star:
I travel East to meet the sun!

JEANETTE MARKS

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

ACT II.

The stage call-bells ring to warn the company that the play is about to begin again.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER *comes out of the Manager's office along with* THE CHILD *and* THE BOY. *As she comes out of the office, she cries*: —

Nonsense! nonsense! Do it yourselves! I'm not going to mix myself up in this mess. (*Turning to the Child and coming quickly with her on to the stage*). Come on, Rosetta, let's run!

(THE BOY *follows them slowly, remaining a little behind and seeming perplexed*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*Stops, bends over the Child and takes her face between her hands*). My little darling! You're frightened, aren't you? You don't know where we are, do you? (*pretending to reply to a question of the Child*). What is the stage? It's a place, baby, you know, where people play at being serious, a place where they act comedies. We've got to act a comedy now, dead serious, you know and you're in it also, little one. (*Embraces her, pressing the little head to her breast, and rocking the child for a moment*). Oh darling, darling, what a horrid comedy you've got to play. What a wretched part they've found for you. A garden . . . a fountain . . . look . . . just suppose, kiddie, it's here. Where, you say? Why, right here in the middle. It's all pretence you know. That's the trouble, my pet: it's all make-believe here. It's better to imagine it though, because if they fix it up for you, it'll only be painted cardboard, painted cardboard for the rockery, the water, the plants . . . Ah, but I think a baby like this one would sooner have a make-believe fountain than a real one, so she could play with it. What a joke it'll be for the others, but for you, alas! not quite such a joke: you who are real, baby dear, and really play by a real fountain that is big and green and beautiful with ever so many bamboos around it that are reflected in the water, and a whole lot of little ducks swimming about . . . No, Rosetta, no, your mother doesn't bother about you on account of that wretch of a son there. I'm in the devil of a temper, and as for that lad. (*Seizes Boy by the arm to force him to take one of his hands out of his pockets*). What have you got there? What are you hiding? (*Pulls his hand out of his pocket, looks into it and catches the glint of a revolver*). Ah! where did you get this?

(THE BOY, *very pale in the face, looks at her, but does not answer*).

Idiot! If I'd been in your place, instead of killing myself, I'd have shot one of those two, or both of them: father and son.

(THE FATHER *enters from the office, all excited from his work. The* MANAGER *follows him*).

THE FATHER. Come on, come on dear! Come here for a minute! We've arranged everything. It's all fixed up.

THE MANAGER (*also excited*). If you please, young lady, there are one or two points to settle still. Will you come along?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*following him towards the office*). Ouff! what's the good if you've arranged everything?

(THE FATHER, MANAGER *and* STEP-DAUGHTER *go back into the office again* (*off*) *for a moment. At the same time,* THE SON *followed by* THE MOTHER, *comes out*).

THE SON (*looking at the three entering office*). Oh this is fine, fine! And to think I can't even get away!

(THE MOTHER *attempts to look at him, but lowers her eyes immediately when he turns away from her. She then sits down.* THE BOY *and* THE CHILD *approach her. She casts a glance again at the Son, and speaks with humble tones, trying to draw him into conversation*).

THE MOTHER. And isn't my punishment the worst of all? (*then seeing from the Son's manner that he will not bother himself about her*). My God! Why are you so cruel? Isn't it enough for one person to support all this torment? Must you then insist on others seeing it also?

THE SON (*half to himself, meaning the Mother to hear, however*). And they want to put it on the stage! If there was at least a reason for it! He thinks he has got at the meaning of it all. Just as if each one of us in every circumstance of life couldn't find his own explanation of it! (*pauses*). He complains he was discovered in a place where he ought not to have been seen, in a moment of his life which ought to have remained hidden and kept out of the reach of that convention which he has to maintain for other people. And what about my case? Haven't I had to reveal what no son ought ever to reveal, that is: how father and mother live and are man and wife for themselves quite apart from that idea of father and mother which we give them. When this idea is revealed, our life is then linked at one point only to that man and that woman, and as such it should shame them, shouldn't it?

THE MOTHER *hides her face in her hands. From the dressing-rooms and the little door at the back of the stage the actors and* STAGE MANAGER *return, followed by the* PROPERTY MAN, *and the* PROMPTER. *At the same moment,* THE MANAGER *comes out of his office, accompanied by the* FATHER *and the* STEP-DAUGHTER.

THE MANAGER. Come on, come on, ladies and gentlemen! Heh! you there, machinist!

MACHINIST. Yes, Sir.

THE MANAGER. Fix up the white parlor with the floral decorations. Two wings and a drop with a door will do. Hurry up!

(THE MACHINIST *runs off at once to prepare the scene, and arranges it while* THE MANAGER *talks with the* STAGE MANAGER, *the* PROPERTY MAN *and the* PROMPTER *on matters of detail*).

THE MANAGER (*to Property Man*). Just have a look, and see if there isn't a sofa or divan in the wardrobe . . .

PROPERTY MAN. There's the green one.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No! no! green won't do. It was yellow ornamented with flowers — very large and most comfortable.

PROPERTY MAN. There isn't one like that.

THE MANAGER. It doesn't matter. Use the one we've got.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Doesn't matter. It's most important.

THE MANAGER. We're only trying it now. Please don't interfere. (*To Property Man*). See if we've got a shop window — long and narrowish.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. And the little table! The little mahogany table for the pale blue envelope.

PROPERTY MAN (*To Manager*). There's that little gilt one.

THE MANAGER. That'll do fine.

THE FATHER. A mirror.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. And the screen. We must have a screen. Otherwise how can I manage?

PROPERTY MAN. That's all right, Miss. We've got any amount of them.

THE MANAGER (*to the Step-Daughter*). We want some clothe's pegs too don't we?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Yes, several, several.

THE MANAGER. See how many we've got and bring them all.

PROPERTY MAN. All right!

(THE PROPERTY MAN *hurries off to obey his orders. While he is putting the things in their place, the* MANAGER *talks to the* PROMPTER *and then with the Characters and the actors*).

THE MANAGER (*to Prompter*). Take your seat. Look here: this is the outline of the scenes, act by act (*hands him some sheets of paper*). And now I'm going to ask you to do something out of the way.

PROMPTER. Take it down in shorthand?

THE MANAGER (*pleasantly surprised*). Exactly. Can do you do shorthand?

PROMPTER. Yes, a little.

MANAGER. Good. (*Turning to a stage hand*). Go and get some paper from my office, plenty, as much as you can find.

(*The stage hand goes off, and soon returns with a handful of paper which he gives to the Prompter*).

THE MANAGER (*To Prompter*). You follow the scenes as we play them, and try and get the points down, at any rate the most important ones. (*Then addressing the actors*). Clear the stage, ladies and gentlemen! Come over here (*pointing to the Left*) and listen attentively.

LEADING LADY. But, excuse me, we . . .

THE MANAGER (*guessing her thought*). Don't worry! You won't have to improvise.

LEADING MAN. What have we to do then?

THE MANAGER. Nothing. For the moment you just watch and listen. Everybody will get his part written out afterwards. At present we're going to try the thing as best we can. They're going to act now.

THE FATHER (*as if fallen from the clouds into the confusion of the stage*). We? What do you mean, if you please, by a rehearsal?

THE MANAGER. A rehearsal for them (*points to the actors*).

THE FATHER. But since we are the characters . . .

THE MANAGER. All right: "characters" then, if you insist on calling yourselves such. But here, my dear Sir, the characters don't act. Here the actors, do the acting. The characters are there, in the book (*pointing towards Prompter's box*) when there is a book.

THE FATHER. I won't contradict you, but excuse me, the actors aren't the characters. They want to be, they pretend to be, don't they? Now if these gentlemen here are fortunate enough to have us alive before them . . .

THE MANAGER. Oh this is grand! You want to come before the public yourselves then?

THE FATHER. As we are . . .

THE MANAGER. I can assure you it would be a magnificent spectacle!

LEADING MAN. What's the use of us here anyway then?

THE MANAGER. You're not going to pretend that you can act. It makes me laugh. (*The actors laugh*). There, you see, they are laughing at the notion. But, by the way, I must cast the parts. That won't be difficult. They cast themselves. (*To the Second Lady Lead*). You play the Mother. (*To the Father*). We must find her a name.

THE FATHER. Amalia, Sir.

THE MANAGER. But that is the real name of your wife. We don't want to call her by her real name.

THE FATHER. Why ever not, if it is her name? . . Still, perhaps, if that lady must . . . (*makes a slight motion of the hand to indicate the Second Lady Lead*). I see this woman here (*means the Mother*) as Amalia. But do as

you like (*gets more and more confused*). I don't know what to say to you. Already, I begin to hear my own words ring false, as if they had another sound . . .

THE MANAGER. Don't you worry about it. It'll be our job to find the right tones. And as for her name, if you want her Amalia, Amalia it shall be, and if you don't like it, we'll find another. For the moment though, we'll call the characters in this way: (*to Juvenile Lead*) You are the Son; (*to the Leading Lady*) You naturally are the Step-Daughter.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*excitedly*). What? what? I, that woman there? (*bursts out laughing*).

THE MANAGER (*angry*). What is there to laugh at?

LEADING LADY (*indignant*). Nobody has ever dared to laugh at me. I insist on being treated with respect; otherwise I go away.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No, no, excuse me . . . I am not laughing at you . . .

THE MANAGER (*to Step-Daughter*). You ought to feel honoured to be played by. . .

LEADING LADY (*at once, contemptuously*). "That woman there" . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. But I wasn't speaking of you, you know. I was speaking of myself. Whom I can't see at all in you. That is all. I don't know . . . but . . . you . . . aren't in the least like me . . .

THE FATHER. True. Here's the point. Look here, Sir, our temperament, our soul. . .

THE MANAGER. Temperament, soul, be hanged! Do you suppose the spirit of the piece is in you? Nothing of the kind.

THE FATHER. What, haven't we our own temperament, our own soul?

THE MANAGER. Not at all. Your soul or whatever you like to call it takes shape here. The actors give body and form to it, voice and gesture. And my actors — I may tell you — have given expression to much more lofty material than this little drama of yours, which may or may not hold up on the stage. But if it does, the merit of it, believe me, will be due to my actors.

THE FATHER. I don't dare contradict you, Sir, but believe me it is a terrible suffering for us who are as we are, with these bodies of ours, these features to see . . .

THE MANAGER (*cutting him short and out of patience*). Good heavens! The make-up will remedy all that, man, the make-up . . .

THE FATHER. Maybe. But the voice, the gestures . . .

THE MANAGER. Now, look here! On the stage, you as yourself, cannot exist. The actor here acts you, and that's an end to it.

THE FATHER. I understand. And now I think I see why our author who conceived us as we are, all alive, didn't want to put us on the stage after all. I haven't the least desire to offend your actors. Far from it. But when I think that I am to be acted by . . . I don't know by whom . . .

LEADING MAN (*on his dignity*). By me, if you've no objection.

THE FATHER (*humbly, mellifluously*). Honoured, I assure you, Sir. (*Bows*). Still, I must say that try as this gentlemen may with all his good will and wonderful art to absorb me into himself . . .

LEADING MAN. Oh chuck it! "Wonderful art" Withdraw that please!

THE FATHER. The performance he will give, even doing his best with make-up to look like me . . .

LEADING MAN. It will certainly be a bit difficult (*The actors laugh*).

THE FATHER. Exactly. It will be difficult to act me as I really am. The effect will be rather — apart from the make-up — according as to how he supposes I am, as he senses me — if he does sense me — and not as I inside of myself feel myself to be. It seems to me then that account should be taken of this by everyone whose duty it may become to criticize us . . .

THE MANAGER. Heavens! The man's starting to think about the critics now. Let them say what they like. It's up to us to put on the play if we can (*looking around*). Come on! come on! Is the stage set? (*to the actors and Characters*). Stand back — stand back! Let me see, and don't let's lose any more time (*to the Step-Daughter*). Is it all right as it is now?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Well, to tell the truth, I don't recognize the scene.

THE MANAGER. My dear lady, you can't possibly suppose that we can construct that shop of Madame Pace piece by piece here (*to the Father*). You said a white room with flowered wall paper, didn't you?

THE FATHER. Yes.

THE MANAGER. Well then. We've got the furniture right more or less. Bring that little table a bit further forward. (*The stage hands obey the order, to Property Man*). You go and find an envelope, if possible a pale blue one, and give it to that gentleman (*indicates Father*).

PROPERTY MAN. An ordinary envelope?

MANAGER *and* FATHER. Yes, yes, an ordinary envelope.

PROPERTY MAN. At once, sir (*exit*).

THE MANAGER. Ready everyone! First scene — the Young Lady. (*The Leading Lady comes forward*). No, no, you must wait. I meant her (*indicating the Step-Daughter*). You just watch.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*adding at once*). How I shall play it, how I shall live it! . . . .

LEADING LADY (*offended*). I shall live it also you may be sure as soon as I begin!

THE MANAGER (*with his hands to his head*). Ladies and gentlemen if you please, no more useless discussions! Scene I: the young lady with Madame Pace: Oh! (*looks around as if lost*). And this Madame Pace, where is she?

THE FATHER. She isn't with us, sir.

THE MANAGER. Then what the devil's to be done?

THE FATHER. But she is alive too.

THE MANAGER. Yes, but where is she?

THE FATHER. One minute. Let me speak! (*turning to the actresses*). If these ladies would be so good as to give me their hats for a moment . . .

THE ACTRESSES (*half surprised, half laughing in chorus*). What?

Why?

Our hats?

What does he say?

THE MANAGER. What are you going to do with the ladies' hats? (*The actors laugh*).

THE FATHER. Oh nothing. I just want to put them on these pegs for a moment. And one of the ladies will be so kind as to take off her mantle . . .

THE ACTORS. Oh, what d'you think of that?

Only the mantle?

He must be mad.

SOME ACTRESSES. But why?

Mantles as well.

THE FATHER. To hang them up here for a moment. Please be so kind, will you?

THE ACTRESSES (*taking off their hats, one or two also their cloaks, and going to hang them on the racks*). After all, why not?

There you are!

This is really funny.

We've got to put them on show.

THE FATHER. Exactly; just like that, on show.

THE MANAGER. May we know why?

THE FATHER. I'll tell you. Who knows if by arranging the stage for her, she does not come here herself, attracted by the very articles of her trade (*inviting the actors to look towards the exit at back of stage*). Look! Look!

(*The door at the back of stage opens and* MADAME PACE *enters and takes a few steps forward. She is a fat, oldish woman with puffy oxygenated hair. She is rouged and powdered, dressed with a comical elegance in black silk. Round her*

waist is a long silver chain from which hang a pair of scissors. The Step-Daughter runs over to her at once amid the stupor of the actors).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*turning towards her*). There she is! There she is!

THE FATHER (*radiant*). It's she! I said so, didn't I? There she is!

THE MANAGER (*conquering his surprise, and then becoming indignant*). What sort of a trick is this?

LEADING MAN (*almost at the same time*). What's going to happen next?

JUVENILE LEAD. Where does *she* come from?

L'INGÉNUE. They've been holding her in reserve I guess.

LEADING LADY. A vulgar trick!

THE FATHER (*dominating the protests*). Excuse me, all of you! Why are you so anxious to destroy in the name of a vulgar commonplace sense of truth, this reality which comes to birth attracted and formed by the magic of the stage itself, which has indeed more right to live here than you, since it is much truer than you, if you don't mind my saying so? Which is the actress among you who is to play Madame Pace? Well, here is Madame Pace herself. And you will allow, I fancy, that the actress who acts her will be less true than this woman here, who is herself in person. You see my daughter recognized her and went over to her at once. Now you're going to witness the scene!

But the scene between the STEP-DAUGHTER *and* MADAME PACE *has already begun despite the protest of the actors and the reply of* THE FATHER. *It has begun quietly, naturally, in a manner impossible for the stage. So when the actors, called to attention by the Father, turn round and see* MADAME PACE *who has placed one hand under the* STEP-DAUGHTER'S *chin to raise her head, they observe her at first with great attention, but hearing her speak in an unintelligible manner their interest begins to wane.*

THE MANAGER. Well? well?

LEADING MAN. What does she say?

LEADING LADY. One can't hear a word.

JUVENILE LEAD. Louder! louder please!

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*leaving Madame Pace who smiles a Sphinx-like smile and advancing towards the actors*). Louder! louder! What are you talking about? These aren't matters which can be shouted at the top of one's voice. If I have spoken them out loud, it was to shame him and have my revenge (*indicates Father*). But for Madame it's quite a different matter.

THE MANAGER. Indeed? indeed? But here, you know, people have got to make themselves heard, my dear. Even we who are on the stage can't hear you. What will it be when the public's in the theatre? And

anyway, you can very well speak up now among yourselves, since we shan't be present to listen to you as we are now. You've got to pretend to be alone in a room at the back of a shop where no one can hear you.

(THE STEP-DAUGHTER *coquettishly and with a touch of malice makes a sign of disagreement two or three times with her finger*).

THE MANAGER. What do you mean by no?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*sottovoce, mysteriously*). There's someone who will hear us if she (*indicating Madame Pace*) speaks out loud.

THE MANAGER (*in consternation*) What? Have you got someone else to spring on us now? (*The actors burst out laughing*).

THE FATHER. No, no sir. She is alluding to me. I've got to be here. There behind that door in waiting and Madame Pace knows it. In fact, if you will allow me, I'll go there at once, so I can be quite ready. (*Moves away*).

THE MANAGER (*stopping him*). No! Wait! wait! We must observe the conventions of the theatre. Before you are ready . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*interrupting him*). No, get on with it at once! I'm just dying, I tell you, to act this scene. If he's ready, I'm more than ready.

THE MANAGER (*shouting*). But, my dear young lady, first of all, we must have the scene between you and this lady . . . (*indicates Madame Pace*). Do you understand? . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Good Heavens! She's been telling me what you know already: that mamma's work is badly done again, that the material's ruined, and that if I want her to continue to help us in our misery I must be patient . . .

MADAME PACE (*coming forward with an air of great importance*). Yes, indeed Sir, I no wanta take advantage of her, I no wanta be hard . . .

(*Note. Madame Pace is supposed to talk in a jargon half Italian, half Spanish*).

THE MANAGER (*alarmed*). What? what? She talks like that? (*The actors burst out laughing again*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*also laughing*). Yes, yes that's the way she talks, half English, half Italian, most comical it is.

MADAME PACE. Itta seem not verra polite gentlemen laugha atta me eef I trya best speaka English.

THE MANAGER. Diamine! Of course! Of course! Let her talk like that! Just what we want. Talk just like that Madam if you please. The effect will be certain. Exactly what was wanted to put a little comic relief into the crudity of the situation. Of course she talks like that. Magnificent!

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Magnificent : certainly. When certain suggestions are made to one in language of that kind, the effect is certain, since it seems almost a joke. One feels inclined to laugh when one hears her talk about an " old signore " " who wanta talka nicely with you. " Doesn't it, Madame ?

MADAME PACE. Not so old my dear, not so old and even if you no lika him, be won't make any scandal !

THE MOTHER (*jumping up amid the amazement and consternation of the actors who had not been noticing her. They move to restrain her*). You old devil ! You murderess !

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*running over to calm her Mother*). Calm yourself, mother, calm yourself ! Please don't. . .

THE FATHER (*going to her also at the same time*). Calm yourself. Don't get excited. Sit down now.

THE MOTHER. Well then, take that woman away out of my sight !

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*to Manager*). It is impossible for my mother to remain here.

THE FATHER (*to Manager*). They can't be here together. And for this reason you see. That woman there was not with us when we came. . . If they are on together, the whole thing is given away inevitably as you see.

THE MANAGER. It doesn't matter. This is only a first rough sketch. Just to get an idea of the various points of the scene, even confusedly. . (*turning to the Mother and leading her to her chair*). Come along, my dear lady, sit down now, and let's get on with the scene. . .

(*Meanwhile, the* STEP-DAUGHTER, *coming forward again, turns to Madame Pace*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Come on, Madame, come on !

MADAME PACE (*offended*). No, no, grazie. I not do anything witha your mother present.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Nonsense. Introduce this " old signore " who wants to talk nicely to me (*adressing the company imperiously*). We've got to do this scene one way or another, haven't we ? Come on ! (*to Madame Pace*). You can go !

MADAME PACE. Ah yes. I go'way. I go'way, certainly. (*Exit furious*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*to the Father*). Now you make your entry. No, you needn't go over here. Come here. Let's suppose you've already come in. Like that, yes. I'm here with bowed head, modest like. Come on ! Out with your voice ! Say " Good morning, Miss " in that peculiar tone, that special tone. . .

THE MANAGER. Excuse me, but are you the Manager or am I ? (*to the Father who looks undecided and perplexed*). Get on with it, man ! Go down

there to the back of the stage. You needn't go off. Then come right forward here.

(THE FATHER *does as he is told, looking troubled and perplexed at first. But as soon as he begins to move, the reality of the action affects him, and he begins to smile and to be more natural. The actors watch intently*).

THE MANAGER (*sottovoce, quickly to the Prompter in his box*). Ready ! ready ! Get ready to write now.

THE FATHER (*coming forward and speaking in a different tone*). Good afternoon, Miss.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*head bowed down slightly, with restrained disgust*). Good afternoon.

THE FATHER. (*looks under her hat which partly covers her face. Perceiving she is very young, he makes an exclamation, partly of surprise, partly of fear lest he compromise himself in a risky adventure*). Ah . . . but . . . ah, I say this is not the first time that you have come here, is it ?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*modestly*). No sir.

THE FATHER. You've been here before, eh ? (*Then seeing her nod agreement*). More than once ?(*Waits for her to answer, looks under her hat, smiles and then says*). Well then, there's no need to be so shy is there ? May I take off your hat ?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*anticipating him and with veiled digust*). No sir . . . I'll do it myself. (*Takes it off quickly*).

(THE MOTHER, *who watches the progress of the scene with* THE SON *and the other two children who cling to her, is on thorns, and follows with varying expressions of sorrow, indignation, anxiety and horror the words and actions of the other two. From time to time she hides her face in her hands and sobs*).

THE MOTHER. Oh, my God, my God !

THE FATHER (*playing his part with a touch of gallantry*). Give it to me ! I'll put it down (*takes hat from her hands*). But a dear little head like yours ought to have a smarter hat. Come and help me choose one from the stock, won't you ?

L'INGÉNUE (*interrupting*). I say . . . those are our hats you know.

THE MANAGER (*furious*). Silence ! silence ! Don't try and be funny if you please . . . We're playing the scene now I'd have you notice. (*To the Step-Daughter*). Begin again, please.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*continuing*). No thank you, sir.

THE FATHER. Oh, come now. Don't talk like that. You must take it. I shall be upset if you don't. There are some lovely little hats here, and then Madame will be pleased. She expects it, anyway, you know.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No, no, I couldn't wear it.

THE FATHER. Oh, you're thinking about what they'd say at home if they saw you come in with a new hat. My dear girl, there's always a way round these little matters you know.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*all keyed up*). No, it's not that. I couldn't wear it because I am . . . as you see . . . you might have noticed . . . (*showing her black dress*).

THE FATHER. In mourning. Of course. I beg your pardon. I'm frightfully sorry . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*forcing herself to conquer her indignation and nausea*). Stop! stop! It's I who must thank you. There's no need for you to feel mortified or specially sorry. Don't think any more of what I've said. (*Tries to smile*). I must forget that I am dressed so . . .

THE MANAGER (*interrupting and turning to the Prompter*). Stop a minute! stop! Don't write that down. Cut out that last bit (*Then to the Father and Step-Daughter*). Fine! it's going fine! (*To the Father only*). And now you can go on as we arranged. (*To the actors*). Pretty good that scene, where he offers her the hat, eh?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. The best's coming now. Why can't we go on?

THE MANAGER. Have a little patience (*to the actors*) of course it must be treated rather lightly.

LEADING MAN. Still, with a bit of go in it.

LEADING LADY. Of course. It's easy enough (*to Leading Man*). Shall you and I try it now?

LEADING MAN. Why, yes. I'll prepare my entrance (*Exit in order to make his entrance*).

THE MANAGER (*to Leading Lady*). See here! The scene between you and Madame Pace is finished. I'll have it written out properly after. You remain here . . . oh, where are you going?

LEADING LADY. One minute. I want to put my hat on again (*goes over to hat-rack and puts her hat on her head*).

THE MANAGER. Good! You stay here with your head bowed down a bit.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. But she isn't dressed in black.

LEADING LADY. But I shall be, and much more effectively than you.

THE MANAGER (*to Step-Daughter*). Be quiet please, and watch. You'll be able to learn something. (*Clapping his hands*) Come on! come on! Entrance please.

(*The door at rear of stage opens, and the Leading Man enters with the lively manner of an old gallant. The rendering of the scene by the actors from the very first words is seen to be quite a different thing, though it has not in any way the air of a parody. Naturally, the Step-Daughter and the Father, not being able to recog-*

nize themselves in the Leading Lady and the Leading Man, who deliver their words in different tones and with a different psychology, express, sometimes with smiles, sometimes with gestures, the impression they receive).

LEADING Man. " Good afternoon, Miss " . . .

THE FATHER (*at once unable to contain himself*). No ! no !

(THE STEP-DAUGTHER *noticing the way the* LEADING MAN *enters, bursts out laughing*).

THE MANAGER (*furious*). Silence ! And you please just stop that laughing. If we go on like this, we shall never finish.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Forgive me, sir, but it's natural enough. This lady (*indicating Leading Lady*) stands there still, but if she is supposed to be me, I can assure you that if I heard anyone say " Good afternoon " in that manner and in that tone, I should burst out laughing as I did.

THE FATHER. Yes, yes, the manner, the tone . . .

THE MANAGER. Nonsense ! rubbish ! Stand aside and let me see the action.

LEADING MAN. If I've got to represent an old fellow who's coming into a house of an equivocal character . . .

THE MANAGER. Don't listen to them for Heaven's sake. Do it again. It goes fine. (*Waiting for the actors to begin again*) Well ?

LEADING MAN. Good afternoon, Miss.

LEADING LADY. Good afternoon.

LEADING MAN (*imitating the gesture of the Father when he looked under the hat, and then expressing quite clearly first satisfaction and then fear*). Ah; but . . I say this is not the first time that you have come here, is it ?

THE MANAGER. Good, but not quite so heavily. Like this (*acts himself*). " This isn't the first time that you have come here " . . . (*To Leading Lady*) And you say : " No, sir. "

LEADING LADY. No, sir.

LEADING MAN. You've been here before more than once.

THE MANAGER. No, no, stop ! Let her nod " yes " first. "You've been before, eh ? " (*The Leading Lady lifts up her head slightly and closes her eyes as though in disgust. Then inclines her head twice*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*unable to contain herself*). Oh my God ! (*puts a hand to her mouth to prevent herself from laughing*).

THE MANAGER (*turning round*). What's the matter ?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Nothing, nothing.

THE MANAGER (*to Leading Man*). Go on.

LEADING MAN. You've been here before, eh ? Well then, there's no need to be so shy, is there ? May I take off your hat ?

(THE LEADING MAN *says this last speech in such a tone and with such gestures*

that the STEP-DAUGHTER, *though she has her hand to her mouth, cannot keep from laughing*).

LEADING LADY (*indignant*). I'm not going to stop here to be made a fool of by that woman there.

LEADING MAN. Neither am I. I'm through with it.

THE MANAGER (*shouting to Step-Daughter*). Silence for once and all, I tell you.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Forgive me ! forgive me !

THE MANAGER. You haven't any manners : that's what it is. You go too far.

THE FATHER (*endeavouring to intervene*). Yes, it's true, but excuse her . . .

THE MANAGER. Excuse what ? It's absolutely disgusting.

THE FATHER. Yes, sir, but believe me, it has such a strange effect when . . .

THE MANAGER. Strange ? Why strange ? Where is it strange ?

THE FATHER. No, sir. I admire your actors, this gentleman here this lady, but they are certainly not us.

THE MANAGER. I should hope not. Evidently they cannot be you, if they are actors.

THE FATHER. Just so ; actors. Both of them act our parts exceedingly well. But, believe me, it produces quite a different effect on us. They want to be us, but they aren't, all the same.

THE MANAGER. What is it then anyway ?

THE FATHER. Something that is . . . that is theirs and no longer ours. . .

THE MANAGER. But naturally, inevitably. I've told you so already.

THE FATHER. Yes, I understand. . . I understand.

THE MANAGER. Well then, let's have no more of it (*turning to the actors*). We'll have the rehearsals by ourselves afterwards in the ordinary way. I never could stand rehearsing with the author present. He's never satisfied (*turning to Father and Step-Daughter*). Come on ! Let's get on with it again and try and see if you can't keep from laughing.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Oh, I shan't laugh any more. There's a nice little bit coming for me now : you'll see.

THE MANAGER. Well then : when she says " Dont think any more of what I've said. I must forget etc " you (*addressing the Father*) come in sharp with " I understand, I understand " and then you ask her . . .

THE STEP-DAUGTHER (*interrupting*). What ?

THE MANAGER. Why she is in mourning.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Not at all ! See here : when I told him that it was useless for me to be thinking about my wearing mourning, do you know how he answered me ? " Ah well, " he said " then let's take off this little frock ".

THE MANAGER. Great ! Just what we want to make a riot in the theatre.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. But it's the truth.

THE MANAGER. What does that matter? Acting is our business here. Truth up to a certain point, but no further.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. What do you want to do then?

THE MANAGER. You'll see. You'll see. Leave it to me.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No sir. What you want to do is to piece together a little romantic sentimental scene out of my disgust, out of all the reasons, each more cruel and viler than the other, why I am what I am. He is to ask me why I'm in mourning, and I'm to answer with tears in my eyes, that it is just two months since papa died. No, sir, no. He's got to say to me as he did say. "Well, let's take off this little dress at once." And I with my two months' mourning in my heart went there behind that screen and with these fingers tingling with shame . . .

THE MANAGER (*running his hands through his hair*). For Heaven's sake! What are you saying?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*crying out excitedly*). The truth! The truth!

THE MANAGER. It may be. I don't deny it, and I can understand all your horror, but you must surely see that you can't have this kind of thing on the stage. It won't go.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Not possible, isn't it? Very well, I'm much obliged to you, but I'm off.

THE MANAGER. Now be reasonable. Don't lose your temper.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. I won't stop here. I won't. I can see you've fixed it all up with him in your office. All this talk about what is possible for the stage. I understand. He wants to get at his complicated "cerebral drama" to have his famous remorses and torments acted, but I want to act my part, *my part.*

THE MANAGER (*annoyed, shaking his shoulders*). Ah! just your part. But, if you will pardon me, there are other parts than yours. His (*indicating the Father*) and hers (*indicating the Mother*). On the stage you can't have a character becoming too prominent and overshadowing all the others. The thing is to pack them all into a neat little framework and then act what is actable. I am aware of the fact that everyone has his own interior life which he wants very much to put forward. But the difficulty lies in this fact: to set out just so much as is necessary for the stage, taking the other characters into consideration, and at the same time hint at the unrevealed interior life of each. I am willing to admit, my dear young lady, that from your point of view it would be a fine idea if each character could tell the public all his trouble in a nice monologue or a regular one hour lecture (*good humoredly*). You must restrain yourself, my dear, and in your own interest too, because this fury of yours, this exaggerated disgust you show may make a bad impression you know.

After you have confessed to me that there were others before him at Madame Pace's and more than once . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*bowing her head, impressed*). It's true. But remember those others mean him for me all the same.

THE MANAGER (*not understanding*) What? The others? What do you mean?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. For one who has gone wrong, sir, he who was responsible for the first fault is responsible for all that follow. He is responsible for my faults, was, even before I was born. Look at him! and see if it isn't true!

THE MANAGER. Well, well. And does the weight of so much responsibility seem nothing to you? Give him a chance to act it, to get it over.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. How? How can he act all his "noble remorses" all his "moral torments" if you want to spare him the horror of being discovered one day — after he had asked her what he did ask her — in the arms of her, that already fallen woman, that child, sir, that child he used to watch come out of school? (*She is moved*).

(THE MOTHER *at this point is overcome with emotion, and breaks out into a fit of crying. All are touched. A long pause*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*as soon as the Mother becomes a little quieter, adds resolutely and gravely*). At present, we are unknown to the public. Tomorrow, you will act us as you wish, treating us in your own manner. But do you really want to see drama, do you want to see it flash out as it really did?

THE MANAGER. Of course. That's just what I do want so I can use as much of it as is possible.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Well then, ask that Mother there to leave us.

THE MOTHER (*changing her low plaint into a sharp cry*). No! No! Don't permit it Sir, don't permit it!

THE MANAGER. But it's only to try it.

THE MOTHER. I can't bear it. I can't.

THE MANAGER. But since it has happened already. I don't understand.

THE MOTHER. It's taking place now. It happens all the time. My torment isn't a pretended one. I live and feel every minute of my torture. Those two children there — have you heard them speak? They can't speak any more. They cling to me to keep my torment actual and vivid for me. But for themselves, they do not exist, they aren't any more. And she (*indicating Step-Daughter*) has run away, she has left me and is lost. If I now see her here before me, it is only to renew for me the tortures I have suffered for her too.

THE FATHER. The eternal moment! She (*indicating the Step-Daughter*)

is here to catch me, fix me, and hold me eternally in the stocks for that one fleeting and shameful moment of my life. She can't give it up and you sir, cannot either fairly spare me it.

THE MANAGER. I never said I didn't want to act it. It will form, as a matter of fact, the nucleus of the whole first act right up to her surprise. (*Indicates the Mother*).

THE FATHER. Just so. This is my punishment: the passion in all of us that must culminate in her final cry.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. I can hear it still in my ears. It's driven me mad that cry. — You can put me on as you like; it doesn't matter. Fully dressed if you like, provided I have at least the arms bare, because, standing like this (*she goes close to the Father and leans her head on his breast*) with my head so, and my arms round his neck, I saw a vein pulsing in my arm here; and then, as if that live vein had awakened disgust in me, I closed my eyes like this, and let my head sink on his breast. (*Turning to the Mother*). Cry out mother! cry out! (*Buries head in Father's breast, and with her shoulders raised as if to prevent her hearing the cry, adds in tones of intense emotion*). Cry out as you did then!

THE MOTHER (*coming forward to separate them*). No! My daughter, my daughter (*and after having pulled her away from him*). You brute! you brute! She is my daughter! Don't you see she's my daughter?

THE MANAGER (*walking backwards towards footlights*). Fine! fine! Damned good! And then, of course, curtain.

THE FATHER (*going towards him excitedly*). Yes, of course, because that's the way it really happened.

THE MANAGER (*convinced and pleased*). Oh, yes, no doubt about it. Curtain here, curtain.

(*At the reiterated cry of* THE MANAGER, THE MACHINIST *lets the curtain down, leaving the* MANAGER *and* THE FATHER *in front of it before the footlights*).

THE MANAGER. The darned idiot! I said curtain to show the act should end there, and he goes and lets it down in earnest (*to the Father, while he pulls the curtain back to go on to the stage again*). Yes, yes, it's all right. Effect certain. That's the right ending. I'll guarantee the first act at any rate.

(*To be concluded*).

LUIGI PIRANDELLO

(*Translated By Edward Storer*)

WILLIAM GROPPER

The Top Box

REPAST AND REPOSE

" I'll just fix up a little something quite nasty for your lunch " my landlady said with her best sick-room presence, " and I'll bring it up to you in bed, so as to keep you thoroughly uncomfortable. What crumbs get in the sheets you can brush them out (if you can reach them), or else shove them down with your feet."

" I'm sure your meal will be thoroughly unpalatable," I replied with a thankful smile, " especially to me in my strangely fussy attitude today. How *could* I expect that a person like you, so thoroughly undeveloped sensorially, to have any taste at all which I could respect ? But I am helpless ! Bring me up anything — provided it isn't hash or canned tomato."

These — or something very like them — were the words which made my landlady beam as she left me alone in the grip of the wall-paper.

I generally enjoy a light touch of fever, if the surroundings are pleasant. I flatter myself that it must be quite as entertaining as some furtive drug experiment, and it certainly gives one a delicate suggestion of madness. I feel temporarily in communion with the gentle souls of Gérard de Nerval and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. All manner of old fascinations creep upon me. Whenever the doctor finally tells me that I really should be in bed, at once a vivid, never-varied picture leaps into my inner eye : a window opening upon the end of a dark day of Spring. Upon the sill, a pot of all-but-scentless flowers. Smell of rain. Lamplight. And myself in bed, sometimes reading one of the old Gothic novels, sometimes dozing to indulge my imagination. The novel must be Gothic, charnel. In the strange realms of fever, the ordinary exultations of Shakespeare and Shelley, even of Blake, are too remote, too sane. I must have cruel, morbid emotions : wander through half-ruined abbeys, explore secret passages ending in grated doors, hear midnight shrieks, or witness some love-scene held by a new-made grave.

Except for Poe's, the best of all these novels is easily " Melmoth the Wanderer, " once held to be " among the most sublime creations of the human brain," easily ranking with " Manfred " and " Faust ! " Mrs. Radcliffe's " Mysteries of Udolpho " is very pleasing ; and who could not sympathize with her Adeline of the " Romance of the Forest ? " What won my heart was Adeline's method of entering a ruined abbey with her father :

" The partial gleams thrown across the fabric seemed to make its desolation more solemn, while the obscurity of the greater part of the pile heightened its sublimity, and led fancy on to scenes of horror. Adeline, who had hitherto re-

mained in silence, now uttered an exclamation of mingled admiration and fear. A kind of pleasing dread thrilled her bosom and filled all her soul. Tears started into her eyes :— she wished yet feared to go on. "

How the very sentences reverberate with the windy emptiness of the ruin ! . . . Here I lay the book down and close my eyes : in the rain-scented dusk my imagination raises for itself enormous black naves... Through them pass fantastic processions. . .

Yes, within reach I must have a shelf full of such books. " Jane Eyre " has some thrills not entirely vulgar. The Elizabethan tragedies, especially those of Webster and Tourneur are appallingly hypnotic. Nor should Thomas Lovell Beddoes's " Death's Jest Book " be forgotten, though it is as rambling and pointless in structure as the Gothic architecture of the novels.

Such things I like to read. And at the end, when my hand is no longer strong enough to hold the book, when the dusk is blotted out and my flame-colored curtains are lighted only by my mellow lamp, I lay the book aside, take a last spoonful of medicine, and extinguish the light. Then, alone and in darkness, I put out from the violet wharves of sleep, thrilled with a pleasing dread. . .

Such, as I conceive it, is the ideal fever : amusing, and not unprofitable ; for some day I may collect enough dreams to fill a novel or play of my own.

But the present reality — ah ! always this present reality ! — is far from ideal.

The wall-paper out in the hallway is of grey roses with brown stems and leaves. That alone seduced me into taking my room at this house : it seemed so impossibly, so fantastically sordid. But the wall-paper of my own room far surpasses it as a neurotic masterpiece. It is a heavy network thrown over me, an old network, covering the ceiling, sick with the diseases of all its victims. Its ropes are blighted and flaked with particles of design which quickly resolve into small animals, crawling staticly in all directions. When one gas-jet blares its fluted blue, such wall-paper hints grimly of murder. Most murders occur in rooms just like this.

A knock ; and the help enters, shrilling :

" Mrs. Brown wants t'know if y're feelin' better, and would you like some warmed up hash. She's cleanin' the cellar today, and it would save time, if y' don't mind. "

Ah, hands rinsed too briefly from the pail of grey waters !

" Yes, I suppose so ! " and I accept the inevitable nourishment, trying to believe that nothing would taste good today, no matter what it is.

S. Foster Damon

DEDICATED TO THE ENEMY

(Concluded)

XI

For the onlooker, the sage, to change his mind — to be able to see all sides to all questions — to hunt with both hare and hounds — maybe this is all good and proper.

For the man of purpose — whatever his purpose may be — it is fatal.

All Action can be argued to be fatal and a pity — yet it is obvious that as we are often given to action when sick of over-contemplation (a sickness which to the sages I must admit is rather reprehensible) — when we do turn to action — or rather when our meditation and our studies and the like would make to move that which we love — would move it from obscurity into the light and life of day — let us make it move hugely, slowly, and grandly . . . why else move it?

To do this, then, even the artist meditator, while falling short of being even a sage, must not change his mind's eye. That, like the eye of the pilot, must be unchangeably fixed upon the sea, the sky, and the boat.

Our boat is our fixed purpose; moving ever on, yet fixed; and we our selves have constructed it. Our seas and skies the all but ever restless existence created by mankind.

We have to steer this boat of ours across the seven seas and through to port.

And then gaping mouths and puckered brows ask whiningly why we don't take them into our ship — our plan —: why we took them for a year and then marooned them for treachery or landed them safely in some pretty port because of laziness.

We do not change our mind in such matters.

Be they pretty ladies or remarkable men — once they have shown by some mean act that they are out on their voyage for their own advantages, ready to seize these and leave us any day in the lurch — one man or one woman, *one hand*, less, then we land these amiable and ever so righteous self-seekers to seek for themselves where they like, but no more at our ship's expense.

Has one of our crew married a wife, and is she bent on personal success

at the expense of us all, and does she persuade her husband to follow her lead? . . . this lady Macbeth in little and her little man must go on land — no room for that kind of little ambition with us.

And this may seem to some people very hard-hearted of us . . . cruel . . . terrible.

I have heard a good deal about our plan being hard and cruel — inhuman. It is fixed, our purpose, yet moves ever onwards. It is human as possible. Only one thing is not allowed . . . and that is any form of treachery, no matter how fair and friendly the veils be to our eyes.

Family and friends are in times of meditation and in times of peace lovely and companionable . . . but sometimes something turns family and friends into awful little traitors in times of action and bustle.

It's just a natural nervousness become hysterical which has gone and lost its way — look ye there.

As in these other enterprises the Obstructors have to be swept aside, and ruthlessly, so must we deal with those of our family or friends if they offer obstruction open or Jesuitical to our plans . . . to our fixed purpose.

To give my particular inimical friends full credit, they seldom offer obstruction openly. Their method is to show indignation and gentle regret, . . . that stamp of imitation Christianity which threatens to destroy the real Christianity itself.

Indignation that I know what is wanted — regret that I state it deliberately — sorrow that my purpose should be fixed and unalterable — pique that I have excluded them from my plans (my plans which are merely a purpose).

Really, this is a little incredible.

If I were wealthy — worked to be rich — and cut off my friends and relations with a stage shilling . . . then I could understand their mood. But when all my possession is solely in my fixed purpose, and that one really not far off from an ideal — that they should expect anything of me except my contempt in exchange for their underhand obstruction is a bright idea, and original anyhow.

XII

My last word will be a plea.

Be a little more careful, I beg you, not to misrepresent me and my friends to the People. We have chosen a difficult, not the easiest, way. Have we shirked any discomfort and any sacrifices that were to be made for our Theatre? Have we more to sacrifice? . . . only say so and we can attempt it. But don't misrepresent us. Century after century we are always the same . . . you must say that we are faithful.

You get cross with us sometimes for nothing.

If we say we want applause to cease in Theatres you don't give it a moment's thought, and you fail to give the matter careful investigation. If you thought and enquired you would find that the very people whom you imagine love applause, hate it. If you are a member of society you applaud a celebrated Jenny Lind, and set her up as your example of how a public favourite feels about such things . . . for you think she adores it. But Princess Pauline Metternich tells us in her Memoirs that Jenny Lind at the end of a song, when the applause was frantic, raised her hand saying " Please don't applaud. I have always disliked applause and fuss and it was to avoid them that I left the stage so soon. "

If you are a Socialist you applaud the name of Mazzini just as crowds once applauded the man. " Absurd applause, " says Mazzini himself of the custom.

And if you will only think a while longer and enquire into the past you will find most of my proposals in this book are reasonable, and that many of them can be found put into practice, or longed to be practised, by the best of our fellow workers in the past : by the great names you justly honour.

And so it would be an easy matter — and a reasonable one — to put them once more into practice.

Whereas, the proposals which are new — the hints I give to bring us a new Theatre — these need not so much your thought or careful enquiry as your courage. Courage to accept them . . . for it is only your fear which causes you to reject them and so to lose something . . . and courage to urge that they be put immediately into practice. Show courage towards me and you do no harm and much good to the People and most of all to yourself.

For if you do not show courage in this, my ideas will die with me — for no one but myself can possibly carry them into execution. Of this I am quite sure.

And you — are you not beginning to suspect it too ? You thought ten years ago that any young and intelligent and enthusiastic follower of mine could be persuaded, encouraged, and paid to bring out " Craig's ideas " as they are called.

Reinhardt comes : you thought you had the ideas then — and cheaply. The Russian Ballet : — you still think they brought you something of the kind . . . and hardly a month passes but some new and crazy adventurer appears in Rome, Paris, London or New York and you nudge yourself and fancy you are going to get my ideas at last — and cheaply — and without obligation to me.

But are you not beginning to see that you are no nearer the solution —

and that the problem you thought so easy is not to be solved until you turn to me and empower me to solve it in whatever way seems best to me?

And I think you know by this time that I will only show my work in future in a theatre of my own.

I was five to six times asked by Reinhardt to enter his admirable theatre and produce a play as I wished to see it produced. I did not do so — and I will do no such thing. "What, you won't produce a play as you wish to see it produced!" . . . I seem to hear the scream. Calmly, please. I never said any such bosh. I said I will not enter another man's theatre and do it. I will do it only in my own theatre. Is that clear? Do you know the old song beginning

Will you walk into my parlour...

You are strange people. You blame me for not taking into their theatres the very things which I am keeping for you so that you may have them intact in mine. In their theatres the ideas would be pulled limb from limb. Is it not so? — and what are they worth in pieces? You see what they are worth for you have them in pieces: . . . yet your public raves over them — that's the queerest thing of all. Yes, you are a strange people.

You don't go on in that way about paintings, do you? Perhaps you do — but it seems to me that when you are purchasing paintings for the National Gallery you are very careful to buy an original, a genuine Bellini, or an authentic Van Dyck. I never heard of the National Gallery preferring to purchase AN IMITATION of one of the panels of a triptych by Memling to the genuine three panels. Did you? And yet that's exactly the whole English policy in regard to nearly all theatrical works of art. If it *can* get the imitation it seems delighted. "The original was too expensive" is the feeble reply which is nearly always offered. Which is obviously only the excuse vamped up in the confusion of the moment when the purchasers see what a hash they've made of the whole transaction.

And now, because I have not given you a text book called "Craig's Ideas, and how to put each one of them into practice," do not misrepresent the book and me by saying that I am unpractical.

If I haven't given you the whole of my Ideas the modern theatre holds proof that I've given you some, and that these are put into execution.

I give you some more here. Don't be churlish and ask with some show of a grievance why I've not given you all. I think it's your turn to do something.

The attempt to antagonize the artist by throwing ever one more obstacle in his path :

(A) By rejecting what he has to bring ; by doing this beyond the regulation time limit :

(B) by supporting one foreigner the more :

(C) by not empowering him to work :

(D) by criticising the work they have not seen :

(E) by praising turpitudes :

(F) and by numerous other methods the which roll away from my mind like the famous water does off the infamous duck's back . . .

this attempt to antagonize him does succeed — for a short while. And it is necessary to his progress that this be so.

But as it does not succeed in doing *more* than this — and since he merely resorts to blockade — and you get no genuine goods into England — is it wise to fool away the time turning the artist into Aunt Sally . . . and failing to hit him every time ?

Who would not willingly serve as so British a figure to real sportsmen : but I ask myself, is this sort of thing real sport ? is it playing the game ? . . . and I leave you to answer what concerns me no longer.

E. Gordon Craig

AFTER AND BEYOND DADA

Art continues to be a losing proposition, financially, in Paris as well as in Chicago or New York. Let us have done with the old-fashioned slogan that American papas have always chanted: "A young man has got to be self-supporting". The significant books of the spring season in France have been published, largely at their authors' expense; while the Pierre Benoîts, the Binet-Valmers, the Léon Daudets, continue to draw fat salaries.

France, possessing splendid youthful material, is undergoing a dangerous period of bigotry, chauvinism, intolerance. Her younger artists and writers are driven to the wall for a moment. But the battle is always more exhilarating here; there is more surplus youthful truculence to enlist, and the intransigent minority gives least quarter . . .

The appearance of three or four new books by the younger and less tradition-bound of the French writers is an indication of a renewed lease of life after the demise of Dada. There is no doubt that the more forceful and spirited young men were intrigued for several years by the Dada affair. After much argument over the feeble pulse and the attenuated heart beats of the expiring "movement", Messrs. Philippe Soupalt, Louis Aragon, and Paul Eluard, once staunch adherents, publish new books which they would have written Dada or no Dada.

"Dada has run its course, has served its purpose," they say in effect. "It was very exciting while it lasted, but it is about time to have done with it."

Through bombast, dynamite, blague, vilification, impertinence much headway had been made against the unwholesome tendency of present-day France to develop within its own past, to produce within the limits set by the 90s or the 19th century, to grow, in short, like an ingrown toe-nail.

The hunt is now on for "purity" of form and content, while expressing the distinctive modern attitude developed in post-war Europe. Among the drastic young writers this attitude is negation (you believe in neither God nor country) and thanks to negation, a ridiculous credulousness in ever so many trivial and touching things is vaunted, an inclination toward the idiotic mirth provided by the rushing crowded cacaphony of modern existence. The writer arms himself with new material. There is no logical direction or growth. It is rather that many unexpected zones of experience have been discovered to him within the monstrous expansion of human activity, and he is concerned for the moment

with reaching for and gathering these impressions, *being cognitive rather than selective*.

An instance of this search for fresh booty is the strong leaning for purely American elements in the new literature. The contemporary American flora and fauna are collected, in an arbitrary fashion, out of the inimitable films, the newspaper accounts, the jazz band, on the hunch that the world is on its way to being Americanized in the next two decades. Although the quality of the new poetry is so formidably different from its predecessors, as to be distracting, the play of the intellect is dominant — intellect, of course, freed from the syllogism as well as from empiricism, therefore naked plundering intellect, in astonishing encounters and adventures.

Westwego Philippe Soupalt's new book, is a single poem of some four hundred lines. The new " cultural elements ", as an archaeologist would term them, are introduced with the soft pedal. Their novelty does not divert the attention from the extraordinary freshness and simplicity of his manner. Employing the medium of free verse as he does, there is no shock of the bizarre as in Paul Morand or Cocteau, where the exotic is painfully hunted for. The quick insolent mind of Soupault springs into laughter that is neither of sophistication nor of naivete.

But best of all he retains with his new media the gift of song :

sur les bords de la Tamise
un beau matin de février
trois anglais en bras de chemise
s'égosillaient à chanter
trou la la trou la la trou la laire

This lyric which occurs in the course of the long poem is reminiscent of the most delicious and most nonsensical of his *Chansons*, still unpublished. One thinks of Blake because Soupault's French verses almost suggest the tonic English accent. The spoken word here achieves its utmost vigor and purity with an ease that is happy and un-laboured.

Mary Daisy Poppy
petites flammes
dans ce bar sans regard . . .
marchons pour être sots
courrons pour être gais
rions pour être forts

Soupault's images are the products of sophisticated senses, but they protrude no jarring reverberations and their cerebral character is scarcely perceptible :

Je me promenais à Londres un été
les pieds brûlants et le coeur dans les yeux
près des murs noirs près des murs rouges
près des grands docks
où les policemen géants
sont piqués commes des points d'interrogations

Westwego should be read at one sitting in fifteen minutes. It is too simple and limpid to be translated, too sustained to be quoted from. Its only apparent weakness is its closeness to the Apollinaire of *Alcools* and *Caligrammes,* the " voyageur, voyageur ! " and the ever changing panorama of the globe-trotter. At that Guillaume Apollinaire was far more uneven. With the same impulsive equipment he fell more frequently into mediocre writing which the more scrupulous Soupault fails to disclose. Philippe Soupault is significant in that he formulates tendencies in poetry toward which Apollinaire groped spontaneously.

Philippe Soupault may never reach America despite his great urge to visit the United States. However, we may never have quite the same expatriated American note that tinkles in certain of the younger French poets.

The work of Paul Eluard in *Répétitions* undergoes evolutions toward one of its later stages — perfection ; at least for those who are familiar with his earlier work. His curiously crystalized poems are a strange outgrowth among the common garden flowers. From the exaggerated air of detachment, all the way to the faultless typographical arrangement of each poem on the printed page it is a provoking, an arresting book. Eluard has worked exquisitely deep into his own corner, into his personal idiom. Here, poety is no more representative or descriptive than a Lipschitz sculpture. The *formal* aspects of the poems are as thought-provoking as the imagist recordings of Amy Lowell are boring. The poet ceases to be Nature's *stenographer.*

The Eluard method is fascinating : to take banal phrases, words that occur a thousand times in daily speech and juxtapose them into patterns of contrast, harmony, obliqueness, etc. The manner is deliberate enough, and is carried off with great deftness.

LA MORT DANS LA CONVERSATION

Qui a votre visage
La bonne et la mauvaise
La belle imaginable
Gymnastique à l'infini
Dépassant en mouvements
Les couleurs et les baisers
Les grands gestes la nuit.

Poetry for poetry's sake, you will say. Poetry becomes a sort of mad mathematic with Eluard At intense moments he attains a brilliance and volume that is not of science. But more often the line of thought is mechanical, tortured and tragic. A characteristic passage is : " The sacrificed make a gesture which means nothing amid the lace-work of all the other gestures, imaginary, of five or six, toward the place of repose where there is no one. Agreed that they have taken refuge in the naked branches of a desperate politeness, tree-tops, clipped by gusts of wind. Take, cords of life. Could you take more liberties ? " Or this :

SOLEIL TREMBLANT

Signal vide et signal à l'éventail d'horloge
Aux caresses unies d'une main sur le ciel
Aux oiseaux entrouvrant le livre des aveugles
Et d'une aile après l'autre entre cette heure et l'autre
Dessinant l'horizon faisant tourner les ombres
Qui limitent le monde quand j'ai les yeux baissés

Paul Eluard attains full growth in this, his fourth volume of poems. The daring method of his earlier work attracted comment, amazement, mockery. Despite the perfection of *Répétitions*, it, like Soupault's book is received silently in Paris, where Paul Morand's *Ouvert la Nuit* has just gone through twenty (20) editions in three weeks.

" It only remains for Eluard to fire a revolver at his poetic talent, " said Tzara. The domain of pure poetry contracts, indeed, with every fresh raid, into narrower and narrower confines.

If poetry is approaching its incommensurable limits, prose is merely beginning to open its eagle wings and " mew its mighty youth ". It is becoming clear that a novel need not absolutely have a social message nor a short story have a plot in order to be artistic. It is just as possible to dispense with these elements as to use them admirably.

Of two new books published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* the one, Paul Morand's *Ouvert la Nuit*, proves my thesis negatively, the other, *Télémaque* by Louis Aragon, positively. Morand seeking this time to outdo Conrad in romantic adventure, in shifting panorama, bizarre cafes in Constantinople or Berlin, and throbbing modernity in the dining cars of the Compagnie des Wagons-Lits et des Grands Express Européens, appeals to a large audience, his book being disseminated in thoroughly American fashion with a pink jacket reproducing the laudatory press comments. The " modern " note is attempted by means of harsh metallic phrases which reverse habitual thought-associations. The disagreable aspect of Morand is his pretension of style by

virtue of the impurities of language which he resorts to. The press critics have spoken eloquently enough of his " modernity ". His is, at any rate, a much more vicious tendency than that of Pierre Benoît. Blah! Give us more Zane Grey.

Louis Aragon in *Télémaque*, a type of " roman poètique ", has made a considerable advance upon his first precocious novel, *Anicet*. *Télémaque* has swift movement, is rich in incident, and its characters are accomplished personnages who speak in an exalted and floridly-figured diction ; but these elements are vehicles for the poet. In the negation of all beliefs the mind voyages through many troubling moods and planes of complete bereftness of the tangible universe. The conceptions of time and extension vanish before the impassioned questioning of the poet, and memories of distinct trivial wounding moments return. There are lovely recitatives of this type discovered in a succession of bottles found at sea which interrupt the progression of the " novel ". For Aragon, the language yields too easily, falls too felicitously into broad and luxurious chords. In Joyce's *Ulysses* there are flights of language and innovations in the technique of prose which stimulate reflection upon the ultimate destiny of the prose novel. *Ulysses* is an eloquent and disorganized masterpiece. *Télémaque* a far smaller book is written with an equal fertility of styles, in turn insolent, cerebral, florid and euphuistic. The book observes an intrinsic organization, from which it breaks at the end upon a note of complete abandon — the agonized escape of the mind.

The spectacle of French letters in the City of Light rolls on. The Prix Goncourt and the other Prix Balzac-Bazaharoff, Catulle Mendès, etc. come and go. If we are to have literary subsidies in America, Heaven preserve us from such scenes as attended the donation of the all important Prix Goncourt where the vote was so evenly divided that three or four novels appeared with jackets that brazenly announced how closely the author had come to clutching the coveted prize. The award was finally tendered a negro. René Maran, for his *Batouala* which subsequently swam into the enormous publicity and circulation which attends the award of this soiled prize. The book is a polemic on the eternally stupefying race question, with suitable tracts of horror and debauchery. Mr. Ezra Pound finds occasion to chuckle over the fact that the Prix Goncourt novel of 1922 will never get through the American mails. It is, nevertheless, much sadder than that. Americans may well be spared this crowned book which is as doctrinaire as a Woodrow Wilson note, and of less artistic merit. The significant writing of this generation in France is more likely to be welcomed in New York than in official Paris in its present frame of mind.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

COMMENT

The cabinet of Doctor Caligari

I don't like this film. Why ?
Because it is a film of misapprehension.
Because it is a film that casts discredit on all modern Art.
Because it is hybrid, hysterical, unwholesome.
Because it is not cinema.

Film of misapprehension because it is faked and dishonest.

Casts discredit on modern Art because the discipline of modern painters (cubist) is not the hypersensibility of madmen but equilibrium, intensity, and mental geometry.

Hybrid, hysterical, unwholesome because it is hybrid, hysterical, unwholesome (vive the cow boys !)

Is not cinema because :

1. The pictorial deformations are only tricks (new modern conventions) ;
2. real characters in unreal sets ;
3. the deformations are not optical and do not depend on the angle of taking, nor on the objective, nor on the lens, nor on the focus ;
4. there is never any unity ;
5. theatrical ;
6. movement but no rhythm ;
7. no purification of the technique, all the effects obtained by the aid of means belonging to painting, music, literature, etc. One is never aware of the Camera.
8. sentimental and not visual ;
9. good photography, good lighting, superexcellent acting.
10. Good business.

Blaise Cendrars

The short review of *Dr. Caligari's Cabinet* given above provides a curious contrast to the reaction of most American modern artists and critics to the same film. It is not an isolated French opinion, but is typical of the attitude of contemporary modern French artists. We heard half-a-dozen times : " A third grade American movie is better than this. "

The explanation is partly due to the sharp demarcation between scientific French post-impressionism and intuitional German expressionism and partly

is owing to the American presbyopia when the art products of his own country are in question. Cendrars only differs from many in that his dislike is explicit, due to his having directed films himself.

Nevertheless, the French public thronged the house nightly, even though Philippe Soupault, representing the erst-while Dadaists, alone of critics saw fit to praise it.

The Book of American Negro Poetry. Edited by JAMES WELDON JOHNSON (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York).

Harlem Shadows by CLAUDE MACKAY (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York).

Though Mr. Johnson claims too much for his coloured kinsmen, and in his preface comes near to attributing to them the best in American poetry, he has nevertheless compiled an anthology which has every right to exist. The poets represented run from Paul Lawrence Dunbar to moderns like Fenton Johnson and Claude McKay. The principal characteristics of this poetry, much of which is written in the negro dialect, are a very simple directness, a Salvation Army kind of Christianity which sometimes become maudlin, and a certain childishness. Mr. Johnson rebuts this charge of childishness levelled against the negro, but it exhales from this anthology, and is often indeed one of its charms. The first and best characteristic, that of simple directness, is to be found in only a few of the poems. Mr. Johnson in his preface goes so far as to say that the negro has been " the creator of the only things artistic that have sprung from American soil and have been universally acknowledged as distinctive American products. " Such overstatements weaken the effect of his interesting preface. Mr. Claude McKay in his volume *Harlem Shadows* shows to much better advantage than he does in the selections made in the anthology of Negro poetry. There the editor has stressed the verses dedicated to race antagonism. McKay's purely lyrical talent is seen at its best in such simple touching pictures as the *Easter Flowers On Broadway, The City's Love.*

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Books Received.

Heavens. By LOUIS UNTERMEYER (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York).

Civilization in the United States. By THIRTY AMERICANS. (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York).

Ouvert la Nuit. By PAUL MORAND (Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française).

Anita. By E. SCUDDER (Blackwell, Oxford, England).

The Little Death. By IRENE FORBES MOSSE. Translated by Mrs. HENRY HEAD (Allen, Unwin, London).

ERNESTO FRATONI, *Gerente responsabile.*

Printed in Italy by « L'Universelle » Imprimerie Polyglotte — Roma.

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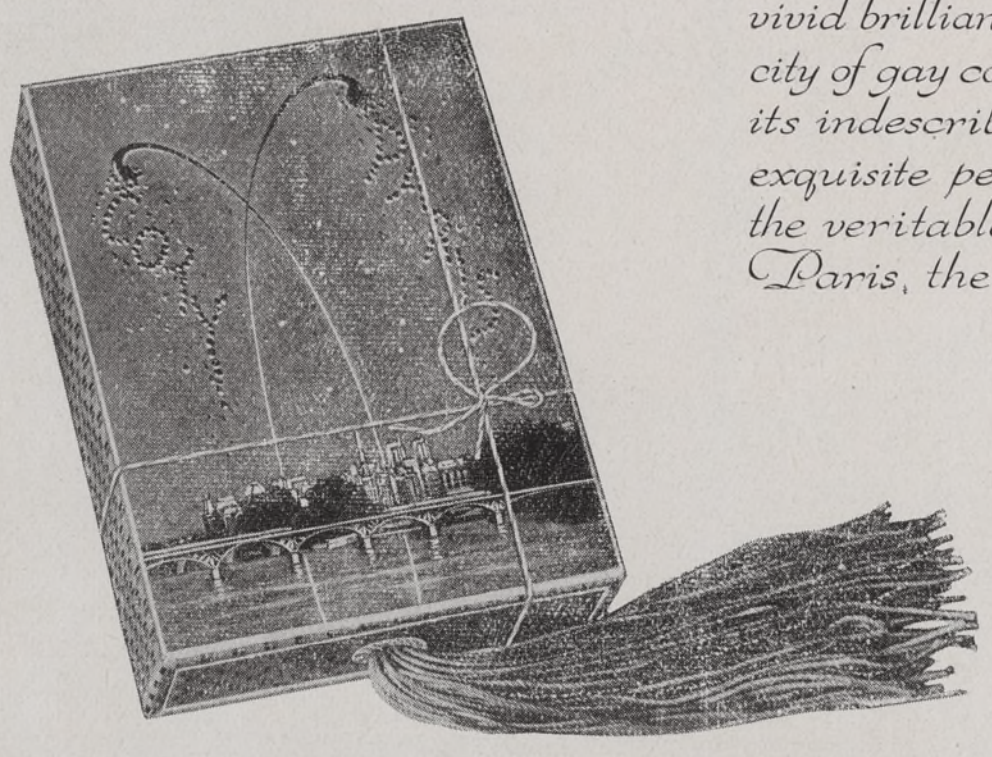

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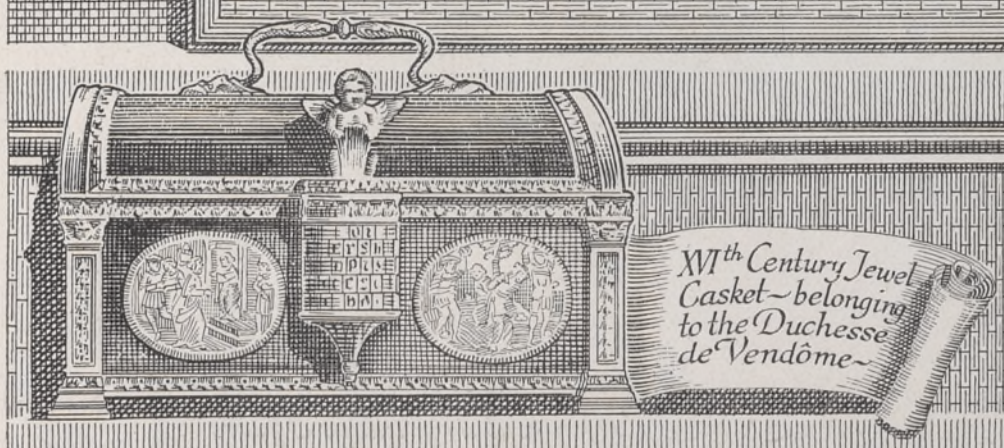

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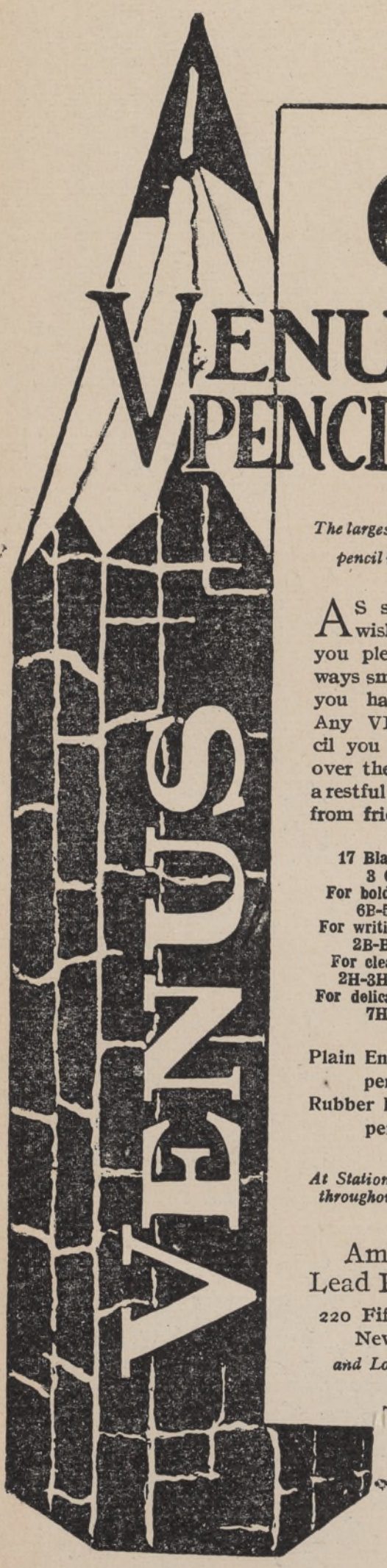

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