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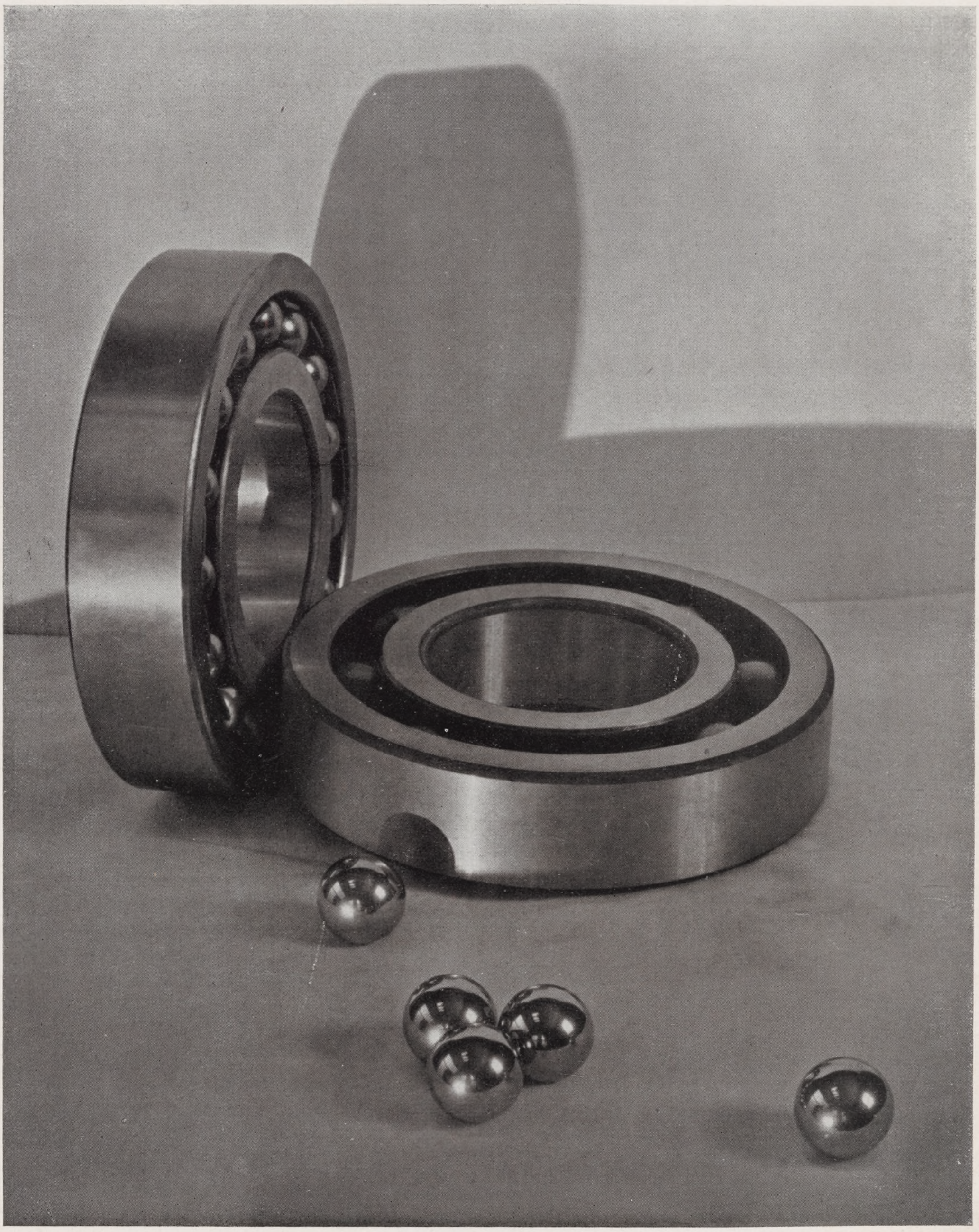

WHEN ALL IS ENDED . . .

A STORY WITH A MORAL

My name is Grindor, Clement Grindor, and it seems that I was once the son of a man who stood in the public eye. Paris with its carriages, its ladies and its thousand lights per second lay sweetly upon my brows like a garland of flowers. I had a mistress, a rather will-o-the-wispish one, set free by special grace of the moon's influence; the objects we found were transformed at the touch of her wand. A bouquet became a kodak and served to photograph the fugitive words which escaped at the pace of a mowing-machine encountered at the *place de la Bourse* (I forget just what it looked like) and I could cite many other instances of her wizardry. Eléonore F. had several lovers with whom I got along very well, and at times we all made excursions together to the outskirts of Paris where we lunched in the woods or on the banks of a river. One of these men was the famous B. . . whose history you are doubtless quite familiar with.

"What! B. . .?"

Yes, none other than B. . . He was unforgettable when he sang naughty ballads and would entertain us until far into the night when we passed on to philosophical discussions, in which Eléonore shone with extraordinary brilliance. Maurice, whom we nick-named *Mau-la-Sagesse* took pleasure in provoking us into personal confessions out of which he drew the most fascinating conclusions.

The oldest of us was twenty years of age, and we all still retained the character assumed at school: one the enthusiast, another the skeptic, Mau, who treated us as his pawns, aroused mental conflicts which brewed trouble: nights, you know, when we lost all faith in the integrity of our system, and even the informed insolence of our youth and sound health failed us. These were crises from which we emerged most often only to be re-united by a tragic sense of our differences and of the dark instincts which a light whistle could summon up from the abyss. Each time our friendship hung in the balance, seemed lost forever; but our hunger for it was so great that we always came back to our first principles. This faith in each other, so precarious the while, came to be as vital to us as breathing.

We became so inured at this time to the atmosphere of drama that we came to love it and cultivate it for its own sake. There was not a move made, not a gesture, which did not serve to arouse our common mistrust and which we did not pass up without demanding the motive and justification thereof. Little by little that which we agreed upon in debate became dogma. We began to imitate each other's way of thinking, a mental direction which multiplied the snares and fallacies about us. Thus, there was introduced into our existence an accelerated motion whose effect was not long to be awaited.

There is nothing easier if there are eight of you, than to become convinced of the superiority of one form of life over another. We began to despise the long happy lives that we used to envy, and one night we held a trial of all human motives. The kind of terrorist sincerity that gripped us led us, naturally, to reject with horror all utilitarian motives, and since we denied all truth, we were dominated by a sense of absolute moral reality for which some of us were to pay some day with our lives.

The only real things that seemed to persist were such personal accidents as the mind ignores: a birth mark on B. . .'s shoulder, Maurice's way of swallowing the ends of his sentences when he spoke, and my habitual gesture before I sat down. We spent days observing what men called happiness and paid pedagogical visits to society, the Folies-Bergères, the Louvre, what-not. But finally we gave up these random investigations quite fatigued, and certain that we had seen it all before. This lassitude of ours, so easy for others to judge from outside, was not that which was called *blasé* twenty years ago. There was nothing sparkling about us at this time, but neither could we put out of mind the cruel intellectual plan by which all seemed futile and vain. Our judgments were constantly made upon a scale of the infinite, and this infiniteness crushed us.

How could we have accepted the common happy lot of the people of our time who found in Auguste Comte the peace that came of rejecting all metaphysical problems? Born to prefer desperate adventures to the stolid patience which was soon to end in the election of a Raymond Poincaré as President of the Republic, we would have instantly thrown the fate of a thousand lives into the balance against the career of this citizen. It was thus that we launched ourselves into the affair of the automobile. We conceived it all rather vaguely at first and we pressed each other to make clear the exact nature of the plan. For several days we stood ready with all the weapons in our hands, but shuddered to hasten a doubtful catastrophe. . . . It was B. . . who took it upon himself to un-bolt the machinery. I tried to restrain him to the last.

"I am in the hands of destiny," he said. "I am the princess sworn to find the needle in the haystack and peril incites me to tempt peril."

A great argument arose among us over the allotment of the various parts. Once more everything seemed about to fall apart.

"Go", cried B. . ., "your hearts are soap bubbles. I can see easily enough the cause of all the trouble: you do not fear half so much the outcome of this enterprise as you do the idea of a criminal act against everything you have been taught to revere since childhood. I have noticed before this, how, rather than follow your natural inclinations toward what you consider good, you make dogma of all I believe in; perhaps in the hope of some greatness to come. But how can you help recognizing in your hesitations, your remorse, the shameful return of traditional virtue?"

It was Mau-la-Sagesse who replied to him: "If I did not love you as much as I do, how odious you would be to me! This eternal worry about analysis. The same old testing and questioning carried out, with all your well-known subtlety of perception. What about this tacit acceptance of all your acts which you condemn at the same moment that you demand it? You don't want us to discuss this dangerous project at all, then. . ."

"I do not mean" retorted B. . . fiercely, "to engage anybody to follow me: but how could we have the right to commit such an act if not by this sense of greatness of which I just spoke, which brings us every day nearer to this unfathomable, unseen end which is our only objective. Yes, and you know you all agree with me: cruelty, felony, audacity will change their meanings in the eyes of men; their opposites are weakness, weakness and weakness. Nothing but excess merits our enthusiasm and if it bring us nothing but hatred now, it will doubtless reward us sooner or later with a more durable love. Must our conduct alway be determined by the reactions of others? I must feel sure that all of my words, that all of my deeds are lost to the world. With me the deluge!" This fury with which he rose against himself, which made him scorn his own interests for the sake of some absurd exploit, could scarcely leave us cold to his project. What an irresistible ascendance he held over us, even over Mau-la-Sagesse—that is what I wanted to show in giving to such length the words of B. . . on the eve of the decisive day. How could we abandon him? His smile was what ruined us. None of us could escape him when he made that inimitable gesture of the hand with which he shook off ideas and the ashes of his cigar.

Like a new sun over the world, the yellow automobile rushed out suddenly along the rue Ordener: we mounted it with a drunken stoicism

which swept aside all other considerations. With the murder of the receiving teller we entered into a strange light in which our life was intensified. You have read our history in the newspapers of the period, even though you were still a student then. But what they never told you about was the pause between two enterprises when we ate our repast, brimming with gaiety as we read the *Petit Parisien,* and what not? We shall not speak of the dreary moments. Sleep. Ever since the pillage of the Chantilly post-office B. . . became for us the hero that he was for historians of the time. You can scarcely imagine his sweetness and the tranquillity which followed his exaltations. We had no idea of how he was to die. He was an angel of destiny: he traversed the world like a flaming torch—of righteousness itself, one might have said. However, thanks to numerous aides we pursued our course as we willed and evaded the pursuit organized against us. A miracle of speed: we were drunk with our impunity. We left a trail of bloody encounters along our route. Out of the human seas, we drained, as we went, immense wealth, terror and an increasing tumult, a growing vertigo. On this mad course which did not last longer than to light up the world as with a ruddy flame, we lived a complete existence, never ceasing to be astonished at it, like people who are always conscious of having survived a dizzy equilibrium, miraculously re-established.

France, Europe, and soon the two continents turned their eyes with anguish toward the corner of the earth where a meteor had exploded. Stupefaction succeeded the horror aroused at first by our early "crimes," and then admiration itself. They began to feel vaguely what game we were up to: a handful of men on the globe had unleashed one of the greatest intellectual earth-quakes of history. The vast clamor of an outraged society could not drown the voice of Mau-la-Sagesse, whose doctrines were commented on even in the provincial cafes. The fatality of some mis-step, I could not help telling this to B. . ., would bring us the vague glory of heroes, the imbecilic lot bestowed upon us already by the "thinkers:" for at this time the dramatists preferred the glory of Catiline to the brilliance of the *prix Montyon* races.

"Sooner or later you will become the hero of text-books, an example like all the others; posterity will remember you for your courage. Ultimately there will adhere to your aureole the moral elements which you sought to destroy. Beyond all regard for human life, generous sympathies will be created for you: you will be given shelter by free spirits. What a pretentious grandeur! We shall have been your fanatics. One more Christ in the picture. . ."

B. . . replied with unheard of violence, that he was quite sure that I was wrong, that the imminent catastrophe would be definitive, and that we had already sunk incredibly in the minds of men, and their opinion of us would never, never be revised. But I saw clearly that I had touched the sore-spot and that a new anxiety gripped my comrades. They suddenly doubted their profound motives. That night at the house of a girl who hid us I remarked the sombre air of our chief. B. . . suddenly threw himself upon our hostess, took her by the head, and opening her eyelids with his fingers, cried: "Tell me why you are not going to deliver us to the police?" You should have seen the savage expression on his face as he plunged his gaze into the suspect eyes. You should have seen this, to understand the dumb and secret joy that pulsed suddenly in my veins. Something was born in me which was soon to take shape.

I had, all told, sacrificed my life. Nothing was dearer to me in this world than my companions in danger and our common ideals, not even my own life. It is, perhaps, well to keep this in mind. For a singular contradiction arose in me: I found it infinitely voluptuous to contemplate the destruction of all that I loved. Such a disaster (and as we became legendary figures of prey and our lives took the semblance of apostles) — such a disaster would have rendered me the mental freedom I had abjured. The desire grew in me to commit the act which would be truly indefensible from all points of view, and in shaking B. . .'s faith I had already tasted the perfidious alcohol, the exquisiteness of losing all that we cherish. These days B. . . never stopped talking of possible betrayals. It almost seemed that he did this intentionally. We scrutinized the people at whose mercy we occasionnally found ourselves as with the hope of discovering the ultimate Judas. This spirit of hunted beasts that we bore became completely unbearable. Our raids became more frequent, more febrile, more ferocious. We became like muffled machines. But I, little by little, I, who felt growing in me the consciousness of offering myself in a supreme challenge of heroism, segregated myself from the collective body foraging in forbidden terrain, took note of the antipathy between my individuality and that of the others, in short, re-discovered my identity. One pleasant evening, I realized that a demon was nourished in me; the desire to betray. Faith, the basis of our adventure, seemed to me an ignoble idealism, a weakness after the manner of pity. This misunderstanding could not exist much longer.

The stupidity with which the police permitted us to escape from the trap set at the house of someone's mistress is well remembered. There were four days more during which every one of the words I dropped was a

marvel of dissimulation. I lived in a restrained exaltation. At last, the moment arrived. Through my aid, two of our numbers had already lost their lives, and the police came to lay siege to the estate of the millionaire anarchist who had given us refuge. When the assailants bursting from the shelter of their hay-wagon thought to have triumphed, fire robbed them of the body of the last survivor of the adventure, B. . . the Titan, who died like Joan of Arc, my dear sir, like Joan of Arc, as his enemies recoiled in horror. The Prefecture had promised to spare me, and helped me disappear. And so the trial of my confederates was carried out without my being even cited as a witness. I bore away with me my secret, the secret of the act without which, you can see, our whole enterprise would have amounted to nothing, nothing but a miserable comedy of revolt such as men are prone to undertake from time to time. As for myself, I bore in me the worm of all greatness.

What should I do? Implore the world that I had assailed to restore me to a position that fitted me? I was given to understand that this was possible only under certain conditions. But I revolted at being confronted with such hypocrisy, which did not deceive me at all. In fact, all of my sympathies were with those whom I had betrayed, and I found my situation extraordinary enough: disdaining those who wished to aid me, unable to return to the few people whom I really respected, with no confidence in anybody I fell into a solitude more hopeless than ever man lost in a trackless desert had known. I maintained contact with the police, using them, and they me. They gave me powers which I enjoyed, and as for them they considered me a decoy. Thus began a strange career which embraced the lives of the most diverse men and women, and so mysteriously conducted that no one could follow my trail. I arrived here, and this passer-by whom I had never known saw his whole destiny altered by my hands. There developed in me a fearful taste for human experience. But what was it I sought? The same state of mind, the same tense moment, the same mechanism. Only one thing attracted me, fascinated me, and I would have given everything to evoke it continually. I desired to behold again and again the weakness I had experienced in myself, this supreme treason which was born, I was convinced, at the very moment when man's instincts surpassed the limits of his affection for another. I left no stone unturned to observe men at this stage of sincerity. For years I penetrated into peaceful existences and sowed passions and fevers. Yes, I was a real decoy: the result mattered little to me, so long as I encountered along my route some child with a pure heart, an ardent heart; you can be sure that I was there to taste of it on the day when on his virtuous

face the stigma of that great weakness, treason, appeared. There was a young man who in the excess of his energy saw so deeply into things that he transcended the limits of good and evil: he refused to heed me, but how vast his projects were! Finally all his efforts were about to be crowned; wealth, a desperately lovely fiancée, fabulous honors. Success I saw, but hid from him, was destined to demolish all even the memory of his past irregularities. Then, then I insinuated a tiny doubt into his veins, and it twisted his whole destiny. What a sight: I attended the death-rattle of a human will. The young man renounced all that he had so avidly sought, for which he had not quailed at committing crimes. And all at once he accepted exile as a beggar to the possibilities of a disaster which in no case would have given him as much misery as he faced. Now that the serpent gnawed him, what was it he gave sneering to a wench of the provinces? It was the photograph of his fiancée which he had hid in his breast when he did not keep it to his trembling lips. Such men, my dear sir, I have known a hundred such as he.

And the women, why, if my demands had been within reason very few of them would have resisted me. But it must needs be that the woman forsake all to follow me, that she be my own shadow, even the shadow of my shadow. What intrigues I resorted to only to see rise from the depths of her trusting pupils the spectre of doubt and treachery. If she knew me to be struggling with some terrible force, the police for example, I tasted at least the incomparable pleasure of her complicity. What a strange delight there is in love exasperated by danger and crime. Forgive me if I cannot pronounce that word without laughing. Certain of catastrophe, I read the passionate disbelief in those possessed eyes, the mental restriction of the instincts. Unto death, she said; but for herself, nothing but the prison. For ten years I could not grow tired of her; on her face there was the very same expression as that of my mistresses at the moment when the implacable fate knocked at the door. A gaze more charming than the fresh air of mountains: at this moment you become a strange and living personality to me. Three or four were so beautiful that I could not bear that they should survive this moment. What could they have given me after such a look? They could not extinguish themselves. And I still see them, strangled, with disheveled hair. Three, or four?

To ask every one for a moment of his life — it was the cost of this practice that made me neither Lovelace nor Satan but Grindor. Clement Grindor, who, if he detaches his history from that of the generations to follow, will know himself an arch type. You have perhaps forgotten the Eléonore who introduced me to B. and to Mau-la-Sagesse? She had incurred nothing worse

than banishment and it was quite by chance on the banks of the Rhine that I found myself in her presence one day. I was then at work on a case of international politics in which were involved the intrigues of a naval ensign and a Viennese singer. The plot worked admirably: the affair threw light on three subjects of the first rank, and I could think of nothing but to bring it to a head at dinner that night in the hotel by the river by having my pretty puppet set fire to the bouquet of flowers on the table. A boat on the river attracted our attention. She rocked heavily to and fro, when suddenly a white form surged out of the shadows, dove into the water and swam rapidly to our side of the river. Out of pure curiosity, I was among the first who seized her and helped her to regain terra firma. I was almost stupefied to recognize Eléonore in her, beautiful and almost naked. I took her in my arms, and carried her into a salon, where she recovered sufficiently to demand that we be left alone. I saw, then, the blood stains on her neck and learned that she had escaped from the boat as *someone* tried to strangle her. But what a surprise to find me again; she had believed that I died like a dog somewhere along the route. The miracle of my immunity recalled to her the old taste she had had for my person; at her throat there was the scent of the blood of all her lovers, my victims, and it was two hours before I remembered to send a note to my little companion who was waiting for me on the terrace. Her fingers struck old and ravishing chords in my body, as she sang one of B. . .'s familiar doggerels. This sweet trembling slave who held sway over the whole length of me, whom I had regretted for so long, had been found in such a miraculous fashion. And I began very deliberately to relate to her the *real* account of my adventures. She did not budge; the details of the betrayal did not bring a quiver to her rigid face; but when I came to the death of B . . ., when he had cried out the words that I alone had heard and thrown himself into the flames, it was indeed too much and she lost all consciousness and fell to the floor.

When she came to, her alternate horror and febrile passion made our existence a prolonged ecstasy during three weeks. In the Hartz we fought out our intellectual drama. I gave her a revolver and she tried to shoot me down a hundred times. She followed me into the mountains to places where a detonation would have been lost among the thousand echoes of cascades and falling rocks. A hundred times an inflexion of my voice, an inflexion of my body arrested her finger at the trigger; at the end of three weeks, tamed, she found herself alone at the hotel with the bill to pay.

I shall not speak of my rôle during the European war. A skilled craftsman in all that was carried on during those last years it would seem like pure boasting if I should recount to you a tenth of the actual fact. I organi-

zed two revolutions, several defeats; I created out of wholecloth five criminal affairs which demolished the reputation of the most honored statesmen; I ruined countries; I led to the post a woman who was more beautiful than the setting sun, a misdeed for which I would have killed any number of young people; I sought to dishonor as many men as I could find who believed in the honor of which they prated, and the virtue they preached, and against which, sir, my life up to this moment has been nothing but an eternal protest, futile certainly, but amazing enough for me to laugh, from time to time, when by chance I catch a glimpse of my image in a mirror, this frank and pleasant expression which seems to fairly personify devotion, magnanimity, heroism.

LOUIS ARAGON.

(Translated from the French by Matthew Josephson)

VALUTA

Following the dollar O following the dollar I have learned three fashions of eating with the knife and ordered beer in four languages from a Hungarian waiter while following the dollar around the 48th degree of north latitude where it buys most there is the Fatherland

following the dollar by grey Channel seas by blue seas in Italy by lakes in the Alps as blue as aniline blue by lakes as green as a bottle of green ink and ink-smeared mountains rising on either hand

I dipped my finger in the lake and wrote. I s h a l l n e v e r r e t u r n n e v e r t o m y s t r a n g e l a n d

my land where plains are daily stretched where plains are stretched and tacked like brussels carpet where forests burn in business hours daily where yellow nameless rivers run and where

cities stand daily on their heads and wave proud legs in the air

my land of cowboys of businessmen of peddlers peddling machinery to boil eggs three minutes exactly three minutes for there's one born every minute in my land

incomprehensible and sweet and far where Douglas Fairbanks weds our winsome Mary and taking the Bronx Express they sail

away far far away into a photographed bliss I never may understand

four angels bathed in glory guard my land

at the north gate Theodore Roosevelt at the west gate Charlie Chaplin at the south gate Jack Johnson blackly naked and

at the middle gate a back-country fiddler from Clarion County fiddling with a turkey in the straw and a haw haw haw and a turkey in the hay and I shall never hear it fiddled O farther than Atlantis is that land

where I could return tomorrow if I chose

but I shall return to it never

shall never wed my pale Alaska virgin

never lie in thine arms O Texas Rose.

MALCOLM COWLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE NEW GOD

Man having created the concept of God The Creator, found himself unsatisfied. For despite the proven pragmatic value of this image, through which the fine arts of music and literature, of architecture, painting, and sculpture, together with the less fine arts of murder, thievery and general human exploitation, had been carried to great heights, there was still something unfulfilled: the impulse of curiosity in man was still hungry.

In all ages therefor, we find the empirical thinker, the alchemist and astrologer, mathematician and philosophic experimenter, at work, frequently, as in the early Christian world, at considerable risk of his life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Then, it was the artist alone who was able to indulge in the luxury of empirical thought under the camouflage of subject matter. In every other field of research, the scientific method was seen to be and no doubt was, inimical to all forms of Churchianity; the scientist was then, as his fellow-worker the artist is to-day, persona non grata.

But through the disintegration of the power of the Christian Church following the Reformation, scientific empirical thought found its opportunity of expression. Men's imaginations, weary of sectarian intrigue and of Holy Wars, kindled at the thought of the unknown in the form of unexplored trade routes and new sources of material wealth; and through them dreamed of a power over their fellows as potent as any which could be derived from a vested interest in God. With this change in the direction of thought, the scientist became indispensable, he began to function in society. For when it became apparent that craftsmanship as a means to trade growth was insufficient, that quantity and not quality of production was the essential problem in the acquisition of wealth, it was the scientist and his interpreter the inventor who jumped into the breach.

Out of wood and metals he made hands that could do the work of a thousand men; he made backs that could carry the burden of a thousand beasts and chained the power which was in the earth and waters to make them work. Through him men consummated a new creative act, a new Trinity: God the Machine, Materialistic Empiricism the Son, and Science the Holy Ghost.

And in the development and organization of this modern Church, the veritable artist, composer or poet, architect, painter or sculptor, has

played no great part. His form of creativity based upon what Croce calls intuitive rather than intellectual knowledge, was clearly of no value in a fairly unscrupulous struggle for the possession of natural resources, for the exploitation of all materials, human and otherwise. As a consequence the artist has fallen considerably from his place of high seriousness as an integral and respected element in society, to that of a tolerated mountebank entertainer merely. With neither Popes, Princes nor any equivalent of the Rockerfeller Foundation to support his experimental work, he is to-day in a position similar to that which the scientist occupied in the middle ages; that of heretic to existing values. That kind of life which has its being in the extension and projection of knowledge through the syntheses of intuitive spiritual activity, and its concomitant the vita contemplativa, is seen to be and no doubt is, a menace to a society built upon what has become the religious concept of possessiveness. It is natural therefor that the artist finds himself looked upon with a new sort of hostility which expresses itself, due possibly to the benign influence of civilization, in the form of indifference or contempt, and extends to him the privilege of starving to death. At the judgment seat of the new Trinity he has been found wanting as a waster and a non-producer.

With this increasing isolation of the seeker after intuitive knowledge, the scientist, working not so much in the field of philosophy as in those more "practical" expressions of conceptual knowledge, the natural sciences, has become more and more a part of this industrial society, nay, is largely responsible for it. Having created the new God, he has permitted himself to be used at every step and for every purpose by its interested devotees. Printing presses or poison gas, he has been equally blind or indifferent to the implications in the use or misuse of either, with the result that the social structure which he has so irresponsibly helped to rear, is to-day fast being destroyed by the perversion of the very knowledge contributed by him. Virtually yanked out of comparative obscurity by the forces of evolutionary circumstance, and considerably over-inflated by his Holy Ghostship, he has made possible the present critical condition of Western Civilization, faced as it is with the alternatives of being quickly ground to pieces under the heel of the new God or with the tremendous task of controlling the heel.

Signs of this imperative revaluation of the idea of the machine are beginning to manifest themselves. And significantly, one might almost say ironically enough, not among the least important, is the emerging demonstration on the part of the artist, of the immense possibilities in the creative control of one form of the machine, the camera. For he it is who, despite his social maladjustment, has taken to himself with love a dead thing unwit-

tingly contributed by the scientist, and through its conscious use, is revealing a new and living act of vision.

In order to make this clear it is necessary to record briefly the development of the use of the camera by the seeker after intuitive knowledge. The first of these to become interested in the mechanism and materials of photography was David Octavius Hill, a painter, and member of the Royal Scottish Academy. Hill came upon photography about 1842 in the following way; — he had received a commission to paint a large canvas on which were to appear the recognizable portraits of a hundred or more of the well-known people of the time. Faced with this difficult task and having heard of the then recently invented process of photography, he turned to it as a help to his painting. Three years of experimentation followed and it is interesting to learn that he became so fascinated by the new medium that he seriously neglected his painting. So much so in fact, that his wife and friends found it necessary to remind him that he was an "artist." They chided him upon wasting his time and finally succeeded in giving him such a bad conscience that he never photographed again. Yet the results of Hill's experimenting have given us a series of amazing portraits which have not until recently been surpassed. They are built with the utmost simplicity upon large masses of light and dark, but unquestionably the element which makes these portraits live is the naiveté and freedom from all theory with which Hill approached his new medium. He was not concerned or hampered in his photographing by the academic standards of the time as he must have been in his painting, for as a painter he is of slight importance. Despite the primitive machine and materials with which he was compelled to work, the exposures of five to fifteen minutes in bright sunlight, this series of photographs has victoriously stood the test of comparison with nearly everything done in photography since 1845. They remain the most extraordinary assertion of the possibility of the utterly personal control of a machine, the camera.

A gap then of nearly forty years intervened during which these photographs made by Hill passed into obscurity and practically no similar experimentation was done. However, some time before their re-discovery photography had, about the year 1880, started upon a renascent and widespread development all over the world. With the invention of the dry plate, the improvements in lenses and printing papers, the process had been brought within the realm of greater certainty and ease of manipulation. And with this period begins that curious misconception of the inherent qualities of a new medium, on the part of almost everyone who has attempted to express himself through it. Without the slightest realization that in this machine, the camera, a new and unique instrument had been placed in their hands,

photographers have in almost every instance, been trying to use it as a short cut to an accepted medium, painting. This misconception still persists today throughout Europe and to a large degree even here in America.

As a consequence the development of photography so beautifully and completely recorded in the numbers of "Camera Work," is interesting not so much in the aesthetically expressive as in an historical sense. We find all through the work done in Germany, France and Italy, in England and much in America, the supreme altar of the new God, a singular lack of perception and respect for the basic nature of the photographic machine. At every turn the attempt is made to turn the camera into a brush, to make a photograph look like a painting, an etching, a charcoal drawing or whatnot, like anything but a photograph; and always in imitation of the work of inferior painters. Moreover, with the production of this very considerable number of bastard photographs, interesting though they were temporarily, went an equally vast and foolish discussion as to whether photography was or was not an Art. Needless to say this discussion was usually as thoughtless and as uncritical of its terminology and of its standards as were the photographers of theirs. But partly through this evolution we are now fortunately becoming aware of the fact that nobody knows exactly what Art is; the word does not slip quite so glibly off the tongues of the serious-minded. And fortunately as well, a few photographers are demonstrating in their work that the camera is a machine and a very wonderful one. They are proving that in its pure and intelligent use it may become an instrument of a new kind of vision, of untouched possibilities, related to but not in any way encroaching upon painting or the other plastic arts. It has taken nearly eighty years for this clarification of the actual meaning of photography to reach from the remarkably true but instinctive approach of David Octavius Hill, to the conscious control embodied in the recent work of Alfred Stieglitz.

For it is in the later work of Stieglitz, an American in America, that we find a highly-evolved crystalization of the photographic principle, the unqualified subjugation of a machine to the single purpose of expression. It is significant and interesting to note that this man is not a painter and has never felt any impulse to be one. From the very inception of his photographic work which covers a period of thirty-five years, he like Hill, was fascinated by the machine as a thing apart. In fact, Stieglitz knew nothing about painting until, as the guiding spirit in that little experimental laboratory known as "291" he gave Americans their first opportunity of seeing the development of modern painting together with that of photography. Yet with all this he has maintained in his own photographic work a unity of feeling uncontaminated by alien influences; in his own words, "no

mechanicalization but always photography." In his later work, consisting almost exclusively of a series of portraits made during the past four years, the achievements possible to the camera pass out of the realm of theory and become objective realities in which certain affirmations emerge. For the first time we are given an opportunity of examining and of drawing some conclusions concerning the means of photographic expressiveness, an expressiveness the actual nature of which, together with that of other media, may be safely left to the aestheticians to fight about among themselves.

We find first of all in this man's work a space-filling and formal sense which, in many instances, achieves as pure a synthesis of objectivity as can be found in any medium. We perceive upon the loveliness of paper a registration in monochrome of tonal and tactile values far more subtle than any which the human hand can record. We discover as well, the actuality of a new sensitivity of line as finely expressive as any the human hand can draw. And we note that all these elements take form through the machine, the camera, without resort to the imbecilic use of soft focus or uncorrected lenses, or to processes in which manual manipulation may be introduced. Nay more, we see that the use of such lenses or processes weakens or destroys entirely the very elements which distinguish photography and may make it an expression. In the work of Stieglitz there is always a full acceptance of the thing in front of him, the objectivity which the photographer must control and can never evade.

But above all, we become aware in these photographs of his, of a new factor which the machine has added to plastic expression, the element of differentiated time. The camera can hold in a unique way, a moment. If the moment be a living one for the photographer, that is, if it be significantly related to other moments in his experience, and he knows how to put that relativity into form, he may do with a machine what the human brain and hand, through the act of memory cannot do. So perceived, the whole concept of a portrait takes on a new meaning, that of a record of innumerable elusive and constantly changing states of being, manifested physically. This is as true of all objects as of the human object. With the eye of the machine, Stieglitz has recorded just that, has shown that the portrait of an individual is really the sum of a hundred or more photographs. He has looked with three eyes and has been able to hold, by purely photographic means, space filling, tonality and tactility, line and form, that moment when the forces at work in a human being become most intensely physical and objective. In thus revealing the spirit of the individual he has documented the world of that individual, which is today. In this sense portrait painting, already nearly a corpse, becomes an absurdity.


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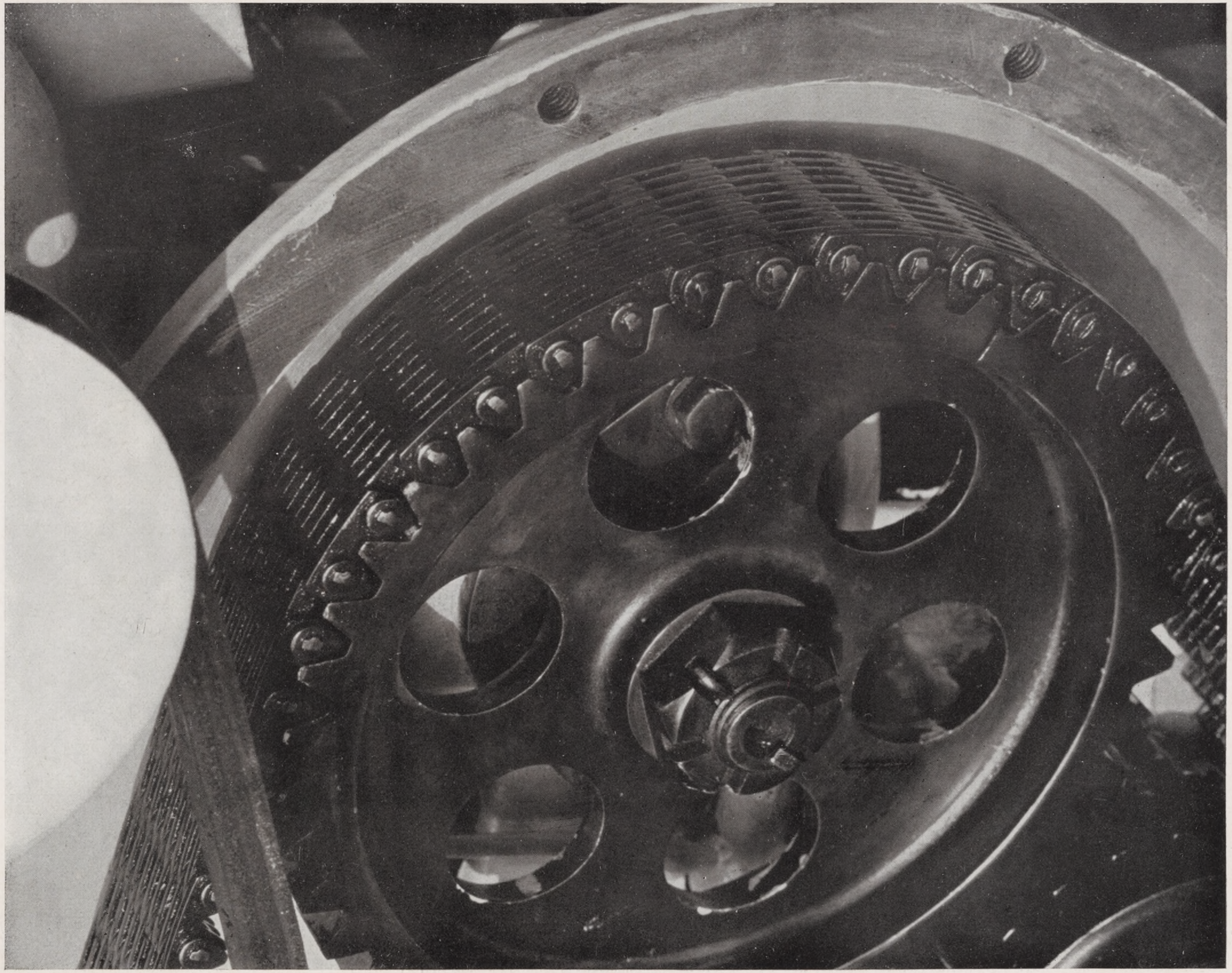

Now in all of this it should be well understood, that the machine is a passive and an innocent party. The control of its mechanism and materials, the fineness and sensitivity of its accomplishment are those of man. The new God shorn of its God-hood, becomes an instrument of intuitive knowledge. Whether the results of its use will continue to live in the mind and spirit of the future, only time will tell. Whether or no these results come under the category of Art, is irrelevant. The important fact to be noted is that to-day, painters, writers and musicians, even the scientists and sensitive people in every occupation, are reacting as profoundly before photographs, these untouched products of an intelligence and spirit channelling through a machine, as before any of the accepted forms of expression. So that when Croce in his "Aesthetic" writes: "And if photography be not quite an Art, that is precisely because the element of nature in it remains more or less unconquered and ineradicable." When he asks: "Do we ever feel complete satisfaction before even the best of photographs? Would not an artist vary and touch up much or little, remove or add something to the best of photographs?" the conclusion and answer are obvious. Signor Croce is speaking of the shortcomings of *photographers* and not of photography. He has not seen, for the simple reason that it did not exist when he wrote his book, fully achieved photographic expression. In the meantime the twaddle about the limitations of photography has been answered by Stieglitz and a few others of us here in America, by work done. Granting the limitations which all media have in common, it is only when the limitations of *photographers* are under examination, that the discussion becomes realistic.

Thus the deeper significance of a machine, the camera, has emerged here in America, the supreme altar of the new God. If this be ironical it may also be meaningful. For despite our seeming wellbeing we are, perhaps more than any other people, being ground under the heel of the new God, destroyed by it. We are not, as Natalie Curtis recently pointed out in *The Freeman,* particularly sympathetic to the somewhat hysterical attitude of the Futurists toward the machine. We in America are not fighting, as it may be natural to do in Italy, away from the tentacles of a medieval tradition towards a neurasthenic embrace of the new God. We have it with us and upon us with a vengeance, and we will have to do something about it eventually. Not only the new God but the whole Trinity must be humanized lest it in turn dehumanize us. We are beginning perhaps to perceive that.

And so it is again the vision of the artist, of the intuitive seeker after knowledge, which, in this modern world, has seized upon the mechanism and materials of a machine, and is pointing the way. He it is who is again

insisting, through the science of optics and the chemistry of light and metals and paper, upon the eternal value of the concept of craftsmanship, because that is the only way in which he can satisfy himself and because he knows that quality in work is prerequisite to quality in living. He has evolved through the conscious creative control of this particular phase of the machine, a new method of perceiving the life of objectivity and of recording it. And he has done so in spite of the usual opposition and contempt with which the Accepted always greets the New, in spite of the actual deterioration of materials and in the face of a total absence of those monetary returns which work in other media occasionally brings.

In thus disinterestedly experimenting, the photographer has joined the ranks of all true seekers after knowledge, be it intuitive and aesthetic or conceptual and scientific. He has moreover, in establishing his own spiritual control over a machine, the camera, revealed the destructive and wholly factitious wall of antagonism which these two groups have built up between themselves. Rejecting all Trinities and all Gods he puts to his fellow-workers this question squarely: What is the relation between science and expression? Are they not both vital manifestations of energy, whose reciprocal hostility turns the one into the destructive tool of materialism, the other into anemic phantasy, whose coming together might integrate a new religious impulse? Must not these two forms of energy converge before a living future can be born of both?

PAUL STRAND.

APOCALYPTIC HARVEST

The thinning light
Of afternoon
Is over ripened wheatfields
Shining to a thin skyline —

A cloud,
Fluted and impervious,
Rides up a paler sky to meet the sunset
When it comes.

This light
Spreads from the Old Testament,
These fields
Are printed leaves —

And far away
Go out across the fields
And kill a man,
Be hanged at dawn.

And far and far away
Young horses stand immobile,
Their long manes rippled
In many winds.

YVOR WINTERS

STRAVROGIN'S CONFESSION.

CHAPTER II.

It was indeed foreign type, — three printed sheets of ordinary note-paper, sewn together. It must have been printed secretly by some Russian printing-press abroad, and at first blush the pamphlet looked very much like a revolutionary leaflet. The heading read "From Stavrogin."

I insert this document literally into my chronicle. I allowed myself to correct the mistakes in spelling, which are rather numerous and which somewhat surprised me, for the author was, after all, an educated and even well-read man (of course, judged relatively). As for the style, I made no changes in it, in spite of the errors. At any rate, it is obvious that the author is by no means a man of letters.

FROM STAVROGIN

In 186- I, Nikolai Stavrogin, a retired officer, was living in Petersburg, indulging in dissipation in which I found no pleasure. In those days I was keeping, for quite some time, three apartments. I myself was living in one, in a lodging-house where I got board and service and where Maria Lebyadkina, now my lawful life, was also staying. The other two apartments I rented by the month for Intrigues: in one I received a certain lady who loved me, and in the other, her maid, and for quite a time I was planning how I could bring the two together, so that mistress and maid could meet in my rooms. Knowing the characters of both, I expected to get a good deal of entertainment out of this joke.

In the gradual preparation for that meeting I had to go more often to one of the two apartments, which was in a large house on Gorokhovaya Street, because it was there that I received the maid. Here I had only one room on the fourth floor, which I rented from a Russian family of the lower class. They occupied the adjacent room, which was smaller, and the door between the two was always open, which fell in with my desires. The husband was employed in an office and stayed away from morning till night. The wife, a woman of forty, was generally busy cutting and sewing up old clothes for new and she too often went out to dispose of these. I remained all alone with their daughter, who was only a child. Her name was Matriosha. Her mother loved her, but often beat her, and had a way of screaming at her frightfully, as is the manner of women of her class. This little girl took care of my room, and cleaned things up behind the screen. I declare

that I forget the number of the house. When I inquired I found out that the old house was torn down and there is now one large new house on the site of two or three of the former buildings. I also forget the name of my landlord (perhaps I didn't even know it then). I recall that the woman's name was, if I am not mistaken, Stepanida Mikhailovna. Him I don't remember. I believe that it might be possible to trace them through the Petersburg police. It was a corner flat, opening on to the courtyard. Everything happened in June. The house was painted pale blue.

Once a pen-knife which I didn't need and which was just lying around disappeared from my table. I told the woman, without thinking that she would whip her daughter. The mother had just been screaming at the child on account of the loss of a rag, suspecting that she had taken it, and went as far as pulling her hair for her. When the rag was found under the table-cloth the little girl did not say a word of reproach but just looked at her mother silently. I noticed it, and it was now for the first time that I remarked the girl's face which had always been a blank to me before. She was fair-skinned and freckled, with an ordinary face, but it was a child's face and gentle, exceedingly gentle. The mother didn't like the little girl's failure to reproach her for the unmerited beating, and she raised her fist against the child, but didn't hit her, and it was then that the matter of the pen-knife came up. Indeed, there was nobody there but the three of us, and it was only the girl who went into my room. The woman flew into a passion, especially because she had just beaten the child unjustly. She ran over to the besom, plucked some twigs from it, and whipped the girl before my very eyes so that she raised welts on her, although the child was already in her twelfth year. Matriosha did not cry under the strokes, probably because I was there, but she gulped strangely at each blow. And afterward she continued to gasp for a whole hour.

But here is what happened first. At the very moment when the woman went to pluck the twigs from the besom I found the penknife on my bed, where it must have fallen from the table. It occurred to me immediately not to say anything so as not to interfere with the whipping. It was an instantaneous decision; at such moments I stop breathing. But I intend to tell everything in more unmistakeable words, so that nothing may remain concealed.

Every situation in my life which was exceedingly disgraceful or immeasurably humiliating, or base, or, above all, ridiculous, always aroused in me together with immense anger an incredibly intense pleasure. Also in moments of crime and in moments of danger. If I were stealing anything I would feel enraptured by the consciousness of the depth of my baseness. It

wasn't that I loved baseness (here my reason was entirely intact), but I liked the intoxication of the tormenting consciousness of vileness. Likewise, each time I stood at the barrier, waiting for my opponent's shot, I experienced the same shameful and violent feeling, and once it was extraordinarily strong. I confess I often sought it myself, because for me it is the most intense of all similar sensations. When I was slapped, and I was slapped twice in my life, the feeling was there too, in spite of a furious anger. But if you can control your anger, the gratification will surpass anything that can be imagined. I never told this to anyone, even by a hint, concealing it as a shame and disgrace. But once in Petersburg when I was badly beaten up and had my hair pulled in a tavern I didn't have that feeling, but only fearful anger, and got into a row, for it was just a drunken brawl although I was sober. But I thought at the time that if the French Vicomte, who had slapped my face and whose lower jaw I had shot off for that, had pulled me by the hair, I would have felt the familiar pleasure, and perhaps would not have been angry at all.

I say all this so that everyone should understand that this feeling never wholly overcame me, and I was always completely conscious (it was precisely on consciousness that everything was based). And although it took such a hold on me as to render me unreasonable or, so to speak, stubborn, it never made me forget myself. Although it reached a point of frenzy in me, I could always subdue it, even stop it at its height, only I never wished to stop it. I am convinced that I could live my whole life like a monk in spite of the brutal lust which is in me and which I always provoke[1]. I am always my master when I wish to be. And so let it be known that I do not wish to claim irresponsibility for my crimes, either through effect of surroundings or disease.

The punishment ceased, I put the pen-knife into my vest-pocket and without saying a word left the house, and, going so far that no one could discover, I threw the pen-knife away. Then I waited two days. The little girl, having cried her fill, became even more taciturn, yet I am convinced that she had no ill feeling toward me. However, she surely felt some shame because she had been punished in such a way in my presence. But being a child, she surely must have blamed herself even for her shame.

It was in the course of those two days that I once put myself a question, as to whether I could give up my intention, and I immediately felt that I could, at any time, even that very minute.

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[1] *The proofs contained the following sentence inserted here, which Dostoyevski omitted in the final version: "Up to the age of sixteen I indulged with extraordinary immoderation in the vice to which Jean-Jacques Rousseau confessed, but I put a stop to it when I so desired, namely, when I began my seventeenth year."*

At that time I wanted to kill myself because of a sick indifference, however, I don't really known whether that was the reason. In the course of those few days (for it was necessary to wait so that the little girl might forget everything), perhaps in order to distract myself from my constant fancy or merely for a joke, I committed a theft from the furnished rooms where I lived. It was the only theft I ever committed.

Many people were crowded into those lodgings. Among others, a government clerk lived there with his family in two furnished rooms, — a man of about forty, not altogether stupid, a decent enough appearing fellow, but poor. I did not have much to do with him and he was afraid of the company which I entertained there. He had just received his salary, thirty-five roubles. What chiefly brought me to this step was that at the moment I was in want of cash (although four days later the money came through the mails for me), so that I was stealing because of need, so to speak, and not merely for the fun of the thing. It was done impudently and simply. I just walked into his room while he and his family were eating dinner in the other hole. His uniform, folded, lay on a chair at the very door. The thought had flashed through my mind when I was still in the hall. I slipped my hand into the pocket and drew out the purse. But the clerk heard a noise and looked in from the next room. It seems that he saw something, at least, but since he didn't see the whole procedure, naturally, he didn't believe his eyes. I said, that as I was passing through the hall I had looked in to see what time it was by his clock. "It's stopped, sir," he answered, and I went out.

I was then drinking heavily, and a whole crew, including Lebyadkin, was camping in my rooms. The purse with the small change I threw away, but I kept the bills. There were thirty- two roubles, three red and two yellow bills. I immediately got change for a red bill and sent for champagne. The second red bill, and the third too went the same way. Some four hours later in the evening the clerk accosted me in the hall.

"When you looked in this afternoon, Nikolai Vsevolodovich, didn't you inadvertently brush my uniform from the chair . . . it lay by the door?"

"No, I don't remember. Was your uniform there?"

"Yes, sir."

"On the floor?"

"First on the chair, sir, and then on the floor."

"Did you pick it up?"

"Yes, I did, sir."

"Well, so, what do you want?"

"Nothing, sir, if that's the case."

He did not dare to say anything further, and he told nobody in the

whole house — so timid are these people. Besides, everyone in the lodging-house was terribly afraid of me and showed a great deal of deference toward me. Afterward, I loved to meet his eyes as I passed through the hall. But that soon began to bore me.

Three days later I went to my room on Gorokhovaya Street. The mother was getting ready to leave with a bundle. The man, as usual, was not at home, so I remained alone with Matriosha. The windows were open. The house was occupied mostly by people with small workshops and all day long the place was filled with songs and the sound of hammers. An hour passed. Matriosha was sitting in the next room on a little stool, with a bit of sewing, her back turned to me. At length she began to hum, softly, very softly. She did that sometimes. I took out my watch and looked at the time; it was two o'clock. My heart began to beat fast. I got up and began to steal towards her. On the window-sill there were many geranium pots and the sun was fearfully bright. I sat down beside her on the floor quietly. She started, and at first got incredibly frightened and jumped to her feet. I took her hand and kissed it gently, drew her down on the stool again, and began looking into her eyes. The fact that I had kissed her hand suddenly struck her as funny, as though she were a baby. But her amusement lasted only a second for she quickly jumped up again and this time in such fear that her face was convulsed. She looked at me, her eyes motionless with terror, and her lips began to twitch as though she were going to cry, but she did not. I kissed her hand again and seated her on my knees. Then she suddenly pulled away from me with a jerk of her whole body and smiled as though with shame, but it was a strangely crooked smile. Her whole face reddened with shame. I was muttering something to her like a drunken man. Suddenly an odd and astonishing thing happened which I will never forget: the little girl threw her arms around my neck and suddenly began to kiss me violently of her own accord. Her face expressed perfect rapture. I nearly got up and went away — this was so disagreeable to me in the small creature, and besides I felt a sudden pity.

When it was all over, she was embarrassed. I did not try to soothe her and no longer caressed her. She looked at me with a timid smile. Her face suddenly seemed stupid to me. Her embarrassment grew with every moment. Suddenly she covered her face with her hands and stood in the corner with her face to the wall, motionlessly. I feared that she would get frightened again, as before, and silently left the house.

I suppose that all that happened presented itself to her with deadly horror as a measureless abomination. In spite of the foul language which she must have heard from the days of her swaddling-clothes, and in spite

of the talk that she heard all around her, I have every reason to believe that she did not yet understand anything. In the end it must have seemed to her that she had committed an unspeakable crime, that there was deadly guilt upon her, that she had "killed God."

That night I was in the drunken brawl that I mentioned before. In the morning I woke up in my lodgings, where Lebyadkin had taken me. My first thought on awakening was: did she tell, or not? It was a moment of actual fear, although not very strong. I was very gay that morning, and awfully kind toward everyone, and the whole crew was very well pleased with me. But I left them all and went to Gorokhovaya Street. I met her downstairs in the hall. She was coming from the grocery where she had been sent for some chicory. Seeing me, she shot up the stairs in a terrible fright. When I came in, her mother had already given her a slap because she had entered the room at "breakneck speed," and this covered the true cause of her fear. And so everything was all right. She had retired to some corner and did not come in all the time I was there. I stayed for an hour and then left.

Toward evening I was afraid again, but this time the fear was incomparably stronger. Of course, I could deny the whole thing, but I could be found out. I thought of forced labor. I had never felt fear before and this was the only time in my life that I was to feel it. And I certainly wasn't afraid of Siberia, although I might have been deported more than once. But this time I was frightened and actually felt fear, I don't know why, for the first time in my life — a very painful sensation. Besides, in the evening when I was at my lodgings, I began to hate her so that I decided to kill her. The chief cause of my hatred was the memory of her smile. Contempt mixed with measureless disgust was arising in me at the thought of the way she ran into the corner and hid her face in her hands after everything was over. An inexplicable fury took hold of me. Then followed chill and when toward morning I had fever, I was again overcome by fear, but this time it was so powerful that I have never experienced any worse torture. But I no longer hated the little girl — at least it didn't reach the paroxysm that it had the previous evening. I notice that strong fear completely banishes hatred and any feeling of revenge.

I woke up around noon feeling perfectly well and I was astonished at the violence of the sensations of the day before. But I was in a bad humor and was again forced to go to Gorokhovaya Street, in spite of my aversion. I remember I had an awful desire at that moment to have a serious quarrel with somebody on my way there. On reaching my room I found Nina Savelyevna there, the maid, who had been waiting for me for an hour. I didn't

really love that girl, so that she came with some fear that I might be angry because of her uninvited presence. But I suddenly found myself glad to see her. She was rather pretty, modest, and had the manners which the lower classes like, so that my landlady praised her highly to me. I found the two of them at coffee and my landlady was hugely enjoying the pleasant gossip. I noticed Matriosha in the corner of the room. She stood there motionlessly, staring at her mother and the visitor. When I entered she did not hide as before, nor did she run away. Only it seemed to me that she had grown very thin and that she had fever. I gave Nina a few hugs and locked the door between the two rooms, which I hadn't done in a long time, so that Nina left in an altogether happy mood. I went out with her and for two days did not return to Gorokhovaya Street. The whole thing had already begun to bore me. I decided to put an end to everything, to give up the room and leave Petersburg.

But when I came there in order to settle my account I found the woman alarmed and grieved. Matriosha had been ill for two days. Each night she had fever and was delirious. Of course I asked what she said in her delirium (we talked in whispers in my room), and the woman whispered that her ravings were terrible: "killed God." I offered to send for the doctor at my expense, but she didn't want me to. "With God's mercy it will pass off. She isn't in bed all the time. In the daytime she goes out. She has just run to the grocer's on an errand." I decided to find Matriosha alone, and, since the woman mentioned that she had to leave the house at five, I made up my mind to come back in the evening.

I had dinner at a restaurant. At a quarter past five sharp I returned. I always let myself in with my own key. There was nobody there but Matriosha. She was lying in her mother's bed behind the screen, and I noticed that she peeked out, but I pretended that I didn't see her. All the windows were open. The air was warm, it was even hot. I paced up and down a bit and then sat down on a divan. I remember everything to the last minute. It positively gave me pleasure to say no word to Matriosha and to keep her in suspense — I do not know why. I waited a whole hour and suddenly she herself jumped out from behind the screen. I heard her feet strike the floor, the noise as she got out of bed, then her rapid steps, and there she was standing on the threshold of my room. She stood and looked at me silently. I was so base that my heart leapt with joy at the thought that I had shown my mettle and forced her to be the first to come out. Through these days in which I hadn't seen her at close range she had really grown terribly thin. Her face had dried up and her head must have been hot with fever.

Her eyes grew large and looked at me fixedly with stupid curiosity, as it seemed to me at first. I sat, looking, and did not budge. And now suddenly I was moved to hatred again. But very soon I noticed that she was not afraid of me at all, but that she was perhaps in a delirium. Yet she was not delirious.. Suddenly she began to shake her head at me as naive and illmannered people do in reproach. And suddenly she raised her little fist at me and began to threaten from where she stood. For the first moment this gesture seemed funny to me, but almost at once I could not bear it. There was such despair in her face as is impossible to see on the face of a child. She kept on shaking her little fist at me threateningly and wagging her head in reproach. I got up and moved toward her fearfully, I began to talk to her kindly in a low, cautious voice, but saw that she wouldn't understand me. Then suddenly she threw her hands over her face, as she had done then, moved away and stood at the window with her back turned toward me. I returned to my room and also seated myself by the window. I cannot possibly understand why I did not leave then, but remained as though waiting for something to happen. Soon I heard her rapid steps again. She passed through the door on to a wooden gallery which led down to the stairs, and I immediately ran to my door, and opened it just in time to notice that Matriosha had stepped into a tiny cubicle, something like a hen-coop, adjacent to another cubicle. A very curious thought flashed through my mind. Even now I cannot understand why it suddenly occurred to me, things must have led to it. I closed the door and again sat down at the window. Of course, it was still impossible to believe the thought that had come to me — "nevertheless. . ." (I remember everything, and my heart beat violently).

A minute later I looked at my watch to see exactly what time it was. Why I needed that precision I do not know, but I was capable of such carefulness, and generally, at that moment, I wanted to notice everything. So that what I noticed then, I remember now distinctly and see it as if it were happening before my very eyes. Evening was coming on. A fly was buzzing overhead and kept alighting on my face. I caught it, kept it awhile in my fingers, and let it fly out of the window. A cart rumbled noisily into the courtyard. In the corner of the courtyard a tailor at his window was singing a song very loudly. He was sitting at his work and I could see him plainly. It occurred to me that since nobody met me when I was entering the gates and while I was going upstairs, it would be much better if nobody saw me as I went downstairs, and I cautiously moved my chair away from the window so that the tenants could not see me. I took a book but soon cast it

aside and began to look at a tiny red spider on a geranium leaf and I dozed off. I remember everything to the last moment.

Suddenly I whipped my watch out of my pocket. Twenty minutes had passed since she went out. My conjecture assumed the shape of a probability. But I decided to wait another quarter of an hour exactly. It also occurred to me that she might have returned without my hearing her, but this was impossible: there was a dead silence, and I could hear the buzzing of every fly. Suddenly my heart began to beat violently again. I took out my watch: three minutes left. I sat through them, although my heart beat so violently that it hurt me. Then I rose, put on my hat, buttoned my coat, and looked about the room to see if there were any traces of my having been there. I moved the chair nearer to the window, where it stood before. Finally I opened the door quietly, locked it with my key, and went to the cubicle. It was closed but not locked; I knew that it had no bolt, but I didn't want to open it, so I stood on tiptoe and looked through a crack. At the very moment when I was raising myself on tiptoe I recalled that when I was sitting by the window, looking at the little red spider, and was about to doze off, I had thought of how I would raise myself on my toes so that my eye would be on a level with the crack. By noting this detail I want to prove without fail that I was fully in possession of all my faculties, and that I am responsible for everything. I stood looking through the crack for a long time, because it was dark there, yet not altogether, so that at length I saw what I wanted to see. . . .

At last I decided to leave. I did not meet anybody on the stairs. Three hours later all of us, in our shirt-sleeves, drank tea and played cards, Lebyadkin recited verses. Many stories were told, and it so happened that they were recounted well and amusingly, and not stupidly as usual. Kyrilov was there too. Nobody drank, except Lebyadkin, although there was a bottle of rum on the table.

Prokhor Malov observed that "when Nikolai Vsevolodovich is contented and doesn't sulk, all of us are in good spirits and talk cleverly." The phrase stuck in my memory, and so it seems that I was gay, contented, and did not sulk. But that was only my appearance. I knew, I remember, that I was a base and vile coward rejoicing in my delivery, and that I would never be decent again.

About eleven o'clock the janitor's little girl from Gorokhovaya Street brought me the news that Matriosha had hanged herself. I went with the child and discovered that the woman herself did not know why she had sent for me. She screamed and writhed. The place was full of people, policemen. I stood there a while and then left.

All this time the authorities did not disturb me at all, except to ask a few questions. But I told them nothing but that the girl had been ill and delirious, and that I offered, on my part, to call a doctor at my own expense. The pen-knife too was mentioned. I said that my landlady whipped the child but that this was nothing. No one knew anything about my visit in the evening.

For about a week I did not go there. I went long after the girl was buried in order to arrange to leave the room. My landlady still cried, although she was already busy again with her rags and sewing. "It was because of your penknife that I insulted her," she said, but without much bitterness. I gave up the room on the pretext that naturally this was now no place to receive Nina Savelyevna. When I took leave she again praised Nina Savelyevna. I gave her five roubles in addition to what I owed her for the room.

The chief thing was that life bored me to madness. I would have wholly forgotten the Gorokhovaya Street affair as well as all that happened in that period, if it hadn't been that, for some time, I kept remembering angrily, how at one moment I had lost my nerve.

I let out my anger upon whomever I could. At that time for no apparent reason at all, I thought of somehow crippling my life, in the most repulsive manner possible. The year before I had already had the idea of shooting myself; something better presented itself.

Once looking at the lame Maria Timofeevna Lebyadkina, who was more or less of a servant in my lodgings, I suddenly decided to marry her — at that time she was not insane, but simply a flighty idiot, and secretly madly in love with me. (The gang found that out.) The thought of Stavrogin's marriage to a creature like that, the lowest of the low, tickled me. It would be hard to imagine anything uglier. At any rate, I married her, not solely "to win a wager after a drinking bout." The ceremony was witnessed by Kirilov and Piotr Verkhovenski, who at that time happened to be in Petersburg; also Lebyadkin himself and Prokhor Malov (he is dead now). Nobody else ever discovered it, and they promised to keep quiet about it. This secrecy has always seemed abominable to me, but it hasn't been violated even yet, although I had the intention of publishing the fact abroad; now that I'm at it I may as well confess this too.

After the wedding I went to the provinces to see my mother. I went there to amuse myself. In our town I made for myself the reputation of being insane — a reputation which has endured to this very day and which no doubt is harmful to me, as I shall explain below. Then I went abroad and remained there for four years.

I was in the Orient, on Mt. Athos, where I stood through all night services which lasted for eight hours, I was in Egypt, lived in Switzerland, got as far as Iceland, I spent two semesters at the university of Göttingen. The last year I became intimate with a Russian family of high rank that was living in Paris, and got on good terms with two Russian girls in Switzerland. Some two years ago at Frankfort, passing by a stationery store, I noticed among the photographs on sale a small picture of a little girl neatly dressed, but resembling Matriosha very closely. I immediately bought the photograph and coming to the hotel, placed it on the mantel-piece. There it lay for a week, untouched, and I didn't look at it even once, and when I left Frankfort I forgot to take it along.

I note this precisely in order to show to what extent I was able to master my memories and to what extent I became callous to them. I would reject the whole lot of them, and the whole mass would vanish obediently every time I so desired it. Recollection of the past has always bored me, and I could never talk about the past as almost everyone else does, all the more so since, like everything else that was part of me, I hated it. As for Matriosha, I even forgot her photograph on the mantel-piece. About a year ago, in the Spring, travelling in Germany, I absentmindedly passed my station and got upon another line. I got off at the next station; it was between two and three in the afternoon, the day was clear. It was a tiny German town. A hotel was pointed out to me. It was necessary to wait. The next train was due at eleven at night. I was rather pleased with this adventure, for I wasn't in a hurry to get anywhere. The hotel proved to be a small, cheap place, but with shrubs and flower-beds all about it. I was given a small room. I made a good meal and as I had spent all of the previous night on the road, I fell asleep around four o'clock.

I had a totally unexpected dream, because I had never dreamed anything like it before. In the Dresden gallery there is a painting by Claude Lorraine, called in the catalogue *Acis and Galatea,* but which I always called *The Golden Age,* I don't know why. I had seen it previously and just three days before I saw it again in passing. I went to the gallery simply in order to look at it and it was perhaps for that reason that I stopped at Dresden. It was this picture that appeared to me in a dream, yet not as a picture but as though it were real.

What I saw was a corner of the Greek archipelago: gentle, azure waves, rocks and islands, a shore in blossom, afar a magic panorama, a beckoning sunset — words fail one. European mankind remembers this place as its cradle here, the first scenes of mythology, mankind's earthly paradise. . . here lived beautiful men and women. They rose, they slept, happy and

innocent; the groves were filled with their merry songs, the great overflow of unspent energies poured itself into love and simple-hearted joys. The sun loosed its rays upon these isles and this sea, rejoicing in its beautiful children. Marvellous dream, lofty illusion! The most improbable of all visions, to which mankind throughout its existence has given its best energies, for which mankind sacrificed everything, for which its prophets were crucified and killed, without which nations will not desire to live, and without which they cannot even die! All these sensations were mine in this dream; I do not know exactly what I saw, but the cliffs, and the sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun, all that I still seemed to see when I woke up and opened my eyes, for the first time in my life literally wet with tears. A feeling of happiness, hitherto unknown to me, pierced my heart till it ached. It was already evening; a stream of bright slanting sunrays pierced the green of the window-boxes of my little room and flooded me with light. I quickly closed my eyes again, as if eager to call back the vanished dream, but suddenly I noticed a tiny dot in the centre of bright, bright light. Suddenly this dot began to assume a shape, and all of a sudden I saw clearly a tiny red spider. I remembered it at once as it had looked on the geranium leaf, when the rays of the setting sun were pouring in in the same way. It was as if something had stung me, I sat up in bed. . .

(That is the way it all happened!)

I saw before me (O, not that I really saw her! If it only had been a genuine hallucination!) I saw Matriosha, grown thin and with feverish eyes, precisely as she had looked at the moment when she stood at the threshold of my room, and shaking her head, lifted her tiny fist against me. I have never felt anything more painful! The piteous despair of a helpless creature with an immature mind, who threatened me (with what? what could she do to me, O God!) but who, of course, blamed herself alone! Never has anything like that happened to me. I sat far into the night, motionless, forgetful of time. Whether this is what is called remorse or repentance, I do not know and could not tell even now. But what is intolerable for me is only this image, namely, the little girl on the threshold with her lifted little fist threatening me, only the way she looked then, only that moment, only that shaking of her head. That is what I cannot bear, because I see her that way almost every day. No, the image does not appear to me of itself, but I evoke it, and I cannot help evoking it, although I cannot endure it. Oh, if I could only see her sometimes in the flesh, even in a hallucination!

Why then does no other memory of mine rouse any such feelings in me? And yet I have memories of deeds which people would think much

worse. Such memories arouse only hatred in me, a feeling caused by my present condition; formerly I used to forget them cold-bloodedly and shove them into the background.

After that I traveled about nearly all this year and tried to occupy myself. I know that, even now I can get rid of Matriosha if I so desire. I am in complete possession of my will, as before. But the fact of the matter is that I never wanted to do it, that I do not want to do it now and that I never shall. It will go on like this until I become insane.

In Switzerland two months later I was almost mastered by the old impulse with the same fierce passion that I experienced only in early years. I felt terribly tempted to commit a new crime, namely, bigamy (because I am already married), but I fled at the advice of another girl, to whom I confessed practically everything, even the fact that I did not love the one I wanted so much, and that I could never love anyone. Besides, this new crime would not by any means have saved me from Matriosha.

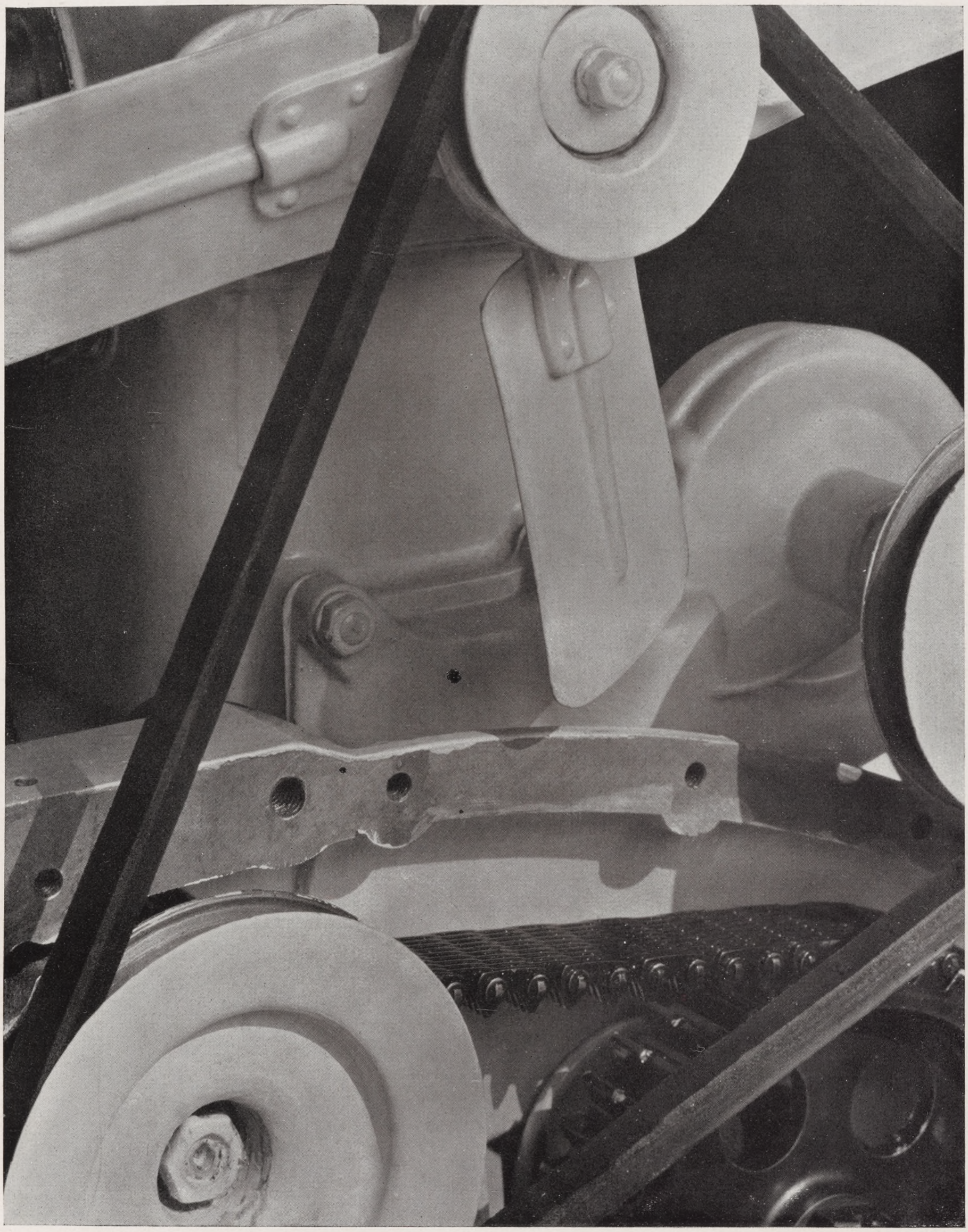
Thus I have decided to have these sheets printed and import three hundred copies of them to Russia; when the time comes, I shall send them to the police and to the local authorities; at the same time I shall send them to the editorial offices of all the newspapers with a request to publish them, and also to my many acquaintances in Petersburg and in Russia. It will also appear in translation abroad. I know that legally I shall probably not be disturbed, at least not to any serious extent. I alone denounce myself, and have no accuser; besides, there is little or no evidence. Finally, there is the generally credited notion of my mental derangement of which my relatives will surely take advantage and thus stop any legal prosecution that may seriously threaten me. One of my purposes in declaring this is to prove, that I am now in full possession of my mental faculties and I understand my situation. But there will be some who will know everything and look at me, and I will look at them. I wish everyone would look at me. I do not know whether or not this will relieve me. I resort to it, as to the last measure.

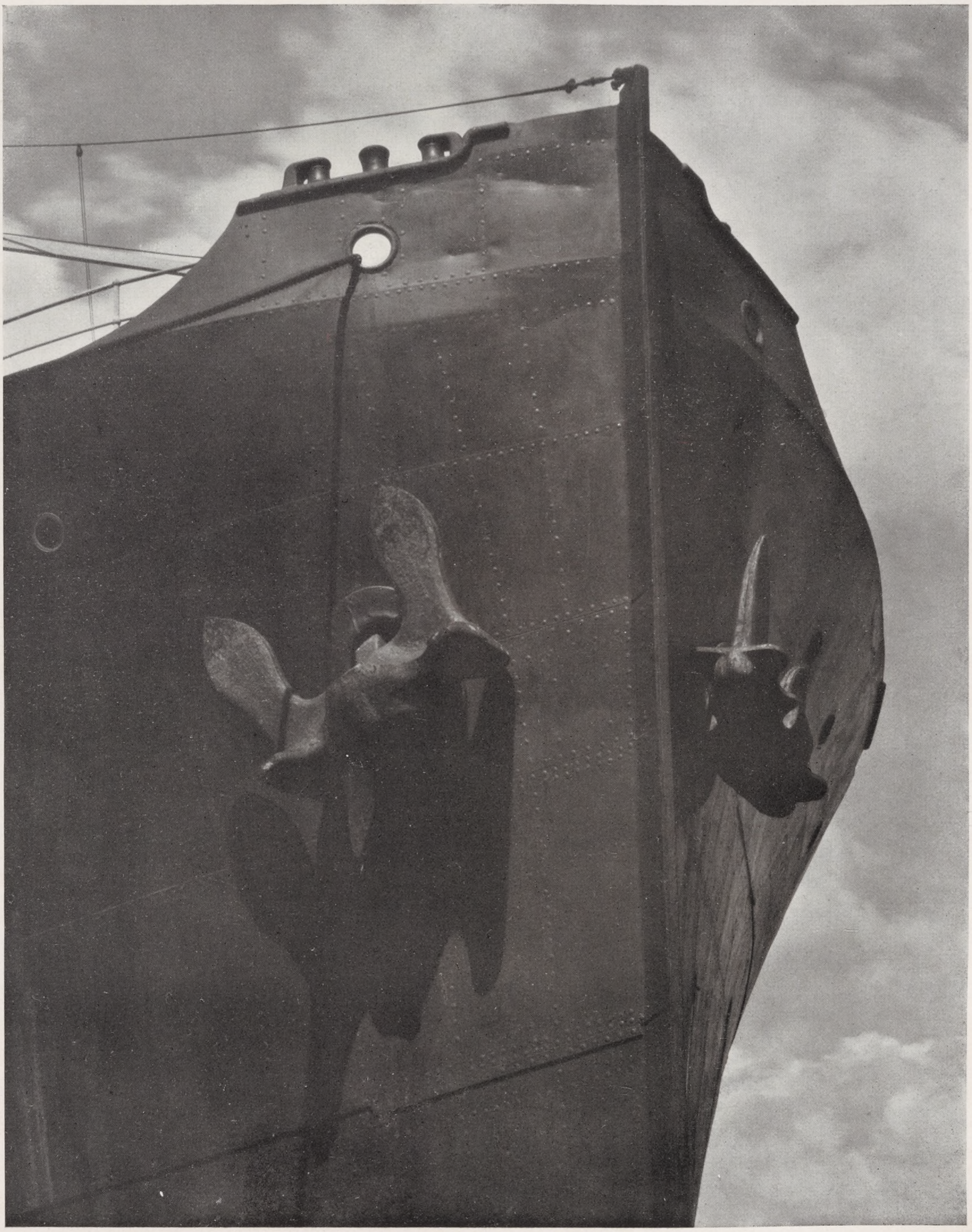
I repeat: if a thorough search is made in Petersburg, the traces may be found. My landlady and her husband may still be there. Of course, they will remember the house. It was pale blue. As for me, I shall not leave my present place of residence but for some time (a year or two) I shall stay at Skvoreshniki, my mother's estate. If I am summoned, I shall present myself wherever it may be.

Nikolai Stavrogin

FEODOR DOSTOYEVSKI.

(To be continued.) *(translated from the Russian by Avram Yarmolinsky)*





ON ENGLISH AND FRENCH FICTION

I

Certainly the modern English novel begins with that elaborate masterpiece, *Tom Jones* of Henry Fielding. And it seems to me that his genius is contained, on the whole, in that one book; in which he creates living people; the very soil is living. His hero is the typical sullen, selfish baseborn, stupid, sensual, easily seduced and adventurous youth, with whom his creator is mightily amused. The very Prefaces are full of humourous wisdom: copied, I suppose, from Montaigne. The typically wicked woman is painted almost as Hogarth might have painted her. It is quite possible that she may have a few touches, here and there, of Lady Wishfort who, wrote Meredith, "is untouched for the vigour and pointedness of the tongue. It spins along with a final ring, like the voice of Nature in a fury, and is, indeed, racy eloquence of the elevated fishwife."

Fielding has a strong sense of the vigilant comic, which is the genius of thoughtful laughter; nor can contempt be entertained by comic intelligence. Blifil is essentially the grossly and basely animal creature, who is also a villain, and who has his part in the plot; indeed one scandalous scene in which he is discovered is laughable in the purely comic sense.

After Fielding comes Thackeray, and his *Vanity Fair* is the second masterpiece in modern fiction. It is the work of a man of the world, keenly observant of all the follies and virtues and vices and crimes and splendours, of crises and of failures, of his neither moral nor immoral Fair. He takes his title from John Bunyan; but in originality he is almost equal with Fielding. "As the Manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards, and looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place." Such is the moral, if you like; at any rate the whole Show "is accompanied by appropriate scenery and brilliantly illuminated with the author's own candles." At the end the Finis: "Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!* Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied? — Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."

There is no question that Becky Sharp is not derived from Balzac's Lisbeth in *La Cousine Bette,* but at what a distance, when once you think of the greatest of all novelists, who has the fortune to be French, and of Thackeray, who has the fortune (at times the misfortune) of being English.

When we think of Becky she startles us by her cynical entrance: she inherits from her parents bad qualities. Her first epigram sums her up. "Revenge may be wicked, but it's natural. I'm no angel." She fascinates Lord Pitt, Rawdon Crawley and Lord Steyne in a way Lisbeth never does. Lisbeth's fascination is that of the evil-doer; she is envious, spiteful, malicious, a lying hypocrite; always deliberately bent on having her own way, always for evil purposes: so that she, in her sinister effrontery, causes the ruin of many of the lives she thrives on, feigns to help, deludes; only, she never deludes as Valérie Marnette does. We have only to say: "Valérie!" and the woman is before us. As for Valérie: "Elle était belle comme sont belles les femmes assez belles, pour être belles en dormant:" a sentence certainly lyrical. Lisbeth's character has "une dose du mordant parisien." Unmarried, she is monstrous, her snares are inevitable, her dissimulation impenetrable. But she is never given a scene so consummately achieved in its sordid and voluptuous tragedy as the scene in *Vanity Fair* when Rawdon enters his house at midnight, and finds Becky dressed in a brilliant toilette, her arms and her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings: and the brilliants in her breast which Steyne had given her. "He had her hand in his, and was bowing to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face." And, as the writer adds, with an entire sense of the tragic and comic drama that is over: "All her lies and her schemes, all her selfishness and her wiles, all her wit and all her genius had come to this bankruptcy."

I have never had any actual admiration for the novels of George Eliot; she had her passing fame, her popularity, her success; people compared her prose — wrongly — with the poetry of Mrs. Browning; and, as for her attempts at verse, the less said of them the better. In favour of my opinion I quote this scathing sentence of Swinburne: "Having no taste for the dissection of dolls, I shall leave Daniel Deronda in his natural place above the ragshop door; and having no ear for the melodies of a Jew's harp, I shall leave the Spanish Gypsy to perform on that instrument to such audience as she may collect." Certainly Charlotte Brontë excelled George Eliot in almost every quality; the latter having, perhaps, more knowledge and culture, but not for a moment comparable with Charlotte's purity of passion, depth and fervour of feeling, inspiration, imagination and a most masterly style.

As for *Romola* I find it almost an elaborate failure in the endeavour to create the atmosphere of the period of Savonarola — that amazing age when the greatest spirits of the world were alive and producing works of unsurpassable genius — and in her too anatomical demonstration of the

varying vices and virtues of Tito: for she has none of that strange subtlety that a writer of novels must possess to delineate how this human soul may pass in the course of decomposition into some irremediable ruin. She is too much of the moralist to be able to present this character as a necessary and natural figure. She presents him — rather after the fashion of George Sand — as a fearful and warning example.

Take, for instance, the character of Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. It is incomparable of its kind; an absolutely conceived living being, who has enough nerves and enough passion to more or less extinguish the various male characters in George Eliot's novels. That Maggie Tulliver, in *The Mill on the Floss,* the finest of her novels, can be moved to any sense but that of bitter disgust and sickening disdain by a thing — I will not write a man — of Stephen Guest's character, is a lamentable and an ugly case of shameful failure; for as Swinburne says, "The last word of realism has surely been spoken, the last abyss of cynicism has surely been sounded and laid bare." And I am glad to note here that he dismisses her with this reference to three great French writers; using, of course, his invariable ironical paradoxes. "For a higher view and a more cheery aspect of the sex, we must turn back to those gentler teachers, those more flattering painters of our own — Laclos, Stendhal and Merrimé; we must take up *La Double Méprise:* — or *Le Rouge et le Noir* — or *Les Liaisons Dangereuses.*"

II

Prose is the language of what we call real life, and it is only in prose that an illusion of external reality can be given. Compare the whole process and existence of character in a play of Shakespeare and in a novel of Balzac. I choose Balzac among novelists because his mind is nearer to what is creative in the poet's mind than that of any novelist, and his method nearer to the method of the poet. Take King Lear and take Père Goriot. Goriot is a Lear at heart, and he suffers the same tortures and humiliations. But precisely where Lear grows up before the mind's eye into a vast cloud and shadowy mountain of trouble, Goriot grows downward into the earth and takes root there, wrapping the dust about all his fibres. Lear may exchange his crown for the fool's bauble, knowing nothing of it; but Goriot knows well enough the value of every banknote that his daughters rob him of. In that definiteness, that new power of "stationary" emotion in a firm and material way, lies one of the great opportunities of prose.

The genius of Prose is essentially different from the "genius of Poetry;" and that is the reason why writers like De Quincey and Ruskin

trespassed, as thieves do, on forbidden ground. Both tried to write prose as if they were writing verse, and both failed; Ruskin ruined by his fatal facility and De Quincey by his cultivating eloquence in rhetoric. Certain prose writers have written lyrical prose, because their genius at times drove them to do so, and with an absolute success. One finds such passages in Shakespeare and Blake and Pater and Lamb; in certain pages of Balzac and of Flaubert and of Meredith and of Conrad. Yet, in what I must call lyrical prose, there is a certain rhythm, but not that of rhymed verse; that is to say, if the inspiration were the same, the mediums are different: the rhythm of prose that has no metre and the rhythm of verse that has metre.

Take, for instance, Peacock, who was neither a great prose writer nor a great poet, but whose novels are unique in English, and are among the most scholarly, original and entertaining prose writings of the century.

> "A strain too learned for a shallow age,
> Too wide for selfish bigots, let his page
> Which charms the chosen spirits of the time
> Fold itself up for the serener clime
> Of years to come, and find its recompense
> In that just expectation."

So Shelley praises him, who was certainly aware of Peacock's clever scraps of rhymning that are like no other verse; the masterpiece being the comically heroic "War-song of Dinas Vawr." His learned wit, his satire upon the vulgarity of progress (on which he is one with Baudelaire and one with Meredith) are more continuously present in his prose than in his verse; yet his characters are caricatures, they speak a language that is not ours; but they are given sensational adventures, often comical in the extreme; and in these pages plenty of nonsense and of laughter and of satire and of serious prose with an undercurrent of bitter cynicism. He treats all his creatures cruelly, and I cannot help seeing the reason why Richard Garnett admired his prose so much: that there is something curiously alike and unlike in their humour.

Garnett himself told me, as I always thought, that *The Twilight of the Gods* was far and away the best book he had written. In France, Marcel Schwob and André Gide have done certain things comparable in their way with these learned inventions, these ironic "criticisms of life," these irreverent classical burlesques in which religion, morality, learning and all civilisation's conventions, are turned topsy-turvy, and presented in the ridiculousness of their unaccustomed attitude. But no modern man in England

has done anything remotely comparable with them, and neither Schwob nor André Gide has heaped mockery so high as in "Abdullah the Adite," and remained as sure a master of all the reticences of art and manners. This learned mockery has an undefinable quality, macabre, diabolical, a witchcraft of its own, which I can find in no other writer.

III

Is not a criticism of primary ideas, the only kind of criticism when one considers it, that is really worth writing? A critic may tell us that So-and-So has written a charming book, that it is the best of his charming books, that it is better or worse than another book by another writer with whom we see no necessity to compare him, that it is, in short, an "addition to literature;" well and good, here is someone's opinion, perhaps right, perhaps wrong; not very important if right, not easy to disprove if wrong. But let him tell us, in noting the precise quality of *A Rebours;* and its precise divergence from the tradition of naturalism: "Il ne s'aggissait plus tant de faire entrer dans l'art, par la répresentation, l'éxtériorité brute, que de tirer de cette éxtériorité même des motifs de rêve et de la révélation intérieure;" let him tell us in discussing the question of literary sincerity that a certain writer "est sincère, non parce qu'il avoue toute sa pensée, mais parce qu'il pense tout son aveu:" has he not added to the very substance of our thought, or touched that substance with new light?

The curious thing in regard to Benjamin Constant is that there was not a single interest, out of the many that occupied his life, which he did not destroy by some inconsequence of action, for no reason in the world, apparently, except some irrational necessity of doing exactly the opposite of what he ought to have done, of what he wanted to do. So he creates *Adolphe,* so much of himself in it, and makes him say in a memorable sentence, "Je me reposais, pour ainsi dire, dans l'indifférence des autres, de la fatigue de son amour." He was never tired of listening to himself, and the acute interest of his Journal consists in the absolute sincerity of its confessions, and at the same time the scrutinising self-consciousness of every word that is written down. "Il y a en moi deux personnes, dont l'un observe l'autre." So cold hearted is he that when perhaps his best friend, Mlle. Talma, is dying, he spends day and night by her bedside, overwhelmed with grief; and he writes in his Journal: "J'y étudie la mort." So out of this distressing kind of reality which afflicts the artist, he creates his art, *Adolphe,* a masterpiece of psychological narrative, from which the modern novel of analysis may have been said to have arisen, which is simply a human document in which

he has told us the story of his liaison with the writer of Corinne. She made him suffer for he writes: "Tous les volcans sont moins flamboyants qu'elle." He suffers, as his hero does because he can neither be intensely absorbed, nor, for one moment, indifferent; that very spirit of analysis which would seem to throw some doubt on the sincerity of his passion, does but intensify the acuteness with which he feels it. It is the turning of the sword in a wound. He sums up and typifies the artistic temperament at its acutest point of weakness; the temperament which can neither resist, nor dominate, nor even wholly succumb to, emotion; which is forever seeking its own hurt, with the persistence almost of mania; which, if it ruins other lives in the pursuit, as is supposed, of artistic purposes, gains at all events no personal satisfaction out of the bargain; except, indeed, when one has written Adolphe, the satisfaction of having lived unhappily for more than sixty years, and left behind one a hundred pages that are still read with admiration, sixty years afterwards.

Flaubert, possessed of an absolute belief that there exists but one way of expressing one thing, one word to call it by, one adjective to qualify, one verb to animate it, gave himself to superhuman labour for the discovery, in every phrase of that word, that verb, that adjective. And the desperate certitude in his spirit always was: "Among all the expressions in the world, all forms and turns of expression, there is but *one* — one form, one mode — to express all I want to say." He desired, above all things, impersonality; and yet, in spite of the fact that he is the most impersonal of novelists, the artist is always felt, for as Pater said; "his subjectivity must and will colour the incidents, as his very bodily eye *selects* the aspects of things." Yet again, in spite of the fact that Flaubert did keep *Madame Bovary* at a great distance from himself, we find in these pages the analyst and the lyric poet in equilibrium. It is the history of a woman, as carefully observed as any story that has ever been written, and observed in surroundings of the most extraordinary kind. He creates Emma cruelly, morbidly, marvellously; he creates in her, as Baudelaire says, the adulterous woman with a depraved imagination. "Elle se donne," he writes, "magnifiquement, généreusement, d'une manière toute masculine, à des drôles qui ne sont pas ses égaux, exactement comme les poètes se livrent à des drôlesses."

As Flaubert invented the rhythm of every sentence I choose this one from the novel I have referred to, this magnificently tragic sentence. "Et Emma se mit à rire, d'un rire atroce, frénétique, désespéré, croyant voir la face hideuse du miserable qui se dressait dans les ténèbres éternelles comme un épouvantement." Aeschylus might have put such words as these on the lying and crying lips of Clytemnestra in her atrocious speech after she has

slain Agamemnon. With this compare a sentence I translate from Pétrus Borel. "I have often heard that certain insects were made for the amusement of children: perhaps man also was created for the same pleasure of superior beings, who delight in torturing him, and disport themselves in his groans." This is a sentence which might almost have been written by Hardy, so clearly does it state, in an image like one of his own, the very centre of his philosophy. Take, for example, these sentences in *The Return of the Native.* "Yet, upon the whole, neither the man nor the woman lost dignity by sudden death. Misfortune had struck them gracefully, cutting off their erratic histories with a catastrophic dash."

Swinburne, who invariably over-praises Victor Hugo, over-praises his atrocious novel *L'Homme qui rit.* But I forgive him everything when he writes such Baudelairean sentences as these: "Bakilphedro, who plays the part of devil, is a bastard begotten by Iago upon his sister, Madame de Merteuil; having something of both, but diminished and degraded; wanting, for instance, the deep daemonic calm of their lifelong patience. He has too much heat of discontent, too much fever and fire, to know their perfect peace of spirit, the equable element of their souls, the quiet of mind in which they live and work out their work at leisure. He does not sin at rest, there is something of fume and fret in his wickedness. There is the peace of the devil, which passeth all understanding."

Certainly, for an absolutely diabolical dissection of three equally infamous characters, this is unsurpassable. Iago is not entirely malignant, nor is he abjectly vile, nor is he utterly dishonest: he is supreme in evil, and almost as far above vice as he is beyond virtue. He has not even a fleshly desire for Desdemona; yet he is the impassioned villain who "spins the plot." Can one conceive, as Swinburne conjectures, "something of Iago's attitude in hell — of his unalterable and indomitable posture for all eternity?" As for Madame Merteuil she is, in *Les Liaisons dangereuses,* not only a counterfoil for Valmont, but a spirit af almost inconceivable malignity; yet she is not as abnormal as Iago. She has a sublime lack of virtue, with an immense sense of her seductiveness. There is no grandeur in her evil, as there is in Valmont's. In the longest letter she writes, that Baudelaire praises, she confesses herself with so curious a shamelessness as to intrigue one. In comparing this for her Laclos shows the most sinister side of his genius. He shows her sterility, her depraved imagination, her deceit and her dissimulations: rarely the humiliations she has endured. As she is resolved on the ruin of Valmont she writes in this fashion: "Séduite par votre réputation, il me sembloit que vous manquiez à ma gloire; je brûlois de vous combattre corps à corps." She is not even a criminal, not even the symbol of one of

the poisonous women of the Renaissance, who smiled complacently after an assassination. Her nature is perverted by the lack of the intoxication of crime. The imagination which stands to her in the place of virtue has brought its revenge, and for her too there is only the release of death.

IV

George Borrow has always had a curious fascination for me: for this man, half Cornish and half French, with his peculiar kind of genius — such as one generally finds in mixed blood — is both creative and inventive, normal and abnormal, perverse and unpassionate, obscure and grimly humourous. I was very young when I read his masterpiece *Lavengro* (1851) in its original three volumes, from which I got my first taste for a sort of gypsy element in literature. The reading of that book did many things for me. It absorbed me from the first page with a curiously personal appeal, as of someone akin to me: the appeal, I suppose, to what was wild in my blood.

What Borrow really creates is a by no means undiscovered world: I mean the world of the gypsies; yet he is the first to discover their peculiar characteristics, their savagery and uncivilization; he gives them life, in their tents, on the road, along the hedges; he makes them speak, in their pure and corrupted dialects, much as they always speak, but nearly always with something of Borrow in them. They are imaginative: he gives them part of his imagination. They are not subtle, nor is he; they are not complex, he at times is complex; he paints their morality and immorality almost as Hogarth might have done.

In regard to the sense of fear, you find it in Shakespeare, in Balzac, everywhere; but never, I think, more intensely than in the chapters in *Lavengro* describing Borrow's paroxysm of fear in the dingle. There is nothing of the kind, in any language, equal to those pages of Borrow: they go deep down into some "obscure night of the soul;" they are abnormal. It is "the screaming horror" that takes possession of him. "The evil one was upon me; the inscrutable horror which I had felt from boyhood had once more taken possession of me. I uttered wild cries. I sat down with my back against a thorn-bush; the thorns entered my flesh, and when I felt them, I pressed harder against the bush; I thought the pain of the flesh might in some degree counteract the mental agony; presently I felt them no longer — the power of the mental horror was so great that it was impossible, with that upon me, to feel my pain from the thorns."

Borrow writes as if civilization did not exist, and he obtains, in his indirect way, an extraordinary directness. Really the most artificial of writers,

he is always true to that "peculiar mind and system of nerves" of which he was so well aware, and which drove him into all sorts of cunning ways of telling the truth, and making it at once bewildering and convincing.

I have often wondered why Robert Louis Stevenson was almost invariably looked on as a man of genius. He had touches of it, certainly; and therein lies part of the secret of his captivating the heart; why, quite by himself, he ranks with writers like Thoreau and with Dumas (one for a certain seductiveness of manner, the other for his extravagant passion for miraculous adventures); and why he appeals to us, not only from his curious charm as a literary vagrant — to some of us an irresistible charm — and from the exhilaration of the blood which he causes in us, and from the actual fever of his prose, and for his inhuman sense of life's whimsical distresses, of its cruelties and maladies and confusions, but from a certain gipsy and wayward grace, so like a woman's, that can thrill to the blood often more instantly than in the presence of the august perfection of classic beauty.

His style, as he admits, is never wholly original; a "sedulous ape," as he once humourously named himself, that aped the styles of Baudelaire and Hawthorne and Lamb and Hazlitt; and that never, except rarely and by certain happy accidents in his rejection of words and using some of them as if no one had ever used them before, attains the inevitable perfection of Baudelaire's prose style, nor the quintessential and exultant and tragic style of Lamb, which has, beyond any writer pre-eminent for charm, salt and sting; nor Montaigne's malign trickery of style, his roving imagination, his preoccupation with himself, who said so splendidly: "I have no other end in writing but to discover myself, who also shall peradventure be another thing tomorrow."

As in a tragic drama so in a tragic novel we must not forbid an artist in fiction to set before us strange instances of inconsistency and eccentricity in conduct as well as in action; but we require of him that he should make us feel such aberrations to be as clearly inevitable as they are certainly exceptional. Balzac has done that and Flaubert and Goncourt and Maupassant and Conrad. All these, at their greatest, are inevitable; only no novelist is ever consistently great. Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* is not, as he ought to have been, inevitable; for what is tragic and pathetic and eccentric in his character is flawed by the writer's failure in showing what ought to have been the intolerable and irresistible force of the temptation; his act is an act of envy, therefore a base act, and has none of the grandeur of Othello's jealousy, which makes one love him the more for that, more even because he is unconscious of Iago's poisoned tongue. Leontes excites our repulsion: he is a coward, selfish and deluded and ignoble.

At his finest I find in Charles Reade certain adventures almost worthy of Dumas: only he never had that over-flowing negro-like genius of the French novelist; who can be tedious at times, and can write very badly when he likes, for he never had much of a style. Yet, with all his suspense and the suddenness of his vivid action and of the living conversations of his furiously living creatures, he does really carry us along in an amazing way; equally in the tragic figure Edmund Dantès as in those of d'Artagnan and Aramis and Porthos.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) is partly made out of Wilde himself, partly out of two other men, both of whom are alive. Not being creative he was cruel enough to mix his somewhat poisonous colours after the fashion of an Impressionist painter, and so to give a treble reflection of three different temperaments instead of giving one. In any case, as Pater wrote: "Dorian himself, though a quite unsuccessful experiment in Epicureanism, in life as a fine art, is (till his inward spoiling takes visible effect suddenly, and in a moment, at the end of his story), a beautiful creature."

His peculiar kind of beauty might be imaged by a strangely coloured Eastern vessel, and hidden within it, a few delicate young serpents. For he has something of the coiled up life of the serpents, in his poisonous sins; sins he communicates to others, ruining their youthful lives with no deliberate malice, but simply because he cannot help it. He has no sense of shame, even in his most ignoble nights. Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face; but secret vices cannot be concealed; one sees them in the mere ironical curl of sinister lips, or in the enigmatical lifting of an eyelid. He has made the devil's bargain, but not in the sense in which Faustus sells his soul to Satan; yet he is always entangled in the painted sins, the more and more hideous aspects, of his intolerably accusing portrait, taken, certainly, in Wilde's usual manner, from *La Peau de Chagrin* of Balzac; only, and therein lies the immense difference, the man's life never shrinks, but the very lines and colours of his painted image shrivel, until the thing itself -- the thing he has come to hate as one hates hell — has its revenge.

Swinburne's *Love's Cross Currents* appeared originally under what is now its sub-title *A Year's Letters,* in a weekly periodical, long since extinct, called *The Tatler,* from 25 th August to 29 th December, 1877. It was written under the pseudonym of Mrs. Horace Manners, and was preceded by a letter "To the Author," supposed to come from some unnamed publisher or literary adviser, who returns her manuscript to the lady with much fault finding on the ground of morality. The letter ends: "I recommend you, therefore, to suppress, or even to destroy, this book, for two reasons: It is a false picture of domestic life in England, because it suggests

as possible the chance that a married lady may prefer some chance stranger to her husband, which is palpably and demonstrably absurd. It is also, as far as I can see, deficient in purpose and significance. Morality, I need not add, is the soul of art; a picture, poem, or story must be judged by the lesson it conveys. If it strengthens our hold upon fact, if it heightens our love of truth, if it rekindles our ardour for the right, it is admissible as good; if not, what shall we say of it?"

The two final sentences of the first chapter, now omitted, are amusing enough to seem characteristic: "For the worldling's sneer may silence religion, but philanthropy is a tough fox and dies hard. The pietist may subside on attack into actual sermonising, and thence into a dumb agony of appeal against what he hears — the impotence of sincere disgust; but infinite coarse chaff will not shut up the natural lecturer; he snuffs sharply at all implied objection, and comes up to time again, gasping, verbose and resolute." But is there not a certain needless loss in the omission of two or three of the piquant passages in French? One is on the woman of sixty who "seule sait mettre du fard moral sans jurer avec." There is another passage in French which comes out of p. 220; it is not clear why, for it is sprightly enough, as this is also, which drops out of p. 175. " 'Ce sang repandu, voyez-vous, mon enfant, c'était la monnaie de sa vertu.' I said I should have preferred it without the small change. 'Mais, avec de la grosse monnaie on n'achète jamais rien qui vaille, 'she said placidly." Then follows, as we now have it, "C'était décidément une femme forte." Such, so slight, and at times so uncalled for, are the changes in this "disinterment" of "so early an attempt in the great art of fiction or creation."

In defending the form of his story in letters, Swinburne invokes the names of Richardson and Laclos and "the giant genius of Balzac." But the *Memoire des deux jeunes Mariés* is full of firm reality, *Pamela* is full of patient analysis, and *Les Liaisons dangéreuses* is full of reality, analysis, and a hard, brilliant genius for psychology. Swinburne may have found in Laclos a little of his cynicism, though for that he need have gone no further than Stendhal, who is referred to in these pages, significantly. Someone says of someone: "I'd as soon read the *Chartreuse de Parme* as listen to her talk long; it is Stendhal diluted and transmuted." But neither in Laclos nor in Stendhal did he find that great novelist's gift which both have: that passion for life, and for the unravelling of the threads of life. His people and their doings are spectral, lunar; all the more so because their names are "Redgie," Frank, and only rarely Amicia; and because they talk schoolboy slang as schoolboys and French drawing-room slang as elderly people. They are presented by brilliant, descriptive or satiric touches; they say the cleverest

things of one another; they have a ghostly likeness to real people which one would be surprised that Swinburne should ever have tried to get, had he not repeated the same hopeless experiment in his modern play *The Sisters,* which sacrifices every possible charm of poetry or deep feeling to such a semblance; to so mere a mimicry of every day speech and manners. There is more reality in any mere Félise or Fragoletta than in the plausible polite letter-writers. It is impossible to care what they are doing or have done; not easy indeed, without close reading, to find out; and, while there is hardly a sentence which we cannot read with pleasure for its literary savour, its prim ironic elegance, there is not a page which we turn with the faintest thrill of curiosity. A novel which lacks interest may have every formal merit of writing, but it cannot have merit as a novel. The novel professes to show us men and women, alive and in action: the one thing vitally interesting to men and women.

ARTHUR SYMONS

MACABRE

Assembled in a graveyard,
Burying the pearly moths of Warawak,
All the gnats of Borneo
Brush their tails in rude derision
Against the moon.

CREMATORIUM

Pile five leaves under each
finger of your left hand —
let each be a leaf you love.
Then write on each a love-word —
something tender;
and burn them one by one.
. . . Gather the ashes into
the palm of your right hand,
scatter them in a dark wind.
Do this, do it all.
Then: never think about it,
never dream about it,
never sing about it!
Burn like the leaves, let your heart be
ashes of a fierce fire;
break, break, in Life's
great hand, —
that so I may cry of you to beauty;
"Place her charred dreams under
your fingers —
let each be a leaf you love.
Then write on each a love-word —
something tender;
and burn them one by one . . ."

JAMES DALY

THE LAY OF MALDOROR.

Selections From Third And Fourth Canto

Let us recall the names of those imaginary beings with angelic natures, which during the second canto my pen has drawn from a brain shining with a light emanated from them. They die, after their birth, like sparks on burnt paper the swift extinction of which the eye with difficulty follows. Leman . . . Lohengrin . . . Lombano . . . Holzer . . . One moment, you appeared to my enchanted view clad in the insignia of youth; but I allowed you to drop into chaos like a diving bell. You will never emerge. It is enough for me that I have your memory; you must give place to other substances, maybe less beautiful, which the stormy overflow of a love, resolved not to quench its thirst in the human race, will give birth to. Starved love, which would devour itself, did it not seek its food in celestial make believes; finally creates a pyramid of seraphim, more numerous than the insects which swarm in a drop of water and will weave them in an ellipse which will whirl about him. Meanwhile the traveler, arrested by the appearance of a cataract, would see in the distance, did he lift his face, a human being, led towards the cave of hell by a garland of living camellias! But . . . silence! the floating image of the fifth ideal slowly defines itself, like the vague folds of an aurora borealis, upon the vapoury perspective of my intellect, and more and more takes on a decided consistency . . . Mario and I skirt the shore. Our horses with stretched necks cleave the membranes of space, and strike sparks from the pebbles on the beach. The blast, which struck us full in the face, was swallowed up in our cloaks and made the hair of our twin heads fly backward. The gull by its cries and the movement of its wings in vain tried to warn us of the possible

proximity of the storm and cried out: "Where can they be going at so reckless a gallop?"

Plunged in thought we said nothing, but let ourselves be carried on the wings of our furious passage; the fisher, seeing us pass, swift as albatrosses, and imagining he sees, flying before him the *two mysterious brothers,* as they were called, because they were always together, quickly makes the sign of the cross and hides himself and his paralysed dog behind some deep rock. The natives of this place have heard strange things told of these two people, who cloud enwrapped appear on earth, at periods of great calamity; when some frightful war threatens to plant its harpoon in the chest of two rival countries, or when cholera with its sling, prepares to hurl putrefaction and death upon whole cities. The most ancient wreckers knit their brows, with a serious air, affirming that the two phantoms of whom each during hurricanes had remarked the vast spread of the black wings above the sand shoals and reefs, were the genius of earth and the genius of the sea, airing their majesty in the sky during the great revolutions of nature, united by an eternal amity, whose rarity and renown had brought forth the astonishment of endless links of generations.

It was said that, flying side by side like two Andean Condors they loved to hover in concentric circles among the strata of air in the neighbourhood of the sun; that in those parts they feed on the purest essence of light, but that they only decide with difficulty to lower the angle of their vertical flight towards the terrified orbit where turns the raging human globe, populated by cruel souls who massacre each other in fields where battles roar (when they do not kill each other secretly, in the hearts of towns, with daggers of hate or ambition) and who feed on beings full of life like themselves and placed a few degrees lower in the scale of existence. Or rather, when they make a firm resolution, in order to induce man to repent by the strophes of their prophecies, to swim, with huge strokes towards the sidereal regions where a planet moves in dense exhalations of avarice, pride, curses and swaggering, which rise like pesti-

lential vapours from its hideous surface, and appears as tiny as a ball, being almost invisible because of the distance; they do not fail to find occasion when they bitterly repent of their benevolence, misunderstood and spat upon, and go and hide themselves deep in volcanoes, to converse with the lively fire which boils in the vats of the main tunnels; or on the sea bed, to pleasantly set their disillusioned sight on the most ferocious monsters of the abyss, who seem to them models of kindness in comparison with the bastards of humanity. Night having come with its propitious darkness, they leap from the craters with their porphyry heads, from the undercurrents, and leave well behind them the rugged chamberpot where the constipated anus of the human cockatoo struggles, till they can no longer discern the swung silhouette of the foul planet. Then, disappointed by their fruitless attempt, and by the stars which compassionate their sadness, under the eye of God, the angel of earth and the angel of the sky, embrace weeping. Mario and he who galloped with him were not unaware of the vague and superstitious rumours which the fishermen of that part repeated when they sat up, whispering round the hearth; door and windows fast; while the night wind who yearned to warm himself made his whistling heard round the straw cabin, and with his strength shook these frail walls, their bases decorated with bits of shells left by the dying folds of waves.

We did not speak . . . What can two hearts say that love each other? Nothing. But our eyes told everything. I cautioned him to wrap his cloak more tightly round himself and he pointed out that my horse was outdistancing his own; each takes as much interest in the other's life as in his own; we do not laugh. He tries to smile at me, but I see that his face bears the marks of the terrible impressions which reflection has engraved there, continually bent over the Sphinxes, which with an oblique eye put to flight the great pangs of the intelligence of mortals. Seeing his manoeuvres futile, he turns his eyes away, champs his terrestrial bit with the foam of rage and looks at the horizon which flees at our approach.

I, in my turn, strive to recall his gilded youth to him, which like a queen, asks only to enter the palaces of pleasure; but he sees that the words issue with difficulty from my emaciated mouth, and that the years of my own spring are flown, sad and glacial, like an implacable dream which wanders over the banquetting tables and upon the satin beds, where the pale priestess of love sleeps, paid with the glint of gold, the bitter joys of disenchantment, the pestilential wrinkles of old age, the terrors of solitude and the torches of sorrow. In view of my futile manoeuvres, I am not astonished at not being able to make him happy; the Almighty appears to me equipped with instruments of torture; I turn my eyes away and gaze at the horizon which flees before us . . . Our horses gallop along the shore as though they fled the human eye . . . Mario is younger than myself; the damp weather and salt foam which spatter us bring the touch of cold to his lips, I say to him: "Take care . . . take care! Shut your lips, each against the other, do you not see the sharp claws of chaps, which furrow your skin with burning wounds?" He stares at my forehead and by a movement of his tongue replies:

"Yes I see the green claws; but I will not alter the natural arrangement of my mouth to make them fly. See if I lie. Since it appears to be the will of Providence I will conform. His will might have been better."

And I cried out: "I admire this noble vengeance."

I wanted to tear out my hair; but he forbade it with a severe look and I obeyed him respectfully. It grew late, and the eagle went back to his nest, hollowed in the infractuosities of the rock. He said to me: "I will lend you my cloak, to keep you from the cold; I have no need of it." I replied: "Woe betide you, if you do as you say. I will not have another suffer in my stead and, above all, you." He said nothing, for I was right, but I began to comfort him because of the too impetuous intonation of my words . . . Our horses galloped along the shore, as though they fled human eyes.

I raised my head like a vessel's prow lifted on a huge wave, and said to him: "Are you crying? I ask you, king of snow and fog. I do not see tears upon your face, handsome as the cactus flower; and your lids are dry as the beds of torrents; but deep in your eyes I discern a vat full of blood, which laps up innocence, bitten in the neck by one of the large scorpions. A strong wind sweeps down on the fire which warms the vat and scatters the dark flames even outside your sacred orbits. I have put my hair to your rosy brows and I have smelt an odour of burning because they are burning. Shut your eyes, or else your face calcined like volcanic lava, will fall in cinders into the palm of my hand." And he turning towards me, careless of the reins in his hand, looked at me tenderly while slowly he lowered and raised his lily-like lids, like the ebb and flow of the sea. He really wanted to reply to my daring question and this is how he did it: "Pay no attention to me. Even as the mists of rivers crawl along the slopes of hills and, once at the summit, leap into the air forming clouds, so your inquietudes on my account have insensibly accumulated with no reasonable excuse and form above your head the deceitful body of a disconsolate mirage. I assure you there is no fire in my eyes, though I have there a feeling as if my skull were plunged into a helmet of glowing coals. Why do you wish for the flesh of my innocence to boil in a vat, since I hear only very faint and confused cries which for me are but the moanings of the wind which passes over our heads? It is not possible that some scorpion has fixed his home and his sharp claws deep in my hacked orbit; I think rather that strong pincers crush my optic nerves. Nevertheless I am with you in the opinion that the blood which fills the copper was drawn from my veins by an invisible executioner, while I slept last night. I have awaited you a long time, beloved son of the ocean; and my languid arms engaged in vain combat with him who introduced himself into the vestibule of my house . . . Yes I feel that my spirit is shut tightly within the locked doors of my body and may not escape to fly far from those shores beaten by the human sea, nor longer witness

the spectacle of the livid pack of evils, without relax pursuing, through bays and gulfs of immense despondency, the human chamois: but I do not complain. I have accepted life like a wound, and I have forbidden suicide to heal the scar. I want the Creator to contemplate the gaping crevice every moment of eternity. That is the punishment I inflict on him."

Our steeds slowed down the speed of their steel hoofs; their bodies quivered like the hunter surprised by a troop of peccaries. It would not do for them to begin to listen to what we said. By force of listening, their intellects would grow and they might perhaps be able to understand us. Woe to them; for they will suffer more! Actually I am only thinking of the young boar of humanity: for does not the degree of intelligence which separates them from the other beings of creation seem to be accorded them but at the price of incalculable suffering? Follow my example, and let your silver spur dig into the sides of your steed . . . Our horses galloped along the shore as though they fled human eyes.

It was a spring day. Birds shed their songs in twitterings and mankind given up to his various duties, bathed in the holiness of fatigue. All things worked to their appointed ends, the trees, the planets, the squalls. All, save the Creator. He lay full length in the road; with his clothes torn. His lower lip hung like a sonniferous cable; his teeth were foul and dust mingled with the fair waves of his hair. Stupefied by a deep drowsiness and crushed against stones, his body made futile efforts to rise. His strength had given way and he lay there, weak as the earthworm, impassive as bark. Floods of wine filled the tracks hollowed by the nervous twitching of his shoulders. Pig-groined brutishness covered him with its protecting wings and looked at him amorously. With relaxed muscles his legs swept the ground like two blind masts. Blood flowed from his nostrils; his face had in falling, struck a post . . . He was drunk. Horribly

drunk! Drunk as a bug who throughout the night has mumbled three tuns of blood! He filled the echo with incoherent words which I take good care not to repeat here; if the arch drunkard does not respect himself, I must at least respect mankind. Did you know that the Creator . . . got drunk! Compassion for this lip, fouled in the cups of orgy! . . . The passing hedgehog dug its spine into his back and said: "That's for you. The sun has run half its course; work, malingerer! I do not eat the bread of others. Wait a bit, I'll show you something, when I call the cockatoo with the hooked beak." The passing woodpecker and the screech owl buried the whole of their beaks in his belly and said: "So much for you. What are you doing on this earth? Is it in order to offer the animals this lugubrious comedy? But I swear neither the mole nor the casoar nor the flamingo will imitate you." The passing donkey kicked him on the temple, and said: "So much for you. What have I done that you gave me such long ears? Everything including even the grasshopper despises me." The passing toad, spat on his forehead and said: "So much for you. Had you not made my eye so large and had I seen you in the condition in which I now see you, I would have hidden modestly the beauty of your limbs under a shower of buttercups, myosotis and camellias, that no one might see you." The passing lion, bowed his royal face, and said: "As for me, I respect him, although for the moment his splendour seems eclipsed. You others, who put on pride and are but cowards, since you have attacked him sleeping, would you be pleased, if, in his place, you put up with the curses from the passerby which you have not spared him?" Man, passing, stopped before the unknown Creator; and applauded by the crablouse and viper shat for three days upon his solemn visage! Woe to man, because of this insult; for he respected not his enemy, lying in a mess of mud, blood, and wine, defenceless and almost inanimate.

Then, the Creator wakened finally by these miserable insults, rose as best he could, and swaying, sat upon a stone, his arms

hanging like the two testicles of a consumptive; and threw a glassy look, without fire upon the whole of nature, which belonged to him. O humanity, you are precocious children; but I beg you, spare this great existence which has not yet finished brewing the foul liquor and having kept hardly enough strength to hold himself upright has fallen heavily upon this rock, where like a traveler it is seated. Note the passing beggar; he has seen that the dervish stretched forth a famished arm, and unwitting to whom he gives alms, throws a morsel of bread into the hand which implores pity. The Creator has expressed his gratitude by a nod of the head. Oh! you will never know how difficult it becomes to hold forever the reins of the universe! Sometimes the blood rushes into one's head, when one sets oneself to bring up out of the void one more comet and a new race of souls. The intellect, too much shaken from top to bottom draws back like one vanquished, and once in a lifetime, may fall into the errors of which you have been the witness.

I fell asleep upon the cliff. He who, unable to come up with it, has for a whole a day chased the ostrich across the desert, has had no time to take nourishment or to close his eyes. If it is he who reads me, he is capable of comprehending, if need be, what slumber weighed upon me. But, when the tempest has vertically, with the palm of its hand, pushed a vessel to the bottom of the sea, if, on the raft, one man remains of the whole crew, and he broken by fatigue and privations of every sort; and if the wave toss him like a wreck throughout hours, each, longer than a man's life, and if a frigate which later furrows with a split keel these lattitudes of desolation, perceives the wretch who promenades his wretched carcase on the ocean, conveying to him a succour all but too late, I imagine that this castaway will better understand to what a degree the coma of my senses was brought. Magnetism and chloroform, when they take the trouble, occasionally know how similarly to engender such lethargic cata-

lepsies. They bear no resemblance to death; it would be a great falsehood to say so. But let us get at once to the dream, so that the impatient, starved of this kind of reading matter, do not begin to roar like a school of macrocephalic cacholots who fight among themselves for a pregnant female. I dreamt that I had entered the body of a hog, and that I wallowed my bristles in the most miry marshes. Was it as a reward? Object of my prayers I no longer belonged to humanity. For myself, I understood the interpretation thus and felt a more than profound joy. Still, actively, I sought to find what virtuous act I had performed to merit this signal favour on the part of Providence. Now that I have resolved in my memory the diverse phases of this flattening out against the granite belly, during which, unperceived by me, the tide passed twice over this irreducible mass of dead matter and living flesh, it is perhaps not without utility to proclaim that the degradation was probably but a punishment, worked upon me by divine justice. But who knows its intimate necessities or the cause of its pestilential joys? The metamorphoses did not appear even to me other than the high and magnanimous echo of a perfect happiness, which I had long expected. Finally came the day, I was a hog. I tried my teeth on the bark of trees. I contemplated my snout with delight. Not the least scrap of my divinity remained; I could lift my spirit even to the excessive heights of this ineffable pleasure.

Listen to me then and do not blush, inexhaustible caricatures of beauty who take seriously the mocking bray of your entirely contemptible soul, and who do not understand why the Almighty in a stray moment of excellent buffoonery, which certainly does not surpass the great general laws of the grotesque, one day took the splendid pleasure of peopling a planet with singular and microscopic beings called *humanity,* and whose composition resembles that of the vermilion coral.

Yes, bones and fat, you have cause to blush, but listen. I do not appeal to your intelligence, you would make it spit blood by

the horror in which it holds you; forget it and be consistent with yourselves . . . . There, enough restraint. When I want to kill, I kill, that has often happened to me, and no one held me back. Human law still pursues me with its vengeance, though I would not attack the race I had so easily quitted; but my conscience did not at all reproach me. In the daytime I fought with my new fellows, and the ground was sprinkled with many layers of clotted blood. I was strongest and bore off every victory; burning wounds covered my body; I pretended not to be aware. The earth's animals went from me and I remained alone in my resplendent grandeur. What was my astonishment when after having swam across a river, that I might go far from those lands which my fury had depopulated, and gain other countries in which to plant my habits of murder and carnage, I tried to walk upon this flower strewn bank! My feet were paralysed; no movement came to betray the verity of this forced immobility and my supernatural efforts to continue my way. It was then I awoke and then I felt I became a man again. Providence thus made me understand, in a not inexplicable manner, that it did not wish my sublime objects accomplished even in dreams. To return to my original shape was such terrible anguish that at night I still weep. My sheets are continually soaked as though they had been passed through water, and every day I have them changed. If you do not believe me, visit me; you will check by your own reference, not only the verisimilitude but in addition the actual truth of my assertion. How often, since that night spent out on the cliff, have I not mixed with herds of swine, to regain as a right, my destroyed metamorphosis! It is time to leave these glorious memories which but leave behind them the pallid milky way of eternal regret.

It is not impossible to be the witness of an abnormal deviation, in the latent or visible functioning of nature's laws. Actually, if everyone takes the ingenious trouble to question the divers phases of his existence (without forgetting a single one, since it may be

that one which was destined to furnish the proof of what I advance), he will remember not without a certain astonishment, which would be comical in other circumstances, that, on a certain day, speaking first of objective things, he was witness of some phenomenon which seemed to surpass and actually did surpass the known ideas furnished by observation and experience, as for example the rain of toads, which magic spectacle must at first not have been understood by the learned; and that some other day, to mention secondly and lastly subjective things, his soul presented to the scrutinising glance of psychology, I do not go as far as to say an aberration of mind, (which nevertheless would be no less curious; on the contrary, would be more) but at least, not to create difficulties with certain cold people, who would never forgive the flagrant lucubrations of my exaggerations, an unaccustomed condition, quite often very grave, which marks the limit accorded by good sense to imagination, and which is sometimes, despite the ephemeral pact concluded between these two powers, unfortunately surpassed by the energetic pressure of will, but most often by the absence of its effective collaboration. Let us give some examples in its support, whose relevance it is not difficult to appreciate: if we always take an attentive moderation to spouse. I offer two: the carrying away by anger and the sicknesses of pride. I warn him who reads me to beware lest he create a vague idea, and with more reason false, of the beauties of literature which I pull to pieces in the excessively rapid development of my phrases. Alas; I would develop my thoughts and my comparisons slowly and very magnificently (but who can arrange his own time?) that each might more understand, if not my terror, at least, my stupefaction, when on a summer's evening, as the sun seemed to sink beneath the horizon, I saw swimming upon the sea, with large duck's feet in the place of extremities of legs and arms, carrying a dorsal fin, proportionately as long and as fined down as those of dolphins, a human being with vigorous muscles which the numerous shoals of fish (I saw in its train among other dwellers

in the sea, the torpedo fish, the Greenland Anarnak and the horrible Scorpéno, followed with very ostensible marks of the greatest admiration. Sometimes he plunged, and his viscous body appeared almost immediately two hundred yards away. The porpoises, who in my opinion have not stolen the reputation of good swimmers, could hardly follow even at a distance this amphibian of a new species. I do not think the reader would have occasion to be sorry, if he lent to my narrative less the harmful obstacles of a stupid credulity than the supreme service of a profound confidence which legitimately discusses with secret sympathy the poetic mysteries, so few in his opinion, which I undertake to reveal each time the occasion presents itself, as it has unexpectedly presented itself to-day intimately penetrated by the tonic smell of aquatic plants, which the refreshing breeze transports into this chapter, containing a monster who has appropriated the distinctive marks of the palmiped family. Who speaks of appropriation here? Let it be definitely known that man, by his multiple and complex nature, is not ignorant of the means of further enlarging his frontiers; he lives in water like the hippopotamus, among the upper layers of air like the osprey; and underground like the mole, the woodlouse and the sublimity of the earthworm. Such is in his shape, more or less concisely (but more than less) the exact criterion of the extremely fortifying consolation which I strive to engender in my spirit, when I think that the human being whom I perceived at an immense distance, swimming with his four limbs upon the surface of the waves, and outdoing the most superb cormorant, had not perhaps acquired the new change in extremities of arms and legs, but as the expiatory punishment of some unknown crime. There is no necessity for me to worry my head to fabricate beforehand the melancholy pills of pity, for, I did not know that this man, whose arms alternately struck the bitter waves, while his feet, with a force as great as that possessed by the spiral horn of the narwhal, occasioned the ebb of aquatic strata, had no more voluntarily taken on these extraordinary

shapes, than had them imposed as a punishment. According to what I learned later, here is the simple truth; the prolongation of existence in the fluid element had led insensibly in the human being who had exiled himself from rugged continents, to the important, but not essential changes, which I had remarked in that object which a passably vague glance had made me mistake, from the primordial moment of its apparition (by an inexcusable carelessness whose vagaries cause the extremely painful feeling which psychologists and lovers of prudence will so easily understand) for a fish of a curious shape, not yet described in the classification of naturalists; but which may occur in their posthumous works, though I would not have the pardonable pretention of inclining to this last supposition, imagined under too theoretical circumstances. Actually this amphibian (since amphibia there are, one being unable to affirm the contrary) was only visible to myself; abstraction created out of fish and cetacean, for I saw how several peasants who had stopped to regard my face, troubled by this supernatural phenomenon; sought vainly to discover why my eyes were continually fixed with what appeared an invincible perseverance, but which in reality was not, on a place in the sea where they themselves discovered only a miserable and limited quantity of shoals of fish of every kind, and distended the opening of their imposing mouths perhaps as wide as a whale's. It made them smile but not blanch as it did me; they said in their picturesque dialect, and they were not so stupid as not to mentally remark that I did not regard the pastoral evolutions of the fish, since my sight was directed much more ahead.

In such fashion that as far as it concerns me, mechanically turning my eyes in the direction of the remarkable stretch of these powerful mouths, I said to myself that unless in the whole universe some pelican could be found huge as a mountain or at least a promontory (admire, I beg of you, the nicety of the restriction which does not yield one inch of ground), no beak of bird of prey, or jaw of wild animal would ever be able to surpass, or even equal,

each of these gaping, but too lugubrious craters. And yet, though I attach a good deal to the sympathetic use of metaphor (this rhetorical figure renders many services to human aspirations towards the infinite, which ordinarily those who are imbued with prejudice or false ideas, which are the same thing, do not attempt to encourage,) it is no less true that the grinning mouths of these peasants were actually large enough to swallow three whales. Let us contract our thoughts still more, be serious, and content ourselves with three tiny elephants newly born. In one stroke the amphibian left half a mile of frothing wake behind him. During the hardly perceptible moment when the arm stretched before it was suspended in air, and before it again lowered itself, its spread fingers joined by a fold of skin like a membrane, seemed to leap to the heights of space and catch at the stars. Upright on a rock, I made use of my hands as a megaphone and while the crabs and craw fish fled into the obscurity of the most secret crevices, cried out: "O you whose swimming gains upon the flight of the frigate's tall wings, if you still comprehend the significance of those great bursts of voice which humanity hurls powerfully forth as the faithful interpreter of its secret thought, deign to stop a moment in your rapid progress and tell me roughly the stages of your real history. But I warn you that there is no need to speak to me if your audacious design is to bring to birth in me friendliness and the veneration I felt for you, the moment I first saw you accomplishing your unconquerable and rectilineal pilgrimage, with the shark's strength and grace."

A sigh which chilled my bones and at which the rock reeled, upon which the soles of my feet rested, (unless it was myself who reeled owing to the brusque penetration of the sonorous waves, conveying to my ear such a despairing cry) was heard unto the bowels of earth; the fish plunged beneath the waves with the noise of an avalanche. The very amphibian dared not too closely approach the shore; but when he was assured that his voice reached my tympanum distinctly enough, he reduced the activity of his webbed

limbs, but maintaining his wrack covered bust above the bellowing waves, I saw him bend his forehead as though by a solemn command to invoke the wandering pack of memories. I dared not interrupt him in this sacredly archeological occupation; plunged in the past, he seemed a reef. Finally he spoke thus: "The centipede does not lack enemies, the fantastic beauty of his innumerable legs instead of drawing to him the sympathy of the animals, maybe is but to them the powerful stimulant of a jealous irritation. And it would not surprise me to hear that that insect is exposed to the most furious hatreds. I will hide from you the place of my birth, since it does not concern my story, but the shame which was reflected upon my family concerns it. My father and my mother (God forgive them!) after a year of expectation, saw heaven bless their prayers; two twins, my brother and myself, saw the light. An additional cause to love each other. But it was not as I say. Because I was the more beautiful of the two, and the more intelligent, my brother hated me and did not trouble to hide his feelings; that is why my father and my mother made most of their love fall upon me, while by my own sincere and constant love, I tried to calm a soul which had no right to rebel against him who had been drawn from the same flesh. Then my brother knew no bounds to his fury, and with the most impossible calumnies destroyed me in my parents' heart. For fifteen years I have lived in a cell with grubs and decayed water for nourishment. I will not relate in detail the unheard of torments to which I was subjected in the unending and unjust sequestration. Sometimes, at a given moment of the day, one of the three tyrants suddenly entered in his turn loaded with pincers, tongs and various implements of torture. The cries which these tortures dragged from me left them immoveable, the abundant loss of my blood made them smile. O brother, original cause of all my ills, I have forgiven you! Is it possible that a blind rage cannot in the end open its eyes! I have reflected much in my eternal prison. You will divine what my general hatred against humanity became. The progressive etio-

lation, the solitude of body and soul had not yet made me lose all my reason to the point of nurturing resentment against those whom I had not ceased to love: triple pillory to which I was enslaved. I succeeded in regaining my liberty by a ruse. Disgusted with the inhabitants of the continent, who though they called themselves my fellows, and do not up till now seem in any way to resemble me (if they think I am like them, why do they hurt me?) I made my way to the beach's pebbles, firmly resolved to kill myself, if the sea must offer me the anterior reminiscence of a fatally lived existence. Will you believe your eyes? From the moment I fled the paternal house, I have not been as sorry as you think to dwell in the sea and its crystal caves. Providence, as you see, has partly given me a swan's construction. I live in peace with the fish, and they procure me the food I need, as if I were their king. I will whistle in a certain way, provided you have no objection, and you will see how they will reappear."

It happened as he had said. He resumed his regal swimming surrounded by his train of subjects, and although at the end of some seconds he had completely disappeared from my sight; with a telescope I was still able to distinguish him on the remotest rim of the horizon. With one hand he swam, with the other he wiped his eyes, which the terrible constraint of having approached firm land, had injected with blood. He had behaved thus to please me. I cast the revealing instrument against the beetling precipice; it leapt from rock to rock and the waves received its scattered fragments; such were the last demonstration and supreme good-bye in which I bowed as in a dream, before a noble and unfortunate intelligence! And yet, everything which happened that summer evening was real.

COMTE DE LAUTRÉAMONT

(To be continued)

(Translated by John Rodker)

THE FLOWER-SPHYNX.

— 1 —

From their spiderwebs the beggars let themselves down.
In their black train are held the downy moon the hushed lambs the flowers without keels and the retrieving bats.
Before the pinnacles of flowers and the curtains of summer sprouts that tremble under the breath of a two horsepower demimondaine the seven barbarous brother stars pass in parade.
In out of the way places little palm sundays are still being observed.
For want of asses the saviours ride in on bicycles.
The King of this city is a rainbow-eater.

— 2 —

Down from the calendar come the crucified flowers the addresses of the exposed and the foundation stones of the residences.
In that marble throat lie the rolled up song-strings.
The busts of dead lionhearted animals adorn the public squares.
The ill-born the fleshly family trees choked with ingrown erotic blocks the shaven horses the pouches of fire are all carried out in the wicker basket.
The thousand towers are built of missals.
Upon them fall from the heavenly star-thatch vermin and the peopled moon.

— 3 —

The chambermaids come gliding in on tortoise-shell rails.
In their aprons they bear the lurid fragments of the broken sun.
In the great arch the caryatidsurinate time like slavejuice.
From the flagstaff of the city gleams the huge ether jellyfish.
Sailors had built a pirate ship in the cavern of its belly.
The plant-guillotine goes puffing through the streets.
The sabine hills sir have not been properly adjusted. Hang too high in fact above the stage. Were the ropes too short? The lynchgong and the jaws of the sixtine prayer mill come crowding through the gap.
The gigantic good-luck balls of black earth go skipping over the sea.

— 4 —

At the sound of a bell a crumpled star whirls about.
The carpets which were laid over the mountains for the dream and cloud animals are brushed cleaned and folded up.
The carcass mountains bedecked with false teeth curls and wedding rings which i took for ruin-stained eagles are simply pendulum weights wound up in the insides of the monuments.
The professional lips of the Laps which i took to be cooing carrierpigeons are merely the carcass mountains decked with false teeth curls and wedding rings.
The forest is a bellows.

HANS ARP

(Translated from the German by M. J.)

THE GREAT AMERICAN BILLPOSTER

The art of a people is a two-edged sword: it spring from the moods and virtues of that people; and it works secretly and mightily to mould the virtues of that people. But we have learned recently to extend the meaning of "art", inasmuch as modern man expresses himself in a far greater variety of manners than did prehistoric or classical man. An ethnological study of a group such as the Americans (of the United States of America) could no longer retrict itself to its politics, sculpture, and mythology; for, thanks to the aggressive application of the arts to new inventions, we find that the automobile is on the road to becoming a thing of beauty and that the advertisements contain the fables of this people. We would, thus, be obliged to observe the motion picture, the sports, the machinery, and many other aspects of the group's behaviour in order to really know its culture.

The prospect of human activities in America is such a rich twisted bottomless thing that it is all we can do to segregate a few aspects of these activities, which, studied in an intensive, localized manner, may yield conclusions applying to our problems.

It has been complained that America lacks an indigenous art, that Americans are not autocthonous enough, that they are a babel of different races. But in reality, America is a *milieu,* as Professor Santayanna has called it, a distinct "situation," and "Americanism the expression of a present material environment," so that "the immigrants at once feel themselves and actually become typical Americans, more instinct with an aggressive Americanism than the natives of Cape Cod or the poor whites of the South."[1] The difficulty can be found precisely among those Thirty Americans (intellectuals) who contributed to "Civilization in the United States." It has not been perceived by them that there is an informed "material environment" moulding and launching the American type. "Outdoor advertising," they cry, "should be removed from sight with all possible haste."[2] That they would abolish the billposter is ample proof of their failure to understand the unaffected beauty and wisdom of the American *milieu.*

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[1] *Marginal Notes on Civilization in the United States, by G. Santayanna, Dial, June, 1922.*

[2] *Civilization in the United States, An Inquiry by Thirty Americans, edited by Harold Stearns (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.)*

America will never enjoy an indigenous art, if, led by its Intellectuals, it adopts approved European methods of living or painting or writing. Poetry in America which imitates British romanticism is as sterile as that which imitates French symbolism is bastard. The prose in America which seeks to emulate the correct cold objectivity of a Flaubert or the ironic naturalism of a Turgenieff takes an equally false direction. An indigenous art is a permanent contribution to the world's knowledge, and an artist whose works are charged with the virtues peculiar to his *milieu is* an event of the first importance.

It is time to examine our home products sympathetically, to judge if they are not sprouting with an authentic beauty that justifies their outlandish departures from the past or from previous European traditions. (I say "previous" advisedly, because the Old World is become fearfully americanized, what of the "telephone, the trolley-car, the department store and the advertising press," and an American who loves these things is conscious in Europe of a painful nostalgia, whereby the material environment of his country becomes highly tangible and provocative through its very distance from him.)

The problem is, thus, to silence for the moment, the anguished voices of the Thirty Americans and to plunge hardily into that effervescent revolving cacaphonous milieu (which not so remotely resembles the Purgatory of Dante), where the Billposters enunciate their wisdom, the Cinema transports us, the newspapers intone their gaudy jargon; where athletes play upon the frenetic passions of baseball crowds, and sky-scrapers rise lyrically to the exotic rhythms of jazz bands which upon waking up we find to be nothing but the drilling of pneumatic hammers on steel girders. We must have poets who have dared the lightning, who come to us out of the heart of this chimera; novelists who express for us its mad humor.

A stranger, nearing the port of New York for the first time and peering anxiously toward this fabulous city, would perceive, as the first indications of its culture and personality, gigantic incandescent messages shooting fitfully over the dark waters: COLGATES . . . HECKER'S FLOUR . . AMERICAN SUGAR REFINERY. These solemn auguries of America, passing in brilliant illuminations across the sea, would serve as a majestic prelude to the strange music of this people. Thereafter, in every walk, in every ride in the subway, in every talk with a friend, some meaningful legend, some Open Sesame (as 57!) would be thundering softly in the back of his brain.

Words, expressions, names, become nationally known and enter into the daily speech. These experiences are received with varying degrees of directness: sometimes the fact that "United States Tires are good tires" is merely refracted into the brain by a series of repercussions, and lodges there with the other legends in a distinct layer of the consciousness. By this one addition, among many, has the American become profoundly different from the Chinaman or Afghanistan (races which I suspect of not being subject, at the present hour, to the searching publicity which we enjoy in America.)

The needs of an industry in America based upon the principle of quantity production, have brought into being the institution of Advertising. (Thus, "It Pays to Advertise.") Like all social or industrial institutions born of the American environment it reflects faithfully the character thereof. The Tired Business Man and the suburban wife are painted as never in any epic by Mary Roberts Rinehart. The dominant male, the Captain of Industry are pictured in concise vivid wireless messages such as:

TO those who
prefer to leave
behind them "mon-
uments in rows of
flaming smoke-
stacks" rather than
monuments of
marble, possession
of an H. C. S. fol-
lows as a matter of
course.

And note the virility of

DRIVEN
and loved
by men who
brook no short-
comings in man,
beast or motor.
They subject it
to hard tasks, and
it always meets
their moods.

The American athlete, lover of unwarlike violence and motion is supreme in a collection of automobile announcements. His bronzed, handsome, genial visage gleams unblemished in such as statement as

THE NEW BUICK SPORT ROADSTER FOR 1923

Built expressly for active out-of-doors men and women who regard a car as a companion and driving a pleasure. Every thing of strength power and speed suggested by its low hung graceful body is quickly realized on the open road.

And to appease the known love for detail, fact, veritable progress, as well as the hobby for puttering with machinery the poet added:

A distinctively new spring suspension smooths out the roughest going at any speed. Wherever it appears the Buick sport roadster with its smart maroon body, khaki top, red wheels and black running gear wins immediate attention.

With a finely characteristic arrogance, which has never offended the public, the concluding motto asserts:

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT
BUICK WILL BUILD THEM.

Our American is healthy, sound, liberty-loving but at the same time he is fastidious, loves elegance, an elegance of his own after his fashion. The Arrow collar publicity brings these elements into play. But it is in his shoes that he is most in his element, — most fastidious about his shoes and their peculiar modes.

BEACH or mountains - hotel cottaj, camp ~ wherever you go this summer, this breezy white buck oxford wil be a fit companion ~ Tan skeleton saddl, tan back stay short wing tip, fibr soles ~

The American is emotional and generous, but at the same time he is thrifty:

Usury.

SIX PER CENT is considered a fair rate of interest; too high a rate of interest is condemned as usury.
Yet there are several thousand American homes in which an IDEAL TYPE A HEAT MACHINE is paying back 33⅓ per cent on its cost — so great is the proportion of fuel saved, and so little does it depreciate in comparison with cheaper heating plants.

Superstition, is another striking quality; he is far more amenable to suggestion, to hypnosis rather than to logic:

ASK DAD HE KNOWS
ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE

or better this:

DAY BY DAY IN EVERY WAY
I AM GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.

There is an uproarious self-assertion, fantastic, audacious, rabelaisian, if you will, in the following bald statement:

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES

GLORIFIES THE AMERICAN GIRL.

A strong social sense is also to be noted; the suburban wife again, and her love of a rather standard refinement, a rather uniform loveliness:

SAMPLER INVITES YOU.

— to an altogether unusual experience in sweets

— to a candy package which reflects the quaint odd beauty of the cross-stitch work of long ago.

The advertisements in newspapers and magazines having over a hundred thousand circulation reflect the national temperament with great clairvoyance. The selection of the above specimens was designed to be suggestive rather exhaustive, reflecting only a few facets of the composite American type. They came about as the fulfillment of a practical need in business; they were "successful" advertisements by virtue of their immediacy to the public pulse, and thus compose a faithful record of the national tastes, the changing philosophy, the hopes and fears of a people; they compose, in fact, the "folklore" of modern times.

II.

The most striking conclusion drawn from a study of specimen advertisements is that the American business man, in the short daily time at his disposal, reads the most daring and ingenuous literature of the age. The particular restrictions of this medium make for extraordinary ingenuity in the "copy writer;" the call for vigor of style, conviction, and interest, are probably more stimulating by far toward creating beautiful conceptions than an intensive course in Victorian poetry at Harvard University. The terse vivid slang of the people has been swiftly transmitted to this class of writers, along with a willingness to depart from syntax, to venture sentence forms and word constructions which are at times breath-taking, if anything, and in all cases far more arresting and provocative than 99 per cent of the stuff that passes for poetry in our specialized magazines. They are a most

amiable band of poets, without the piffle of the teacup type, their hair closely trimmed, their shoes thought-inspiring. All design on immortality, on seats in the Academy, all schemes for hoodwinking posterity, have been renounced by them in favor of ample salaries and smoothly running motorcars.

The need for dealing with definite facts, for writing a little poem about an automobile tire or a pair of stockings, lends their work an exotic flavor — exotic, I say, only when viewed externally and objectively, since it is a perfectly indigenous product. Outside of these accidents, their motives, i. e., to sell a story or a belief, to the public, with burning sincerity and vigor of style, closely parallel those of the old minnesingers, or of Shakespeare and Molière, immensely successful "copy-writers" in their day.

Let us consider for a moment Keats' adroit line:

The beaded bubbles winking at the brim

and also consider the anonymous genius who wrote:

MEATY MARROWY OXTAIL JOINTS

The motives of these two young men — I take it that the contemporary poet is also young and bears a sensitive and wistful spirit beneath the mask of his closely trimmed hair and his Hart Schaffner Marx suit — the motives are superficially different, since the latter was written for the glorification of Campbell's soup and the former for that of Psyche, but they both arrive at the same end, a line of pure poetry, by the same mental processes. Save that the advertising writer being immune from the blighting attacks of some contemporary Edinburgh Review (surely the Atlantic Monthly would never pay him such unseemly and cruel attentions) can proceed with the utmost freedom in his choice of form or diction to such modern flights as:

"The velvety clutch responds to the merest pressure . . . the pliant but positive gears engage silently at a touch of the convenient control . . . the compensating spring suspension cushions the car gently over ridge and rut as it clings to its course unwaveringly."

The rhythm of prose is one of the most intricate problems in all the arts. Here a man has sounded most intriguing and mysterious tempos with a lightness and felicity that is only rarely attained by recognized masters of prose fiction. Simply lovely work. "The pliant but positive gears engage silently . . ." is a profound utterance, reverberant with meanings and shadows.

At times some anonymous master of prosody bursts into perfect metrical verses, which send the glory of his product ringing and echoing through forty-eight states.

AN HOUR A DAY IN A TWIN SIX
IS LITERALLY A DIFFERENT KIND OF AN HOUR OR A DAY

or an alexandrine like this:

THEIRS IS A TYPE AND KIND OF ENJOYMENT SET APART.

Or they may be at times roguishly paradoxical and nonsensical:

The craftmanship of this example is excellent, beginning with the statement of a general principle and ending in a perfect triumph of precisions. The same process can be noted in the following:

VENICE at her best was French, so Paris only borrows from her own for the new Venetian silhouette. Like a little glimpse of Venice at her carnival time come frocks of soft crêpe silks or chiffon velvet fitted slimly to the waistline and flaring in every direction below; taffeta dinner or evening frocks with frilled basques; also frocks of Chéruit wool twill with circular skirts.

The language of modern poetry becomes thus enriched by the use of technical expressions and names which have attained significance in America. One must work more cnunningly in devising a poem, arranging its typography and its stance, than did our predecessors. And when it is remembered that these men must produce new aspects of the same subject constantly and freshly, the formidable intellects at work can be sensed. It is a thrilling business, a fascinating genre, and it is easy to see *why our literature is so impoverished and where the creative genius has all gone.*

Contemporary American writing is at a very uncertain point in its career, bewildered for ways to follow. If our younger writers tend to become more sensitive to the particular qualities in their material environment, one might well imagine their giving and taking fresh stimulus and novelty of the literature of the billposter. What new devices and surprises might come of merely appreciating, for instance, the possibilities of the salesmanship principle for the technique of writing. The advertising columns in America are as "armies with banners."

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

Printed by Rich. Labisch & Co., Graphische Kunstanstalt G.m.b. H., Berlin (Germany)

IT IS WITH GREAT REGRET THAT WE ANNOUNCE THE RESIGNATION OF MR. EDWARD STORER AS ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF BROOM. ALTHOUGH UNABLE TO LEAVE ITALY AT PRESENT HE WILL CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE WITH US FROM ROME WHERE HIS FAMILIARITY WITH LITERARY ITALY RENDERS HIS SERVICES OF GREAT VALUE.

MR. MATTHEW JOSEPHSON ALREADY KNOWN TO READERS OF BROOM WILL ACT AS ASSOCIATE EDITOR IN MR. STORER'S PLACE.

ONE YEAR OF BROOM.

THE PRESENT ISSUE OF BROOM COMPLETES THE CYCLE OF ITS FIRST YEAR.

IN THIS YEAR BROOM HAS ATTAINED A FULL GROWN INDIVIDUALITY SO FAR APART FROM OTHER MAGAZINES THAT NONE CAN GUESS WHAT NEW ARTISTIC SURPRISES ARE IN STORE.

THE WORK OF MODERN ARTISTS AND WRITERS WHICH WILL APPEAR IN BROOM'S PAGES DURING THE COMING YEAR WILL BE EVEN MORE SURPRISING AND SIGNIFICANT.

SUBSCRIBERS WHO BEGAN WITH THE ISSUE OF NOVEMBER 1921 ARE URGED TO RENEW THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS AT ONCE. THIS WILL BE OF GREAT HELP TO US OWING TO SLOW MAILS BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

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B-11-22

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Inside or Upstairs?

The impression is very general that during the summer months more passengers ride on top of the Fifth Avenue buses than ride inside. The checking of the Fifth Avenue Coach Company shows that this impression is incorrect. In only one month of the year—June—are more passengers carried on top than are carried inside. This is undoubtedly because the extreme heat of summer days causes passengers to seek the shaded inside seats.

In the month of May, 1921, the buses carried 5,216,250 passengers—approximately 51% on top, 49% inside.

In June 61% rode on top, 39% inside.

In July and August 40% of the passengers rode on top, 60% inside.

In September and October, usually very pleasant months, 46% of the passengers rode on top, 54% inside.

The Coach Company's checking shows an average of 68% of the passengers ride inside during the year. This is because of rain, snow, cold, wind, etc., and with a great many people the objection to climbing the stairs. 37,000,000 passengers rode inside the buses in the past 12 months, 17,000,000 upstairs.

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