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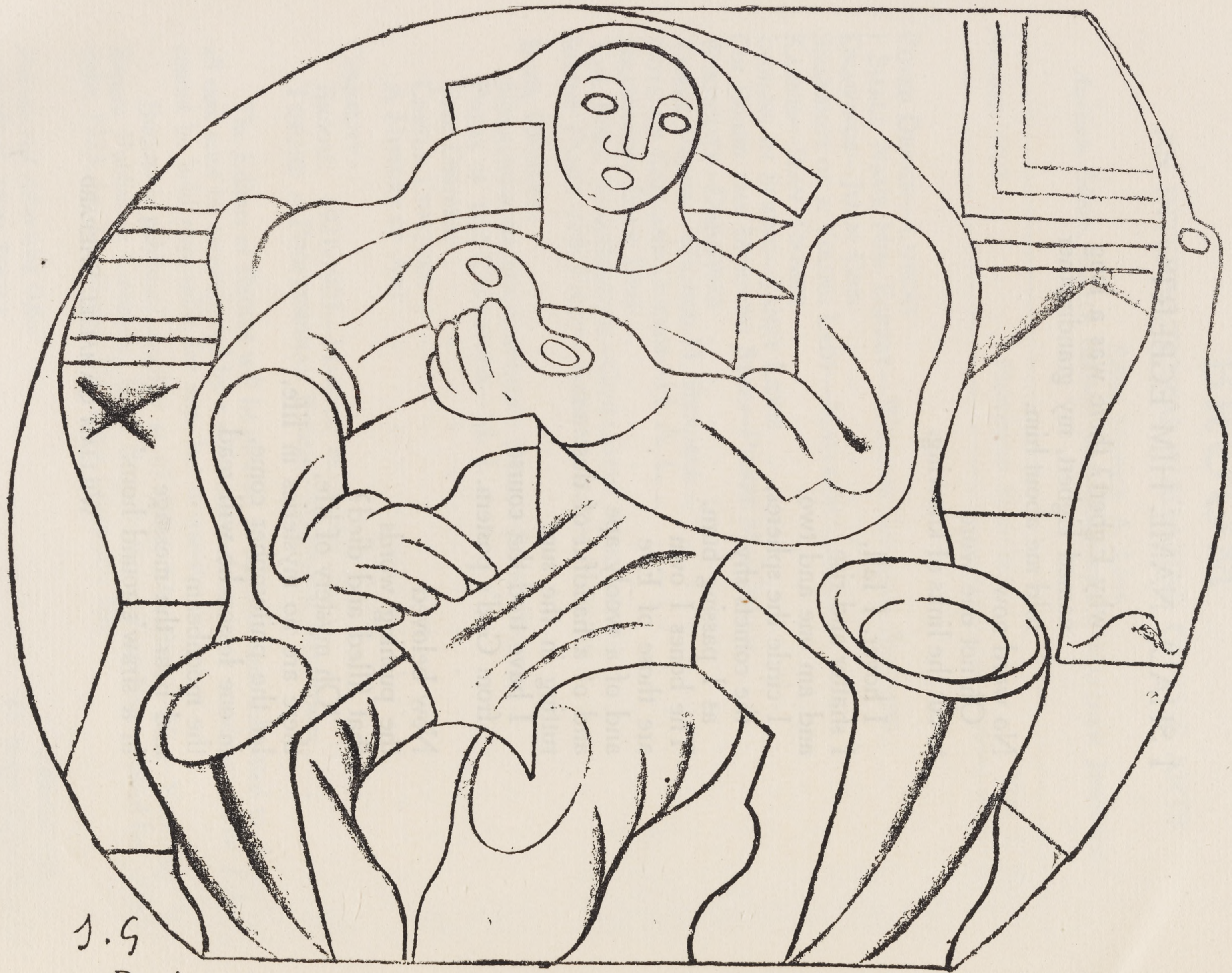
I SHALL NAME HIM EGBERT

why Egbert? there was a king
named Egbert, my grandmother
told me about him.
No word now,
Oh not one word
to cut the links of knowing.

I hover, I fall,
I shatter and rise
and am one and two.
I circle the spheres,
the comets shy
as I passing burn.
The bones I own
are those of Eve
and of a wooly ape
and of a handful of dust
rutting in the sun.
I have trod the course
from God's postern.

Now beloved
the pushing words
that filled and died?
"Oh mystery of life,
there are no mysteries in life,
let the philosopher come,
in one lesson he will read
the moonbeam
and hear the message
in a straw's round horn."

WILLIAM GAMALIEL SHEPARD



Drawing

Juan Gris

SNAPSHOT OF A YOUNG LADY

Biggest of its kind in the world. The blue rubberneck bus with a cargo of 25 brides and 25 grooms from Jersey City and points west (plus an unmarried New Yorker) turned hugely from Fifth Avenue into one of the East Sixties, and stopped.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, on your left is the residence of Miss Virginia Johnson the heiress to millions who is rapidly becoming famous for her untiring pursuit of Hawkbill the master criminal and her courage in face of his threats although but a slip of a girl she follows him from the gilded clubs of Westchester County to the haunts of Lower West Side gangsters and has been called 'by a jury of twelve qualified experts the perfect type of American girl for whom billions are earned on Wall Street and spent in Paris and in fact the heroine of every novel of every moving picture. . .'"

A window opened in the Johnson mansion and a printed streamer unrolled. It bore the legend:

THE VICISSITUDES OF VIRGINIA

A Film from the Life

Released in all good playhouses May 27

Pale, lovely and courageous a face appeared at the window, with hazel eyes and a kissable pouting mouth under a mound of golden hair. Virginia Johnson. I became conscious of a desire, not entirely unselfish, to aid her at any cost in the pursuit of Hawkbill.

". . . It was her miniature which pioneers hid next to their hearts when crossing the Alleghanies when crossing the Great Valley her portrait and none other which was born tenderly by New Bedford whaling captains round the Cape and round the world and home."

I followed an impulse to leap from the car, rush to her door. I rang obstinately. I pounded on the glass between the iron grills with all my forces. Nobody came, and with a gradual miasma of literature the slow night fell. A blue patrolman watched me. The rubberneck bus had disappeared: at 125th Street it overturned suddenly and all my companions, fifty, without distinction of sex, were killed.

"Come!" she said, and tapped me on the shoulder with her white hand. I rose to follow.

I was Smith Masterman: why should I follow her? A scientist of repute, a star reporter on Manhattan's biggest daily, a criminal investigator to whom the mystery of the Kennedy diamonds had recently been entrusted. It was not my only case. I was endeavouring at the same time to unravel the Saltoun murder, which seemed to be linked uncannily with the disappearance of 109 matched diamonds the size of robin's eggs, that sole and immense fortune of the beautiful Mrs. Robinson Kennedy—Ada, as I had learned to call her. And there was Hawkbill, the master criminal whose nose in the shape of a vulture's beak had earned him this sobriquet. He baffled my every step. Should I follow this girl—more beautiful than Ada Kennedy had ever been—she would lead me almost certainly into his power. Listen. Is somebody knocking at the door?

"Come!" she said again. "I am afraid, Father . . ."

Her cheeks went white and red as if the hands of Hawkbill were at her throat already. A tear gathered, there, at a corner of her enormous hazel eyes, under the mound of golden hair. I hesitated no longer. I followed her and should have followed if Hawkbill had been Satan.

My room contained a few worn chairs, a jumble of scientific apparatus, a typewriter: companions and tools of my hasty career. I stole a look at them—perhaps the last—and hurried down the stairs into her limousine. It turned northward.

She huddles there beside me. A bond of sympathy unites us invisibly as if during all my life I had written about no one else and for no other audience. She whispers, "We shall be too late." I try to comfort her, but a sense of catastrophe weighs on me so heavily that words refuse to come. Memories jumbled in an old cigar box.

We halted before her mansion in the sixties. Walters, the butler, seemed to be waiting and swung the door open before we crossed the sidewalk. I remarked his sideburns, his disingenuous eyes, a spot on his waistcoat which might have been blood. We rushed upstairs. On the way I stopped to examine a sheet of yellow paper, without watermark, torn from the sort of pad which is used in high schools, pinned negligently to a Gobelins tapestry. It contained the rude image of a falcon's beak.

Were we indeed too late?

On the second floor is the Johnson library, or rather the room which people have agreed to call the library on account of its containing the only books in the house: namely, the eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, bound volumes of the Atlantic Monthly from 1890 to 1903 and half a dozen novels which Virginia had borrowed from her room-mate at boarding school and forgotten to return. It is from one of these that I quote a vivid if none too accurate account of the Johnson murder:

"At one end of the desk was a telephone. Taylor Johnson was lying on the floor at the end of the desk—perfectly rigid—his face distorted—a ghastly figure. A pet dog ran over, sniffed frantically at his master's legs and suddenly began to howl dismally.

"Johnson was dead!

" 'Help!' shouted Walters.

"Others of the servants came rushing in. There was for the moment the greatest excitement and confusion.

"Suddenly a wild figure in flying garments flitted down the stairs and into the library, dropping beside the dead man without seeming to notice us at all.

" 'Father!' shrieked a woman's voice, heart-broken. 'Father! Oh—my God—he—he is dead.' And she fainted.

"Over her body and over the cold body of the man who for twenty years had controlled the political destinies of New York City, I swore to pursue his murderer, to track him down, to bring him before the bar of justice of the Eternal.

"Newsboys were crying on the dusky streets and their shouts reached me even there. 'Extry. Extry. GERMANS INVADE BELGIUM. Extry.' "

3.

I never thought her real. They say her mother bore her not as a woman gives birth to a child or a tree to its fruits but rather as a tree might sacrifice the richness of its sap, or even its life, to produce a single perfect and frangible flower.

Her birth was aseptic and mechanical. They say her mother never bore her at all.

They say her mother before she died fell into a delirium, during whose course she prophesied of her daughter: "Virginia will have every gift, being rich, beautiful and ignorant of evil. Her arms are white as bread. Her hair gleams beyond envy of peroxide. She rides,

shoots, swims with precise gestures and lives before the camera as under God's eye.

"She has many suitors and she accepts none. The world rides horseback to disaster.

"If ever she loves she will find love and death and the knowledge of evil, and in the same moment. She dies virgin under the symbol of her name. She is like Indian pipe or maybe dogwood. The world rides horseback to disaster and the old dog has learned to beg for cookies."

4.

She is a spot in the desert lying so still that the buzzards circle over, none of them quite daring to descend. There will be time before sunset, before the coyotes. Who has frightened the buzzards away? He stands above her watching without pity. The knife is poised in his hand. She wakens.

Full of the purest horror Virginia looked at him for a moment which stretched backward and forward into time. Her life revolved before her eyes. She could remember a row of Fifth Avenue shops and commencement day at Miss Stoughton's School on Hudson. Fear dried her mouth, suggesting the taste of Romance Caramels and afterwards the memory of all the candy boxes she had emptied. At the same time she felt the significance of the moment and kept trying to repeat: I have kept the faith, have kept the faith. The knife descended. Is it a dream? A shot rang out.

I dragged his body aside. Half-breed Pete had been known for his sullen good-looks, and there were dozens of women in the lonely ranchos who had suffered his fascination. He was considered capable of any infamy, but until he fell under the influence of Hawkbill he had never dared an open crime. The buzzards will return.

Virginia had fainted again, but I found it no difficulty to restore her and to force a little nourishment between her blue lips. I led her to the saddled horses, to follow the trail of Hawkbill. Another hundred yards and it was confused hopelessly by the hoofprints of his pursuers. There was one hope left: to climb the mountain.

Up a precipitous gully: the horses can hold their footing no longer: abandon them and climb, climb the face of vertiginous cliffs where a stumble would plunge us a thousand feet, where the breaking of this little root would open the doors of space. Virginia never whimpers. Damn these spurs. The sheer rock has imperceptible fissures by the

aid of which we mount higher, faster, till the world opens out, higher, till the sun sets, till we reach the summit and look, over blue foothills and a plain, westward to the Pacific.

Small as a fly, a yacht was climbing over its vertical waters. I looked through my telescope and gave it to Virginia without comment. On a pennant which floated from the masthead was painted the design of a falcon's beak.

"Once more, Hawkbill, you escape us, but not for long.

"We shall follow you until your death or ours.

"By this drop of blood you drew from the white wrist of Virginia, by the spilt blood of the bravest and purest of women, by her murdered father I swear it:

"WE SHALL MEET AGAIN."

5.

The storm subsided, the waves rolled back and left me sprawled half-conscious on the beach of Vicissitude Island.

It is a volcanic rock surrounded by coral reefs and lying in the South Pacific at a latitude which, on account of the circumstances of my arrival and departure, I was never able to determine. Indeed I doubt whether Vicissitude Island has any fixed location. It moves about in search of shipwrecked sailors. When they have spent a day and a night in the water, swimming more from habit than a definite hope, it looms suddenly before their eyes and they fall on its beach exhausted. It has been known by a multitude of names. Its nature is substantially the same as when Robinson Crusoe discovered it.

For vegetation and animal life I must refer you to my monograph on The Fauna and Flora of Vicissitude Island (Schenectady: Inter-ocean Press. $1.65).

Its conspicuous features are a large dry cave overlooking the sea, palm trees which supply food, drink and clothing, finally the eggs of turtles which are discovered in the hot sands and afterwards baked in the embers of a fire kindled with the matches I always carry in a water-proof case.

My life on its shores was bestial, idyllic and flavoured with the memories of my great predecessors. I kept a journal. Sometimes after a late dinner I grew pleasantly tipsy with cocoanut wine, and at such moments dared to extract a snapshot of Virginia Johnson from its hiding place against my breast. It had been taken during a picnic on her estate at Tarrytown, at a period when we believed, by a guilty

optimism, that Hawkbill had been drowned in the sinking of the Lusitania. Virginia wore a riding habit and was pretending to puff at a cigarette which would never touch her lips. She smiled into the camera. She was beautiful and she might have been mine.

I replaced the snapshot against my heart and fell asleep to dream that I was Hawkbill. His every ruse was clear to me, and justified being my own. I had tracked Virginia Johnson across two continents till at last she was in my power, in my arms. If I tracked her down it was to kill, so that the stupid and innocent might suffer and the world be purified by pain. There is no virtue but to be intelligent. The will to die is my only justification for crime. Her eyes are looking up at me with a look which is not surely hate. And the walls fold in, suddenly, confounding us in mutual disaster. A new sun rose.

I brooded for weeks over this dream, but finally I became prey to other worries. One morning on the beach I found a long spear of some heavy wood, with its point hardened in the fire. It showed no sign of having been in the water. Another day I saw a paper snake of smoke far out to sea. I lit a fire on the highest promontory and tried to signal, but the steamer, if it was a steamer, disappeared. I did not lose the hope it kindled. Months passed.

I was running to the beach one early morning for my swim, when I noticed a black spot lying where the tide had washed it the night before. I rushed towards it. The spot was a woman . . . with golden hair . . . my breath hurts me . . . Virginia.

I leaned over, took her wrist gently. The pulse was beating. My lips met hers in the sacrament of a first kiss.

Her eyes half opened.

And in the same moment we heard the drum of an aeroplane motor overhead. We looked up. The machine was hardly a hundred yards away and on its under wing was the design of a falcon's beak.

For a moment whose possibilities unfolded like paper flowers, we three: Virginia and I and the evil man above, looked one another directly in the face.

The savages are approaching in their war canoes. Out of the forest bursts another tribe. Are their arrows poisoned? A machine gun hammers. When I had exhausted the chambers of Virginia's pearl-handed revolver—all the chambers but two—I whirled the heavy spear above my head. War cries out of a mist. The blood of an enemy is a red alcohol.

6.

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As we drove northward she explained the situation to me briefly. Hawkbill had forced his way into her house and at the moment was boring through the steel of her safe with an acetylene torch of his own invention. If we hurried we might capture him. Our search was ending in triumph. My arm slipped round her shoulder and she pressed closer. Yet she seemed heavy with a presentiment of evil, as if fear and love had entered her heart at the same time.

I tried vainly to comfort her.

Walters had swung open the iron grill before we were out of the car. We rushed upstairs, forced the library door.

I shall forget no detail, however obscure, of the scene which met our eyes. The door of the safe yawns open. In front of it lies heaped a wealth of gems: pearls, diamonds, rubies such as no man's brain but one could ever imagine. And that one man is sprawled among them in a cutaway with black-striped trousers of which I remember the not extraordinary pattern. Blood drips from a barely perceptible mark in his forehead.

His nose is like a vulture's beak and death has made it the colour of horn.

And strangely his death brings me no joy, only fatigue and a foreboding. When I turn to make a commonplace remark which the circumstance would render ghastly, I see Virginia Johnson herself lying

motionless on the carpet, while a little blood trickles from a mark which is counterpart to the mark in the forehead of Hawkbill.

Hold a mirror gently to her nostrils. The surface of it is troubled with no cloud. She died young, young. Cover her face.

Her hair is dead as gold. Her eyes in the sun had violet lights, which danced beyond them to glow in other eyes. Her fingers taper precisely, make no gesture. Cross them in sign of prayer.

She died young and she was innocent. They say her mother bore her not as a woman gives birth to a child or a tree to its fruits, but rather as a tree might sacrifice the richness of its sap, or even its life, to produce a flower less perfect and as frangible.

Desdemona stifled under a silken pillow, Lucrece dead, the rape of virgin Ophelia by the water. Cats crawl in the elder bushes to die. I have seen the bodies of sparrows rotting in the streets. Hers was the death of a flower I might have plucked.

I read of pioneers who crossed the Alleghanies and hid her miniature against their hearts. I read of whaling captains from New Bedford who bore her portrait with them round the world. They married her never. She might have been mine.

Her mouth was possibly smaller than the classic. She had pouting lips and a freckle or two and lived. And O no stolid Roman matron (Lucrece offended in her constancy,) no Alexandrian martyr and virgin is worthy to be mentioned by her side.

She was the sainted innocence of a world grown arbitrary. She died of sanctity.

Write on her tomb: *She was innocent and died.*

MALCOLM COWLEY

Drawing

Juan Gris

KABNIS

Ralph Kabnis, propped in his bed, tries to read. To read himself to sleep. An oil lamp on a chair near his elbow burns unsteadily. The cabin room is spaced fantastically about it. Whitewashed hearth and chimney, black with sooty saw-teeth. Ceiling, patterned by the fringed globe of the lamp. The walls, unpainted, are seasoned a rosin yellow. And cracks between the boards are black. These cracks are the lips the night winds use for whispering. Night winds in Georgia are vagrant poets, whispering. Kabnis, agaist his will, lets his book slip down, and listens to them. The warm whiteness of his bed, the lamp-light, do not protect him from the weird chill of their song:

White-man's land.
Niggers, sing.
Burn, bear black children
Till poor rivers bring
Rest, and sweet glory
In Camp Ground.

Kabnis' thin hair is streaked on the pillow. His hand strokes the slim silk of his mustache. Hs thumb, pressed under his chin, seems to be trying to give squareness and projection to it. Brown eyes stare from a lemon face. Moisture gathers beneath his arm-pits. He slides down beneath the cover, seeking release.

Kabnis: Near me. Now. Whoever you are, my warm glowing sweetheart, do not think that the face that rests beside you is the real Kabnis. Ralph Kabnis is a dream. And dreams are faces with large eyes and weak chins and broad brows that get smashed by the fists of square faces. The body of the world is bull-necked. A dream is a soft face that fits uncertainly upon it. . . God, if I could develop that in words. Give what I know a bull-neck and a heaving body, all would go well with me, wouldnt it, sweetheart? If I could feel that I came to the South to face it. If I, the dream (not what is weak and afraid in me) could become the face of the South. How my lips would sing for it, my songs being the lips of its soul. Soul. Soul hell. There aint no such thing. What in hell was that?

A rat had run across the thin boards of the ceiling. Kabnis thrusts his head out from the covers. Through the cracks, a powdery faded red dust sprays down on him. Dust of slave-fields, dried,

scattered. . . No use to read. Christ, if he only could drink himself to sleep. Something as sure as fate was going to happen. He couldnt stand this thing much longer. A hen, perched on a shelf in the adjoining room begins to tread. Her nails scrape the soft wood. Her feathers ruffle.

"Get out of that, you egg-laying bitch."

Kabnis hurls a slipper against the wall. The hen flies from her perch and cackles as if a skunk were after her.

"Now cut out that racket or I'll wring your neck for you."

Answering cackles arise in the chicken yard.

"Why in Christ's hell cant you leave me alone? Damn it, I wish your cackle would choke you. Choke every mother's son of them in this God-forsaken hole. Go away. By God I'll wring your neck for you if you dont. Hell of a mess I've got in: even the poultry is hostile. Go way. Go way. By God, I'll . . ."

Kabnis jumps from his bed. His eyes are wild. He makes for the door. Bursts through it. The hen, driving blindly at the windowpane, screams. Then flies and flops around trying to elude him. Kabnis catches her.

"Got you now, you she-bitch."

With his fingers about her neck, he thrusts open the outside door and steps out into the serene loveliness of Georgian autumn moonlight. Some distance off, down in the valley, a band of pine-smoke, silvered gauze, drifts steadily. The half-moon is a white child that sleeps upon the tree-tops of the forest. White winds croon its sleep-song:

rock a-by baby . .
Black mother sways, holding a white child on her bosom.
when the bough bends . .
Her breath hums through pine-cones,
cradle will fall . .
Teat moon-children at your breasts,
down will come baby . .
Black mother.

Kabnis whirls the chicken by its neck, and throws the head away. Picks up the hopping body, warm, sticky, and hides it in a clump of bushes. He wipes blood from his hands onto the coarse scant grass.

Kabnis: Thats done. Old Chromo in the big house there will wonder whats become of her pet hen. Well, it'll teach her a lesson: not to make a hen-coop of my quarters. Quarters. Hell of a fine

quarters, I've got. Five years ago; look at me now. Earth's child. The earth my mother. God is a profligate red-nosed man about town. Bastardy; me. A bastard son has got a right to curse his maker. God. . .

Kabnis is about to shake his fists heavenward. He looks up, and the night's beauty strikes him dumb. He falls to his knees. Sharp stones cut through his thin pajamas. The shock sends a shiver over him. He quivers. Tears mist his eyes. He writhes.

"God Almighty, dear God, dear Jesus, do not torture me with beauty. Take it away. Give me an ugly world. Ha, ugly. Stinking like unwashed niggers. Dear Jesus, do not chain me to myself and set these hills and valleys, heaving with folk-songs, so close to me that I cannot reach them. There is a radiant beauty in the night that touches and . . . tortures me. Ugh. Hell. Get up, you damn fool. Look around. What's beautiful there? Hog pens and chicken yards. Dirty red mud. Stinking outhouse. Whats beauty anyway but ugliness if it hurts you? God, he doesnt exist, but nevertheless he is ugly. Hence, what comes from Him is ugly. Lynchers and business men, and that cockroach Hanby, especially. How come that he gets to be principal of a school? Of the school I'm driven to teach in? God's handiwork, doubtless. God and Hanby, they belong together. Two godam moral-spouters. Oh, no, I wont let that emotion come up in me. Stay down. Stay down, I tell you. O Jesus, Thou art beautiful. . . Come, Ralph, pull yourself together. Curses and adoration dont come from what is sane. This loneliness, dumbness, awful, intangible oppression is enough to drive a man insane. Miles from nowhere. A speck on a Georgia hillside. Jesus, can you imagine it—an atom of dust in agony on a hillside? Thats a spectacle for you. Come, Ralph, old man, pull yourself together."

Kabnis has stiffened. He is conscious now of the night wind, and of how it chills him. He rises. He totters as a man would who for the first time uses artificial limbs. As a completely artificial man would. The large frame house, squatting on brick pillars, where the principal of the school, his wife, and the boarding girls sleep, seems a curious shadow of his mind. He tries, but cannot convince himself of its reality. His gaze drifts down into the vale, across the swamp, up over the solid dusk bank of pines, and rests, bewildered-like, on the courthouse tower. It is dull silver in the moonlight. White child that sleeps upon the top of pines. Kabnis' mind clears. He sees himself yanked beneath that tower. He sees white minds, with indolent assumption, juggle justice and a nigger. . . Somewhere, far off in the

straight line of his sight, is Augusta. Christ, how cut off from everything he is. And hours, hours north, why not say a lifetime north? Washington sleeps. Its still, peaceful streets, how desirable they are. Its people whom he had always halfway despised. New York? Impossible. It was a fiction. He had dreamed it. An impotent nostalgia grips him. It becomes intolerable. He forces himself to narrow to a cabin silhouetted on a knoll about a mile away. Peace. Negroes within it are content. They farm. They sing. They love. They sleep. Kabnis wonders if perhaps they can feel him. If perhaps he gives them bad dreams. Things are so immediate in Georgia.

Thinking that now he can go to sleep, he re-enters his room. He builds a fire in the open hearth. The room dances to the tongues of flames, and sings to the crackling and spurting of the logs. Wind comes up between the floor boards, through the black cracks of the walls.

Kabnis: Cant sleep. Light a cigarette. If that old bastard comes over here and smells smoke, I'm done for. Hell of a note, cant even smoke. The stillness of it: where they burn and hang men, you cant smoke. Cant take a swig of licker. What do they think this is, anyway, some sort of temperance school? How did I ever land in such a hole? Ugh. One might just as well be in his grave. Still as a grave. Jesus, how still everything is. Does the world know how still it is? People make noise. They are afraid of silence. Of what lives, and God, of what dies in silence. There must be many dead things moving in silence. They come here to touch me. I swear I feel their fingers. . . Come, Ralph, pull yourself together. What in hell was that? Only the rustle of leaves, I guess. You know, Ralph, old man, it wouldnt surprise me at all to see a ghost. People dont think there are such things. They rationalize their fear, and call their cowardice science. Fine bunch, they are. Damit, that was a noise. And not the wind either. A chicken maybe. Hell, chickens dont wander around this time of night. What in hell is it?

A scraping sound, like a piece of wood dragging over the ground, is coming near.

"Ha, ha. The ghosts down this way havent got any chains to rattle, so they drag trees along with them. Thats a good one. But no joke, something is outside this house, as sure as hell. Whatever it is, it can get a good look at me and I cant see it. Jesus Christ!"

Kabnis pours water on the flames and blows his lamp out. He picks up a poker and stealthily approaches the outside door. Swings

it open, and lurches into the night. A calf, carrying a yoke of wood, bolts away from him and scampers down the road.

"Well, I'm damned. This godam place is sure getting the best of me. Come, Ralph, old man, pull yourself together. Nights cant last forever. Thank God for that. Its Sunday already. First time in my life I've ever wanted Sunday to come. Hell of a day. And down here there's no such thing as ducking church. Well, I'll see Halsey and Layman, and get a good square meal. Thats something. And Halsey's a damn good feller. Cant talk to him, though. Who in Christ's world can I talk to? A hen. God. Myself. . . I'm going bats, no doubt of that. Come now, Ralph, go in and make yourself go to sleep. Come now . . . in the door . . . thats right. Put the poker down. There. All right. Slip under the sheets. Close your eyes. Think nothing . . . a long time . . . nothing, nothing. Dont even think nothing. Blank. Not even blank. Count. No, mustnt count. Nothing . . . blank . . . nothing . . . blank . . . space without stars in it. No, nothing . . . nothing . . .

Kabnis sleeps. The winds, like soft-voiced vagrant poets, sing:

White-man's land.
Niggers, sing.
Burn, bear black children
Till poor rivers bring
Rest, and sweet glory
In Camp Ground.

JEAN TOOMER

INDIANS IN SPRING

The nights were cold,
And they came slowly upstream,
Pulling past channel stakes
Gnawed white with ice.

Poplar flowers,
Blossoming and falling
Through air remaining cold
As water, the flesh of spring.

JANET LEWIS

Daragnès

ON BOARD THE MORNING STAR *

I

The tenth of October, 1720, as we were coasting the southern shore of Jamaica we saw a sloop anchored in Dry Harbour Bay.

According to the usages of gentlemen of fortune, George Merry gave order to hoist the black flag. By informing the stranger of our true quality we risked nothing, and the mere apparition of this funereal crepe gave the results which we were privileged to expect: two men who were on board the sloop leaped into a boat moored to the stern and pulled hastily for the shore, where we soon lost sight of them.

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* *On Board the* MORNING STAR *consists of the fifth, twelfth, eighth and sixteenth episodes of A Bord* L'ETOILE MATUTINE (PARIS: *G. Crès et Cie., 1921*).

George Merry had himself rowed to the sloop. He was accompanied by his boatswain—we called him Peter Black Sheep—and by a sailor from Dieppe whom we had enrolled in North Carolina while we were lurking at the mouth of the Roanoke.

At the fall of night Peter Black Sheep and the sailor rowed back to the *Morning Star*. We aided them to embark the merchandise which they had been able to find on the sloop. It was a modest booty, but when we considered the few pains it had cost us we greeted it with satisfaction. Our last cruise had been vain, fortune having abandoned the folds of our flag.

Before our eyes the pillaged sloop rocked in the breeze. No sound troubled the quiet of the harbour. We stretched out on the deck, heads pillowed on our crossed arms, and rested. Many slept like beasts, with little nervous starts. We were so tired that our dignity as men seemed to be abolished.

In the evening we heard the whistle of George Merry. A ship's lantern was lighted on the sloop. Peter Black Sheep and the Dieppe sailor untied the boat to bring back our captain. When they came on board the *Morning Star* every one was asleep. . . .

Early in the morning George Merry gave order to ship anchor. We stretched full sail to the south wind and the *Morning Star* whipped northward, where lay the hazards of our profession.

The man from Nantes took his flute and translated into frail notes the ecstasy in which our hearts were melting. Captain Merry himself approached our circle, and for the first time we saw that he was accompanied by a tall young man with robust limbs, whose beardless face expressed audacity and the pride of adventure. He introduced this new gentleman of fortune, who desired to submit himself to our laws and to the sterile fantasy of our wandering life.

His elegance silenced the magic flute. We none of us uttered the impression which this proper sailor, with his decided air, had created in the hell of our hearts.

His hair, tied back with a ribbon, revealed a neck which was as delicate and tender as that of a young boy. It was evident that the captain favoured this new comrade with his friendship.

The stranger—on account of his irritating grace he would always be a stranger to us—showed himself an able sailor. He was supple and seductive as he climbed the ropes, and his knife, which he held clenched between his little teeth, made him resemble a young cat carrying a fish. He knew his trade and therefore we respected him a little.

And besides, his beauty impressed us enough to gain the right of remaining obedient, taciturn and distant.

Thereupon we gave chase to two Dutch traders bound for Martinique, one in ballast and the other laden with sugar and cocoa. The fight was savage but the booty exceeded our hopes. All night we burned rum in great copper kettles. Pew and the man from Nantes fought with knives, and dawn found us lying supine on a quarterdeck still blackened with powder, spotted with blood and pitch.

Our handsome shipmate had born himself like a true knight of fortune. And when the orgy recommenced by day, he drank with us from a silver loving cup, of which he wiped the brim. He made a gesture to raise it to our success, when a little hook at the collar of his embroidered shirt gave way, and in stupour we beheld the revelation of the double cupola of two breasts as pure, as amiably rounded as the pink domes of the cathedral of St. Hermit, at Palermo.

Surprise left us voiceless before this woman whom chance had revealed to us brutally.

Then, we stretched out our fists in her direction, we howled at her face the oaths we had learned in every language of the earth, we spit at her feet like the damned, and our anger rose, rose in measure to the obscene words from our throats.

For we reproached her with standing motionless before our eyes in her calm beauty, and above all because she had watched us, the future clients of the gibbet, in the horror of our coarseness, our unshaven faces, our dirty linen, our smells, our misery.

And we reproached her, without being able to specify motives of this anger, with having surprised us as we searched with dirty fingernails for the lice which gnawed us.

And we reproached her because she had not revealed herself in time to allow us to attempt her conquest by embellishing our faces and our hands, according to the methods familiar to all men, before we cut our throats for bitter joys.

II.

After cruising three days in the Gulf of Honduras—where we met Charles Vane, who had just captured the *Pearl*, Captain Bowling—we dropped anchor in a creek of the little island of Barnacko, whither George Merry had decided to retire to caulk the seams of the *Morning Star*.

Leaving the smaller part of the crew on board, we disembarked on the soil of this fertile island, which the ocean had set down like

a basket too full of fruits and flowers. The scattered houses which composed the village offered but few resources for the satisfaction of our appetites: fruit in earthenware bowls, dried fish, a little milk and some mussels which we broke with our knife handles.

While the larger part of the band scattered through the little village to seek its fortune, the man from Nantes, Pitti, MacGraw, Jack Seven and four or five of the beaux of the forecastle resolved to skirt the southern coast, which disappeared at this point under the rarest samples of the vegetation of the tropics.

I followed this little troop, for I had the confidence of MacGraw who liked, on certain days, to lift the veil covering a past of bookish labour. He instructed me to the point of being able to read, correctly enough, a Latin Bible and the Hudibras of Samuel Butler in English.

"I'm thirsty," said the man from Nantes. "Have you any rum, old Mac? I'll pay it back on the day of our elevation, when we bless the girls of Savannah with our feet."

MacGraw passed him a gourd. He clenched his teeth, lifted it to the end of his arm, and poured out a thread of rum which he swallowed slowly.

We continued our ramble. A fugitive odour of jasmine mounted to our nostrils, and among the green tufts of banana trees and the fresh leaves of live-oaks we saw a little white cottage, of a blinding whiteness, where all the shadows were printed in blue. A bird hidden in the velvet shade of the palms whistled to render the silence more solemn, for, outside of its enchanting voice, no sound revealed the presence of any life whatever. We made a circuit of the house, by habit, and the man from Nantes, thrusting his head through a little window, made us a violent sign with his hand to be still.

"You can come," he said as he straightened up. We penetrated into the cool house, one behind another.

In the centre of its one room, on a piece of worn matting unrolled from the wall, a young negress was sleeping. She was almost naked and her hair was knotted in a yellow silk kerchief with violet spots the size of peas. The sole furniture was a chest which supported a pitcher of clear water where a giant spider was agonizing. In one corner a pile of dirty linen covered a few kitchen utensils.

"Milady!" roared MacGraw, trumpeting his hands round his mouth.

The ebony lady startled up, raising the whites of frightened eyes. During a few seconds her face expressed the most legitimate terror. Then her mouth broadened to a grin, she rose, took a step toward the

man from Nantes and placed her two hands on his shoulders, on both sides of his head. Her lips rounded, seeking a kiss.

"I knew it," he declared. "This lady of quality has been waiting for me. I have sailed twenty years only to land on this island and wed her legally. Gentlemen, I invite you all to be present at the ceremony." . . .

The ceremony was curiously impressive. George Merry had offered a cask of rum, which we carried to the house of the bride on a litter formed of branches. We drank all day. We parodied the religious ceremony. The negress, dressed in a satin gown which we had saved from the pillage of a French vessel, leaned on the arm of her cavalier and received as her just homage the powerful acclamations of the crew of the *Morning Star*.

We separated late at night, leaving the platters clean and goblets empty. Everybody returned to the ship or to the huts of the village. The bride and groom remained with MacGraw and me, since we two were to pass the night in a narrow attic above the nuptial chamber.

Before wishing them a good night, we emptied the remainder of the cask of rum into a flask which must have contained six or seven quarts, and so climbed heavy-headed into our retreat, leaving the flask to the fantasy of the groom but advising him under no circumstances to let it run dry.

We fell immediately into a dead sleep, and when we woke it was broad day.

MacGraw, his hair dishevelled and his voice hoarse, shouted, "Hello, Nantes! Bring up the rum! Bring the rum, old shipmate!"

Nobody answered. We climbed down the ladder which took the place of stairs. As we entered their chamber we saw our old shipmate stretched out on the matting, his throat cut open from ear to ear, bled white like a slaughtered pig.

"She stole the rum! The rum is gone!" howled MacGraw. . . .

We found the wife of the defunct a few yards from the white cottage. She was extremely drunk. She lay at the foot of a tree with the flask of rum between her knees, and there was blood on her hands, between the fingers.

When we raised her up to hang her, she hardly opened her eyes, attempted the politeness of a smile, wished to kiss Pitti and to say something. Her head fell back on her breast. It took three men to pass the cord around her neck, she was so heavy and limp. In her last slumber she stuttered:

"Love... Love..."

Pitti drew the rope tight. When she felt her feet leave the ground, she opened frightful eyes, suddenly. But she died almost immediately and swung back and forwards a long time before remaining still, extraordinary still, in the noisy forest.

III

When we arrived before Vera Cruz with the Dutch flag at our masthead, hoping to trade with the Spaniards without fear of being denounced, we saw that every ship in the harbour was flying a yellow flag to indicate that a sly Death blew over the city like a great and fetid and mysterious wind.

George Merry, Anselmo Pitti and Pierre Black Sheep thought we should fly before the wind to escape the voracious plague, but it happened that several others, MacGraw among them, desired on the contrary to make a landing, arguing that business would be easy in the midst of the general desolation, and they undertook, knowing an apothecary who was willing to receive goods and ask no questions, to avoid the quarantine and the thin and haughty alguazils.

MacGraw demanded a week to attend to our business and his own. George Merry hesitated, allowed himself to be convinced, and the *Morning Star* found anchorage on the coast not far from the yellow bunting of the harbour, toward San Juan d'Ulhua.

That night we untied a rowboat and embarked: MacGraw, Pew and myself.

With the light of day we found our road and soon MacGraw lifted the brass knocker of a house built in the Spanish fashion, carefully closed, cool and porous as an earthenware jug which contains fresh water.

There was a slot fashioned in the door; it opened at our call and a voice, hardly an amiable voice, greeted us in these terms: "What do you want? Is this an inn? Do all the dogs of creation come here to beg shelter?"

"Perfect," said MacGraw. "Say no more. . . . I recognize you, Goldfish. Old hangbird, you haven't changed. . . . Open the portal of your hospitable dwelling. It's MacGraw, with friends, and may God damn me black if I esteem the plague which will present me to the devil as highly as I esteem your Lordship."

We approved the terms of his discourse. Meanwhile the door opened slowly and the face of Goldfish appeared, lighted by a lantern, to affirm how worthy of the name was its proprietor.

Two red eyes were his ornament. The nose was small and balanced itself over the gulf of a lipless mouth. A receding chin was confused with the line of the throat, a feature which gave him—when combined with his bald and pointed skull—the appearance of a carp's head. His colour was a golden bronze, as far as we could judge by the light of the lantern and by the first streaks of a livid dawn.

"Come in and close the door," said Goldfish.

We followed him. He led us across a courtyard surrounded with buildings on four sides, and with a circular gallery of carved mahogany. We climbed a stone stairway and Goldfish blew out his lantern, pressing his body against the wall to let us pass. With MacGraw in the lead we penetrated into a vast room decorated in a manner strangely reminiscent of hell.

"This," whispered MacGraw, "seems a chapel constructed for the devotions of Black Teach." He sat on a three-legged stool and we followed his example, seeking a place to rest our feet in the midst of paintpots and brushes soaking in broken vases.

"So you are no longer an apothecary?" asked MacGraw.

"No," Goldfish answered gruffly, "today I am a painter. Why did you come, the three of you?"

He approached so near that he was breathing in my face; his dry hand took my wrist and a finger pressed on the artery.

"Take care," he said.

Then turning toward MacGraw he said, angrily, "Are you sure you haven't got it? Stick out your tongue. . . . And your eyes . . . how red they are!"

"You should give us a drink," said MacGraw.

Goldfish descended the stair, grumbling confused words. We heard him jingling a bunch of keys in the courtyard.

Without exchanging a word we looked round us. The floor of the room was strewn with clippings of canvas, paint-pots and worn-out brushes; in one corner was a strange row of cardboard sugarloaves, certain of which, half decorated, presented an aspect both grotesque and repulsive; crosses covered with Latin inscriptions were hanging on the walls as also were immense scapularies barred with St. Andrew's crosses or painted with winged devils brandishing pitch-forks, breathing out flames.

We regarded these decorations, to say the least incomprehensible, and which, on account of the poverty of the materials which they adorned, could only evoke some vulgar masquerade, when Goldfish

returned with two bottles which he placed on a table beside a stub of candle, some crusts of bread, and the dried skins of oranges.

"Drink," he said. "Perhaps you have a fever?"

We filled our glasses and that of Goldfish, and we drank to his health. We set them down. In the street we heard a deep murmur, a sort of groan, with the trampling of horses and the machinal hum of a crowd at prayer. We rushed toward the shuttered windows to see a religious masquerade whose aspect astounded us. Between two files of soldiers in ill-fitting uniforms and carrying their muskets carelessly, marched a group of men and women dressed in scapularies which were painted in the manner of those which we had seen on the walls of the room. They wore a sort of grotesque bonnet, which explained equally the use of those sugarloaves which had appeared so repulsive to us. Behind these carnavalesque penitents marched mulatto slaves carrying on their shoulders wooden boxes in the shape of little coffins. Priests chanted in the confusion, and the girls who wore scapularies and painted cardboard bonnets questioned with their enormous eyes the crowd of bearded men. Their jaws trembled. Sometimes they stumbled, fell on their knees, while a confessor holding a crucifix lifted them to their feet with a sort of indiscreet benevolence.

"It is the Inquisition," said MacGraw. "They are leading a few Jews to the stake. The Dutch flag protects us."

"They brought the plague," Goldfish replied. "I painted the angel of the plague on their bonnets—which are known as carrochas —and on their samarras, for I am the official painter of the Holy Inquisition. These witches have been the opportunity for the sensitive colouring of my best work."

He added in a judicial voice as the procession wavered and resumed its march: "I paint the crosses and carrochas, and the samarras with a grey background. Regard how the portrait of the heretic or sorcerer is natural and vivacious. I paint from nature, in the very gaol where these wretches fatigue the heavens with their cries. Let me recommend you this virgin or prostitute, it doesn't matter, the third after the file of men. You see the one I mean? I painted her portrait on the front and back of the samarra. She wears this artistic garment because she denied the true faith before the Holy Tribunal, in spite of the fact that she was convicted of having introduced to our city the odious and melancholy plague, whose victims lose, it is said, the sentiment of God.

"At night," continued the mortuary painter, "it seems that my taut skin converges towards an enormous bubo which bursts with a noise of thunder. The Yellow Death will dominate the world, and

volcanoes are only buboes, perhaps the messengers of a fleshless liberty if I credit my dreams."

"What about business?" asked MacGraw.

"May the devil here painted carry you off!" barked Goldfish. "This gallows carrion comes to talk of business when the whole city trembles like a little girl who stretches out her hand to a fortune teller. Business . . .

"Instead regard my portraits and the decorative principles of the tortures which vary according to the soul of the patient, his tastes, what he has been, what he will become, and above all the things which he regrets, for all the subtlety of my art consists in materializing the regret of life by means of images of which only a part are symbolic."

The artist took his head between his hands and sobbed, "My masterpieces, my poor masterpieces will again be victims of the auto-da-fe! Even those imbeciles who paint red crosses on vulgar sanbenitos are less to be pitied than I . . . I . . . I am most cunningly tortured of all the victims of the Holy Inquisition."

"When this damned masquerade has crossed the square," murmured MacGraw, "we shall leave the painter to his art. Then, God being willing, we shall rejoin George Merry and flee this soil where fever, like a pagan divinity, bathes in every fountain."

"The city has the air of an enormous copper coin, red hot," added Pew. He clicked his tongue, for the air about us smelt of hot copper with, at intervals when a little breeze sprang up, the odour of wood smoke and grilled flesh.

"You digress," said Goldfish interrupting the course of his dreams. "You wander, and I believe you are trembling. . . . Whence do you come . . . with this swollen tongue, these eyes rimmed with scarlet and this exaltation of the lesser sentiments before the spectacles of nature?"

"Easy, easy, Goldfish. Remember the old days at London when you drank urine punch with the 'German widows' of Mother Knox, at Covent Garden, and forget these mummeries . . ."

"Mummeries! Gentlemen, your Lordships! He opens his mouth to blaspheme. He . . ."

Goldfish in suffocation carried his hands to his neck, swollen like a puff-adder. Then he grew calm, rubbed his palms against each other and, timidly, approached the door.

"Gentlemen," said the renegade, "I place my treasures under your protection. (He pointed to the carrochas and the sanbenitos.) I am leaving you immediately to seek the elements of a banquet worthy

of your Lordships and of an old comrade, although I must confess that I hardly understand his remarks on our former life. I shall return."

He took a step toward the door . . . one step . . . but, I swear it, each of us saw from the expression of MacGraw that we had to act without longer delay. Anyhow, MacGraw was the first to bound on Goldfish, who could not withstand the shock and fell on his two knees. He grunted.

And MacGraw strangled him with his two powerful hands, while we held the prone limbs of the painter of sanbenitos. His eyes turned slowly, his tongue pointed from his mouth, his violet-spotted face became a mask like his paintings. MacGraw, to revive his forces, untwisted his fingers and a little life seemed to reanimate the hideous patient. Our comrade knitted his embrace three times, and we felt that the man had just died between our hands.

"He wished to denounce us for what I said about the monks," panted MacGraw.

We left the twisted corpse on the floor, and behind the shutters we inspected the public square, now empty, airless, hot. A madman ran in the shelter of the walls, hunting for a little shade. He raised his arms to heaven. Out of breath he seated himself beside a dry fountain and rolled on the ground, scratching it like a wounded beast.

"Perhaps the time has come for us to go," I said. MacGraw and Pitti nodded their heads, but this precipitate departure had too much the air of a flight, and we hunted for some sort of compensation.

We took Goldfish, and such as he was, with his tortured face, we dressed him in a grey scapulary where unfinished demons howled before flames in the shape of tongues; we set a cardboard bonnet on his head, and it was the final brush-stroke which completed the monstrous personage which we had just created, we, other artists. When he was dressed we carried him into the courtyard and hanged him before the door with his feet resting on the stone slabs of the vestibule.

"We can't go out yet," said Pew, "not by day. We'll have to wait till nightfall . . . Have I a fever? . . . Feel if I have a fever, MacGraw."

MacGraw, in the twilight of the courtyard, laid a finger on the vein of Pew's wrist.

"It is nothing," he said.

We remained seated on the stairway, all three, without saying a word, facing the dead man in his pointed bonnet.

"It hurts me still . . . my heart . . ." said Pew again. He leaned a little over the step to vomit.

"Go farther, pig," said MacGraw.

We waited for night like a thief broken on the wheel who waits for death. The minutes passed slowly and the sun, seen above the courtyard as from the depths of a well, refused to bend its homicidal rays.

"I . . . . it . . ." said Pew.

He did not dare to complain. I surprised MacGraw in the shadow, feeling his own artery at the wrist, slyly, uneasily.

Pew could not walk; his legs were limp. We supported him by the wrists, feeling the blood that beat along his veins, against our clenched palms.

The odour of burned flesh persisted over the city. A great flock of crows and vultures passed over us. They uttered various cries; a few sobbed like children.

Pew collapsed at last in spite of our efforts. We let him fall to earth. He raised his eyes toward MacGraw; they had grown supernaturally intelligent.

"Here, Mac," he said, pointing to his heart. "And quick." MacGraw leaned over him as if to look at his tongue, resting all the weight of his body on a knife which he had applied discreetly against the heart of his comrade.

We abandoned the defunct and rejoined George Merry and the band. And we never spoke of Goldfish or the plague, in fear of being abandoned, by precaution, in a ship's boat with biscuits, water, a rifle and a little powder. The death of Pew was explained naturally as the result of a quarrel adroitly described according to our traditions.

But during fourteen days and fourteen nights MacGraw and I felt, in secret, the big vein of our left wrist, and we examined the mirrors which reflected our tongue . . . We had no desire to question our memories of Vera Cruz.

IV

On the gibbet of Savannah, on the quai which faces the mother ocean, a young man is hanging.

His clothes are those which he wore on the *Morning Star*, a handsome red coat, an embroidered waistcoat, black velvet breeches and white stockings. Everywhere an abundance of gold galloons.

On his already fleshless head his cocked hat perches coquettishly. It is reddened by the sun. His hands, bound high on his back, give him the appearance of a hunchback.

It is George Merry, the captain of the *Morning Star*. He will never smoke his long and melancholy pipe, and the plump Spanish girls have nothing more beneath their skirts to excite his curiosity.

Stiff and sumptuous at the end of the rope he hardly excites the glances of the passers-by and the example of his death fills the hearts of cowards only with fear.

Yonder on the mother ocean, the *Morning Star* perpetuates its tradition under a new master. The black flag floats from its mizzen masthead and for the gentlemen of fortune who sprawl on the deck speaking of the past, George Merry is only a detail confounded with the whores of Maracaibo, the man from Nantes and his negress and this little, little girl who plucks up her pink skirt with an uneasy gesture to water the mandrake growing at the foot of the gallows tree.

PIERRE MACORLAN.

(*Translated by Malcolm Cowley*)

Daragnès

THREE POEMS

I.

THE CHASMS

Here and there abysses appear before me in the gloom.
I have only one concern . . . . to escape them.
I am an armoured affair, upright and quiet, gothic.
With appalling slowness I recognise each chasm
And with appalling slowness I take steps to escape,
I approach slowly, with a holy, chaste step,
The air is quiet, there is no music, all the birds are dead,
(I wonder who prepared this decoration)
I glance at the chasm as one glances at a Latin inscription,
With icy reserve, I lift one foot, it hangs against the sky like a carved club.
Over the edge of the chasm I play a little, I dally upon the edge,
The rocks sweat with desire and I with a charming fear,
My body sways measuredly, deliberately,
The depths of the cavern gleam intensely, blue and quivering;
The rocks, absolutely still, hold their furrows rigid with expectation,
Very, very slowly I begin to fall forward,
I begin to die,
Soundlessly my body lowers its epileptic game forward,
In the vice of this prepared fear I go on falling
Monstrously slow . . . . I progress to an angle of forty-five degrees . . . .
There I hang, an arabesque on the sky
A horror against its virgin opalescence. . . .
A door opens in the cliff and my friends appear ranged in line to view me,
Silently, with premeditated surprise they speculate on my doom,
(Blood begins to flow into my head)

They seem to be dissatisfied with my progress,
Without more ado they return through the same door. . . .
I draw in a tremendous breath . . . filled with bits of rock
Suddenly I leap . . . . two yards to the opposite side of
the chasm;
Through the strange quality of the effort I am embedded in
the rock.
With prayerful ease I extricate myself and become again
An armoured affair, upright and quiet and gothic in design,
Stepping onward with extraordinary slowness,
With admirable reserve, not a little frightened.

II.

REST

The soft, pink, content. . .
The degrees of dream. . .
The basking elements are all here!
For every atom of hate towards me there is one of love;
I glide about among the sussurations of a windy symphony
Bearing harmony as lightly as a cloud bears the damasks of
sunset.
From incalculable heights my voice travels,
Peacefully describing over magnanimous depths
The incredibly simple harmony of everything;
Diligently attuning itself to your waking ears.
Come with your patronymic majesty into these reiterated rests.
The basking elements are all here.

III.

The sibilant fate, dank locked and drunk,
Depends to my streaming face new woes.
It offers wretched and terrible osculations.
My tears are not enough . . . not loud enough
To drown in sound and flood these things,

Phantasmal fears, phantasmal growths;
The dregs of dismay were never deeper to be drunk;
In purple ooze, I dabble my still white body
With purple spots of sin.
Creeping, pale evil-eyed orchids,
Gracefully bodied, slim and swaying, and cool. . .
Creeping over the warm flesh. . .
I entwine with you, I enwreathe you,
Six times I lave myself with your occult dismay.

Since I was a little boy your appeal was so,
I have always bored and danced around you
Much as a moth to a flame . . . now I am aware,
Now, I am fulgent with a new liking,
With a great fresh sickness. . .
This is a celebrated advent . . . why,
The blankets of midnight need me for half an hour only;
I am up to greet the sun, I touch the clouds,
I tear up leaves of grass.
My body is covered with sores that the sun easily burns,
It enters the sores and boils their colourful putrefaction,
Pink steam escapes from me into the blue of heaven.

To be awakened thus early is said to be terrible.
I certainly feel a little sad, do not laugh. . .
Recollect . . . having discovered this entertaining truth
I shall probably never slumber again.
A few suggestions are never amiss in new games,
See if you can, with closed eyes, rise and follow me
Without stumbling over the closing lid of this coffin.

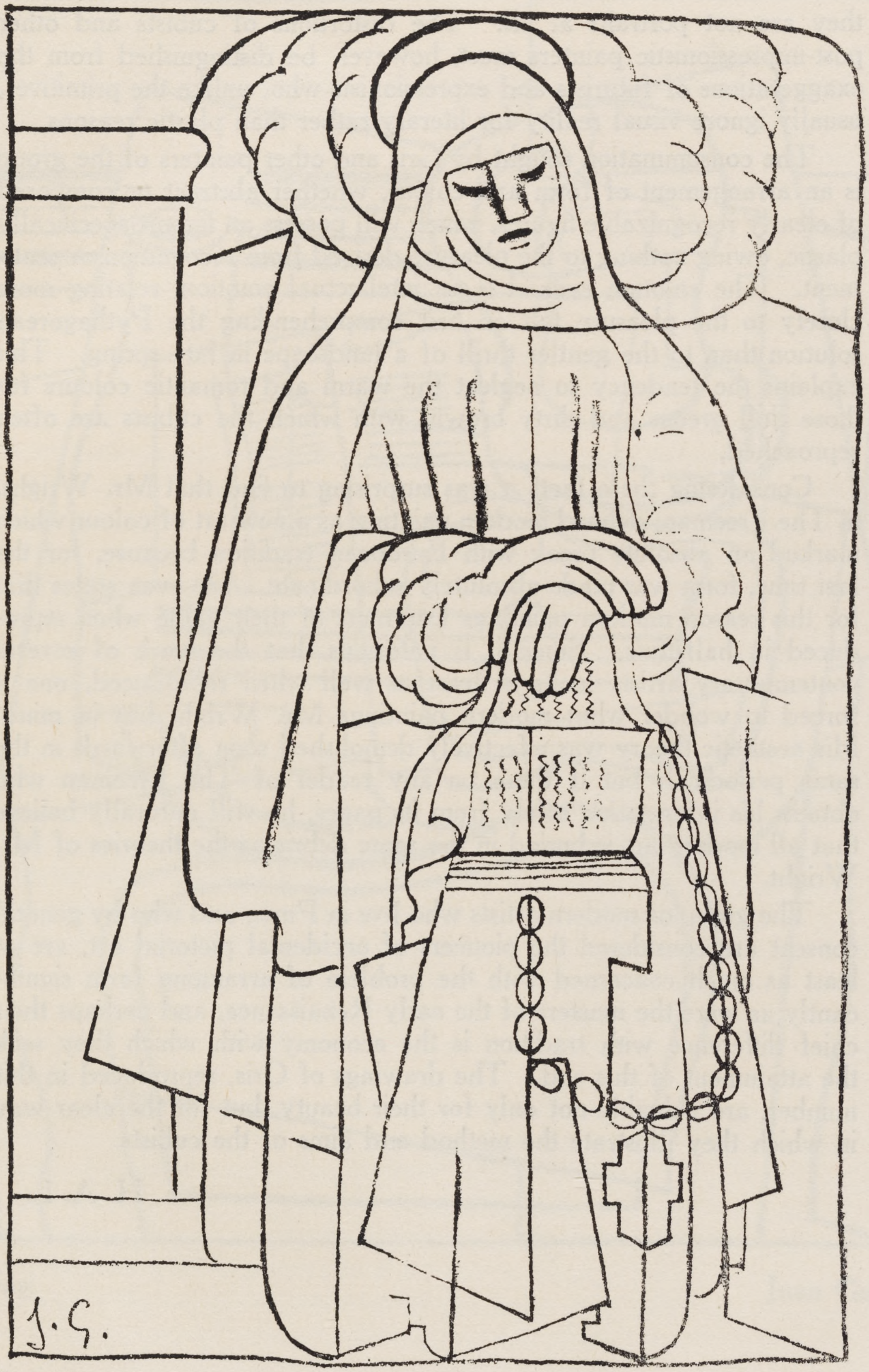
WILFRID H. BENDALL

A NOTE ON JUAN GRIS AND CUBISM

A Guitarist, a Big and Little Pierrot, a Nun and two Still-lifes: these are the latest drawings of Juan Gris: "one of the most orthodox grammarians of the cubist school." "Cubism is dead," says the careless dilettante, more eager to hail new tendencies and bury the old than to understand how the successive phases of painting are aligned, by casual sequence, in a tradition whose beginning is unknown and whose end cannot be imagined. Cubism is hardly dead. The Nun, with her veil falling in geometric lines; with her hands, her chain, her cross, her halo: all essential constituents of a pattern whose value depends entirely on its *plastic* arrangement and not on any similitude of life or reality, owes as much to the researches of the cubists as does the abstract Still-life, in which unnamable two-dimensional shapes intersect. Both drawings are cubist fundamentally.

It is true that Picasso, Braque, Gris and other former cubists are turning more and more to compositions of figures, and are painting fewer of the abstractions which suggested the name of their movement. But this fact merely indicates that the experiments in pure form have reached a satisfactory conclusion. The artists have learned exactly what they can do with this medium from which all the supplementary appeals have been subtracted, and therefore, as is proper for those who deserve the name of artists, they are going on to something new, to the application of their acquired knowledge in more complicated fields.

The evolution can be followed more easily in the work of Juan Gris than with Picasso, for the latter, possessing a genius of phenomenal inventiveness, has swung from one mood to another with bewildering rapidity. Gris, on the other hand, works with a single-minded intention which resembles the progress of a scientist more nearly than that of the traditional artist. His starting point is the relation of two or more forms. Having discovered the arrangement which best satisfies the aesthetic problem, he goes on to incarnate the forms in line or paint, regardless of visual reality. Thus, when desirable, solids mutually interpenetrate, colour is dissociated from its mass, and other liberties are taken with reality as perceived by the optic nerve. This is of course nothing new. Egyptians added the invisible eye to the profile; negroes pierced the opacity of the stomach or distorted the shape of the breast; Mayas so conventionalized the images of their gods that on first glance



Drawing

Juan Gris

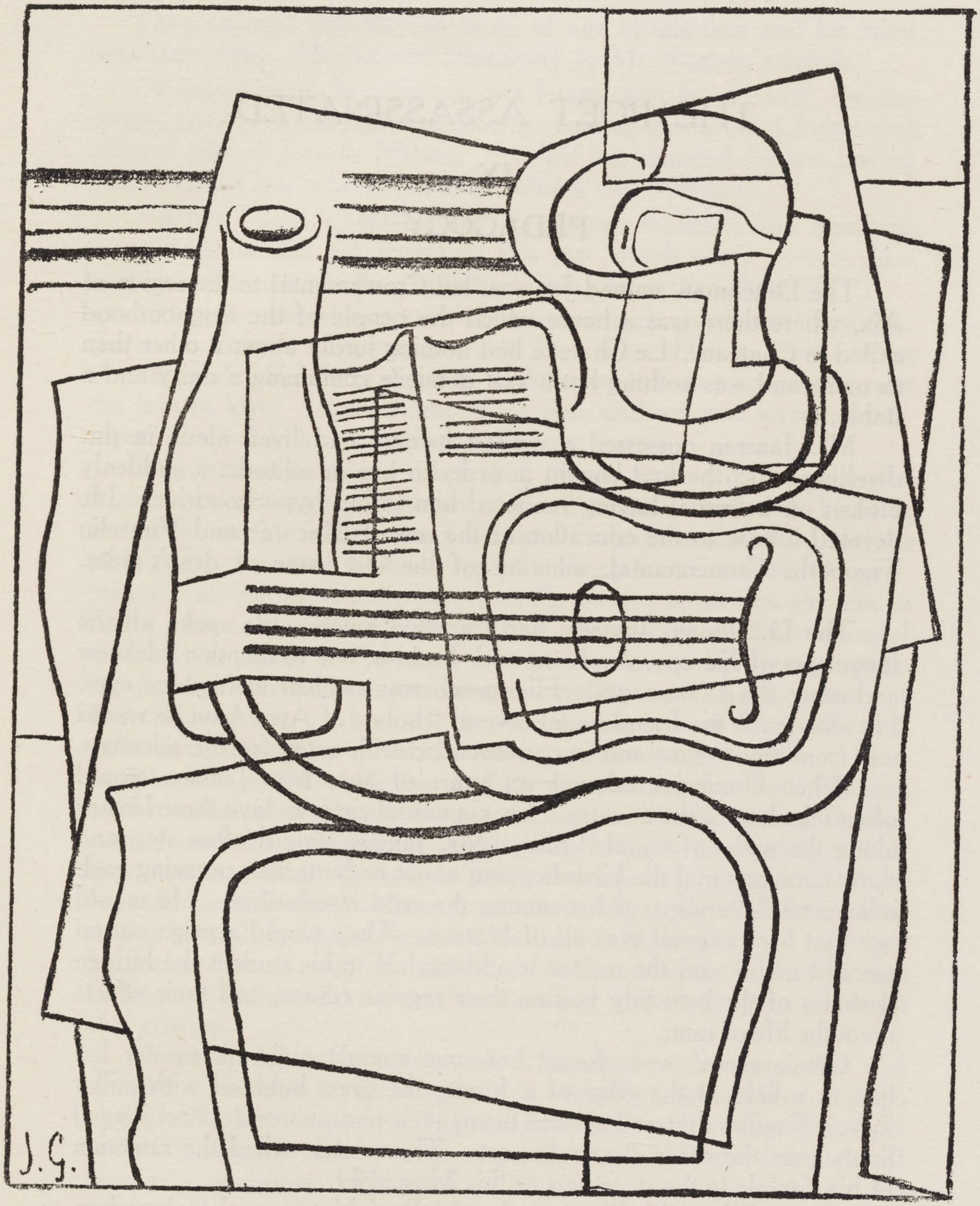
they are not portraits at all. The distortions of cubists and other post-impressionistic painters must, however, be distinguished from the exaggerations of futurists and expressionists who, unlike the primitives, usually ignore visual reality for literary rather than plastic reasons.

The consummation sought by Gris and other painters of the group is an arrangement of form and colour, whether abstract or composed of clearly recognizable figures, which will possess an import specifically plastic, owing nothing to the pleasure derived from recognition or sentiment. The emotion evoked is an intellectual emotion, relating more closely to the pleasure felt on first comprehending the Pythagorean solution than to the gentler thrill of a landscape in late spring. This explains the tendency to neglect the warm and romantic colours for those dull greens and dirty browns with which the cubists are often reproached.

Considering these facts it was surprising to find that Mr. Wright, in The Freeman, defined modern painting as a new art of colour which marked an absolute break with European tradition because, for the first time, form was made absolutely subordinate. He even states that for this reason modern paintings lose most of their value when reproduced in half-tone. Since it is notorious that the work of several contemporary artists looks at least as well when reproduced, one is forced to wonder what modern paintings Mr. Wright has in mind. His aesthetic theory was effectively demolished soon afterwards in the same periodical, but if there be any reader of The Freeman who obtains his information solely from its pages, he will naturally believe that all modern art is buried in the same debris as the theories of Mr. Wright.

The group of modern artists who live in Paris, and who by general consent are considered the pioneers of occidental pictorial art, are at least as much concerned with the problem of arranging form significantly as were the masters of the early Renaissance, and perhaps their chief difference with tradition is the economy with which they seek the attainment of this end. The drawings of Gris, reproduced in this number, are valuable not only for their beauty, but for the clear way in which they illustrate the method and aims of the cubists.

H. A. L.



Drawing

Juan Gris

THE POET ASSASSINATED

IX

PEDAGOGY

The Dutchman, named Janssen, led Croniamantal to the region of Aix, where there was a house which the people of the neighborhood called le Chateau. Le Chateau had nothing lordly about it other than its name and was nothing but a vast domicile containing a dairy and a stable.

Mr. Janssen possessed a modest income and lived alone in this dwelling which he had bought in order to live in solitude, a suddenly broken off betrothal having rendered him rather hypochondriac. He devoted it now to the education of the son of Macarée and Vierselin Tigoboth: Croniamantal, inheritor of the old name of des Ygrées.

The Dutchman, Janssen, had travelled much. He spoke all the languages of Europe, Arabian, and Turkish, not to mention Hebrew and other dead languages. His speech was as clear as his blue eyes. He soon made the friendship of several scholars of Aix whom he would visit from time to time and he corresponded with many foreign scientists.

When Croniamantal was six years of age, Mr. Janssen would often take him to the country. Croniamantal came to love these lessons along the paths of wooded hills. Mr. Janssen would often stop and show Croniamantal the birds hopping about or butterflies pursuing each other and fluttering together among the wild rose-bushes. He would say that love reigned over all of Nature. They would also go out on moonlit nights and the master would explain to his student the hidden destinies of the heavenly bodies, their regular course, and their effects upon the life of man.

Croniamantal never forgot how one moonlit night his master led him to a field at the edge of a forest; the grass bubbled with milky light. Fireflies fluttered around them; their phosphorescent and jagged lights gave the site a strange aspect. The master called the attention of his disciple to the sweetness of this May night.

"Learn," he said, "learn to know all of Nature and to love her. Let her be your veritable nurse, whose salutary mammals are the moon and the hills."

Croniamantal was thirteen years of age at this time and his mind was quite ripe. He listened attentively to Mr. Janssen's words.

"I have always lived in her, but I must say, lived badly, for one should not live without human love as companion. Do not forget that all is a sign of love in Nature. I, alas! am damned for not having observed this law whose demands nothing can withstand."

"What," said Croniamantal, "you, my teacher, who know so many sciences did not recognize this law which every country lout and even the animals, the vegetables, and inert matter observe?"

"Happy child who at your age can put such questions!" said Mr. Janssen. "I have always known that law, from which no human being should rebel. But there are some luckless men destined never to know the joys of love. I have mortified my flesh and suffered severe punishment. I should like your life to be happy."

Croniamantal's master made him devote most of his time to the sciences, keeping him au courant with all recent inventions. He also instructed the boy in Latin and Greek. They often read the Eclogues of Virgil or translated Theocritus in a clump of olive trees. Croniamantal had learned a very pure French, but his master taught him in Latin. He also taught him Italian, and at an early age Croniamantal received the poems of Petrarch, who became one of his favorite poets. M. Janssen also taught Croniamantal English, and made him familiar with Shakespeare. Above all he gave the boy a taste for old French authors. Among the French poets he admired chiefly Villon, Ronsard and his Pléiade, Racine and La Fontaine. He also made him read translations of Cervantes and of Goethe. On his advice, Croniamantal read the romances of chivalry which might have made part of the library of Don Quixote. They developed in Croniamantal an invincible predilection for experiment and perilous love adventures; he devoted hmself to fencing and to horseback riding; at the age of fifteen he declared to anyone who came to visit them that he had decided to become a celebrated and peerless cavalier, and already he dreamed of a mistress.

Croniamantal was, at this time, a handsome adolescent, thin and straight. The girls at the village fetes, when he touched them lightly, would stifle little bursts of laughter and redden, lowering their eyes under his regard. Habituated to poetic forms, his mind thought of love as a conquest. Thoughts of Boccacio, his natural daring, his education, everything disposed him to take the final step.

One May day, he went out for a long ride. It was morning, everything was still fresh. The dew hung from the flowers of the

hedges, and on either side of the road stretched the fields of olive trees whose gray leaves trembled gently in the sea breeze and compared agreeably with the blue sky. He arrived at a place where the road was being mended. The road menders, handsome boys in bright colored caps, worked lazily, singing the while, and stopping occasionally to drink from their flasks. Croniamantal thought that these handsome fellows had sweethearts. It is thus that they call a lover in that country. The boys say "my sweetheart," the girls, "my sweetheart," and in fact they are both sweet in that lovely country. Croniamantal's heart leaped and his whole being, exalted by the springtime and the riding, cried for love.

At a turn in the road, an apparition increased his pain. He arrived close to a little bridge thrown across a river which cut the road. The place was isolated, and across the hedges and the trunks of poplars, he saw two beautiful girls bathing, quite naked. One was in the water and held herself up by a branch. He admired her brown arms and abundant beauties, hardly concealed by the water. The other, standing on the bank, dried herself after her bath and exposed ravishing lines and graces which enflamed the heart of Croniamantal; he decided to join them and mingle in their pleasures. Unluckily, he perceived in the branches of a neighboring tree two youths spying on this prey. Holding their breath and watching the least movements of the bathers, they did not see the equestrian, who, laughing uproariously, threw his horse into a gallop and cried aloud as he crossed the little bridge.

The sun had risen almost to its zenith and was now darting its dreadful rays. An ardent thirst added itself to the amorous inquietudes of Croniamantal. The sight of a farm along the road brought him unspeakable joy. He arrived at a little orchard whose blossoming trees made a lovely sight. It was a little wood, rose and white with the cherry and peach blossoms. On the fence linen was drying and he had the pleasure of seeing a charming peasant girl of about sixteen, at work washing clothes in a vat in the shadow of a fig-tree that had just begun to bloom. Not having noticed his arrival, she continued to accomplish her domestic function which he found noble; for, his imagination full of memories of antiquity, he compared her to Nausica. Descending from his horse he approached and contemplated the young girl with ravishment. He looked at her back. Her folded up skirt discovered a well made leg in a very white stocking. Her body moved in a manner that was pleasantly excitating because of the efforts occasioned by the soaping. Her sleeves were rolled up and he observed her pretty brown plump arms, which enchanted him.

I have always loved beautiful arms especially. There are people who attach great importance to the perfection of the foot. I admit that they touch me too, but the arm is to my mind that which should be most perfect in woman. It is always in motion, one always has one's eye upon it. One might say that it is the veritable organ of the graces, and that by its deft movements, it is the veritable arm of Love, since when curved, this delicate arm resembles a bow, and when extended, the arrow thereof.

This was also Croniamantal's point of view. He was thinking of this, when suddenly, his horse, who suddenly remembered that it was the habitual hour for being fed began to whinny. At once the young girl turned and showed surprise at seeing a stranger regarding her from above the fence. She blushed and only seemed the more charming. Her dusky skin attested to the Moorish blood that flowed in her veins. Croniamantal asked her for food and drink. With much good grace this sweet girl did have him enter the house and served him a rude repast. With some milk, eggs and black bread, his thirst and his hunger were soon sated. In the meantime, he questioned his young hostess, in the hope of finding an opportunity for paying her gallant compliments. He learned that her name was Mariette, and that her parents had gone to the neighboring town to sell vegetables; her brother was working on the road. This family lived happily on the products of the orchard and the barnyard.

At this moment, her parents, fine looking peasants, returned, and there was Croniamantal already in love with Mariette, quite disappointed. He paid the mother for the meal, and went off, after having given Mariette a long look which she did not return, but he had the satisfaction of seeing her blush as she turned away.

He mounted his horse and took the road to his house. Being for the first time in his life, sad for love, he found extreme melancholy in this same countryside which he had previously traversed. The sun had dropped low over the horizon. The grey leaves of the olive trees seemed as sad as himself. The shadows stretched out like waves. The river where he had seen the bathers was abandoned. The lapping of the water became unbearable for him, like a mockery. He threw his horse into a gallop. Then there was the dusk, lights appearing in the distance. Then night came; he slowed up his horse and abandoned himself to a disordered revery. The sloping road was bordered with cypresses, and it was thus, somnolent with the night and with love, that Croniamantal pursued his melancholy way.

His master soon noticed in the days that followed that he gave no more attention to the studies to which he had been wont to apply himself with such diligence. He divined that this disgust came of love.

His respect was mingled with a little scorn because Mariette was nothing but a simple peasant girl.

The end of September had been reached, and one day Mr. Janssen led Croniamantal out under the laden olive trees in the orchard and censured his disciple for his passion, the latter hearkening to his reproaches with ruddy embarrassment. The first winds of autumn complained in the fields and Croniamantal, very sad and much ashamed, lost forever his desire to see again the pretty Mariette and kept nothing but the memory of her.

And so Croniamantal attained his majority.

A disease of the heart which was discovered in him was cured by the military authorities. Soon after, his guardian died suddenly, leaving him by will the little which he possessed. And after having sold the house called *le Chateau*, Croniamantal went to Paris to give himself freely to his taste for literature; he had been for some time past composing poems secretly and accumulating them in an old cigar-box.

X

POETRY

In the early days of the year 1911, a young man who was very badly dressed went running up the rue Houdon. His extremely mobile countenance seemed to be filled with joy and anxiety by turns. His eyes devoured all that they saw and when his eyelids snapped shut quickly like jaws, they gulped in the universe, which renewed itself incessantly by the mere operation of him who ran. He imagined to the tiniest details the enormous worlds pastured in himself. The clamour and the thunder of Paris burst from afar and about the young man, who stopped, and panted like some criminal who has been too long pursued and ready to surrender himself. This clamour, this noise indicated clearly that his enemies were about to track him like a thief. His mouth and his gaze expressed the ruse he was employing, and walking slowly now, he took refuge in his memory, and went forward, while all the forces of his destiny and of his consciousness retarded the time when the truth should appear of that which is, that which was, and of that which is to be.

The young man entered a one story house. On the open door was a placard:

Entrance to the Studios

He followed a corridor where it was so dark and so cold that he had the feeling of having died, and with all his will, clenching his fists and gritting his teeth he began to take eternity to bits. Then suddenly he was conscious again of the motion of time whose seconds, hammered by a clock, fell like pieces of broken glass, while life flowed in him again with the renewed passage of time. But as he stopped to rap at a door, his heart beat more strongly again, for fear of finding no one home.

He rapped at the door and cried:

"It is I, Croniamantal!"

And behind the door the heavy steps of a man who seemed tired, or carried too weighty a burden, came slowly, and as the door opened there took place in the sudden light the creation of two beings and their instant marriage.

In the studio, which looked like a barn, an innumerable herd flowed in dispersion; they were the sleeping pictures, and the herdsman who tended them smiled at his friend. Upon a carpenter's table piles of yellow books could be likened to mounds of butter. And pushing back the ill-joined door, the wind brought in unknown beings who complained with little cries in the name of all the sorrows. All the wolves of distress howled behind the door ready to devour the flock, the herdsman and his friend, in order to prepare in their place the foundations for the NEW CITY. But in the studio there were joys of all colours. A great window opened the whole north side and nothing could be seen but the whole blue sky, the song of a woman. Croniamantal took off his coat which fell to the floor like the corpse of a drowned man, and sitting on the divan he gazed for a long time at the new canvas placed on the support. Dressed in a blue wrap, barefooted, the painter also regarded the picture in which two women remembered themselves in a glacial mist.

The studio contained another fatal object, a large piece of broken mirror hooked to the wall. It was a dead and soundless sea, standing on end, and at the bottom of which a false life animated what did not exist. Thus, confronting Art, there is the appearance of Art, against which men are not sufficiently on their guard, and which pulls them to earth when Art has raised them to the heights. Croniamantal bent over in a sitting posture, leaned his fore-arms on his knees, and turned his

eyes from the painting to an advertisement thrown on the floor on which was painted the following announcement:

I AM AT THE BAR—*The Bird of Benin*

He read and re-read this sentence while the Bird of Benin contemplated his picture, approaching it and withdrawing from it, his head at all angles. Finally he turned towards Croniamantal and said,

"I saw the woman for you last night."

"Who is she?" asked Croniamantal.

"I do not know, I saw her but I do not know her. She is a really young girl, as you like them. She has the sombre and child-like face of those who are destined to cause suffering. And despite all the grace of her hands that straighten in order to repell, she lacks that nobility which poets could not love because it would prevent their being miserable. I have seen the woman for you, I tell you. She is both beauty and ugliness; she is like everything that we love nowadays. And she must have the taste of the laurel leaf."

But Croniamantal, who was not listening to him, interrupted at this point to say:

"Yesterday I wrote my last poem in regular verses:

Te-rum
Te-tum!

and my last poem in irregular verses (take care that in the second stanza the word wench is taken in its less reputable meaning):

PROSPECTUS FOR A NEW MEDICINE

Why did Hjalmar return
The tankard of beaten silver lay void,
The stars of the evening
Became the stars of the morning
Reciprocally
The sorceress of the forest of Hruloe
Prepared her repast
She was an eater of horse-flesh
But he was not
Mai Mai ramaho nia nia.

Then the stars of the morning
Became again the stars of the evening
And reciprocally

They cried—In the name of Maroe
Wench of Arnamoer
And of his favorite zoophyte
Prepare the drink of the gods
—Certainly noble warrior
Mai Mai ramaho nia nia.

She took the sun
And plunged him into the sea
As housewives
Dip a ham in the gravy
But alas! the salmons voracious
Have devoured the drowned sun
And have made themselves wigs
With his beams
Mai Mai ramaho nia nia.

She took the moon and did her all with bands
As they do with the illustrious dead
And with little children
And then in the light of the only stars
The eternal ones
She made concoction of sea-brine
The euphorbiaceans of Norwegian resin
And the mucous of Alfes
To make a drink for the gods
Mai Mai ramaho nia nia."

He died like the sun
And the sorceress perched at the top of a fir pine
Heard until evening
The rumours of the great winds engulfed in the phial
And the lying scaldas swear to this
Mai Mai ramaho nia nia.

Croniamantal was silent for an instant and then added:

"I shall from now on write only poetry free from all restrictions even that of language.

"Listen, old man!

MAHEVIDANOMI RENANOCALIPNODITOC
EXTARTINAP ♯ v.s.
A. Z.

Telephone: 33-122 Pan:Pan
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"Your last line, my poor Croniamantal," said the bird of Benin, "is a simple plagiarism from Fr.nc.s J.mm.s."

"That is not true," said Croniamantal. "But I shall compose no more pure poetry. That is what I have come to, through your fault. I want to write plays."

"You had better go to see the young woman of whom I spoke to you. She knows you and seems to be crazy about you. You will find her in the Meudon woods next Thursday at a place that I shall designate. You will recognize her by the skipping rope that she will hold in her hand. Her name is Tristouse Ballerinette."

"Very well," said Croniamantal, "I shall go to see Ballerinette and shall sleep with her, but above all I want to go to the theatres to offer my play, Ieximal Jelimite, which I wrote in your studio last year while eating lemons."

"Do what you want, my friend," said the Bird of Benin, "but do not forget Tristouse Ballerinette, the woman of your future."

"Well said," said Croniamantal. "But I want to roar to you once more the plot of Ieximal Jelimite. Listen:

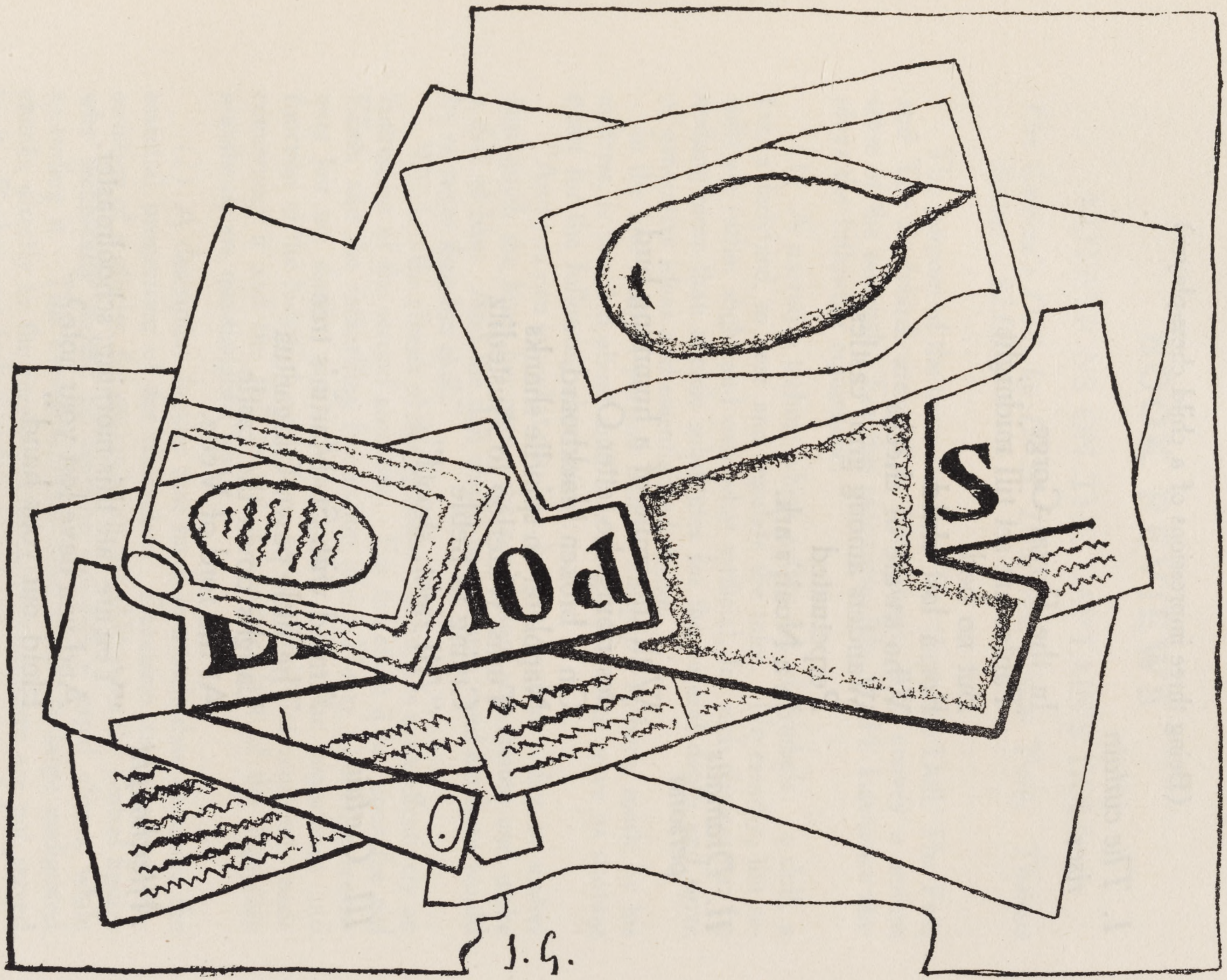
"A man buys a newspaper on the seashore. From the garden of a house at one side emerges a soldier whose hands are electric bulbs. A giant 10 feet tall descends from a tree. He shakes the newspaper vendor, who is of plaster and who in falling breaks to bits. At this moment a judge arrives. With strokes of a razor he kills everybody, while a leg which passes hopping crushes the judge with a kick in the nose, and sings a pretty little song."

"How wonderful!" said the Bird of Benin. "I shall paint the decoration, you have promised me that."

"That goes without saying," answered Croniamantal.

(*To be continued*)

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
(*Translated by Matthew Josephson*)



Drawing

Juan Gris

SAMMY PLAYS THE PAWN

(Being three impressions of a child chess-player)

I. The curtain rises

In the Royal Gorge
Tables are set till midnight
But no bed
For a lost child
Who aware of checks
Wanders among grim castles
Perpetuated
In a Noah's ark.

II. Dramatis persona

With the smile of a humming bird
describing the letter O
On a broken blackboard
Napoleon on spindle shanks
Turns Waterloo to Austerlitz
Crying in treble
"All right, shoot!"

III. Curtain

Armed with St. Martin's tree
The little pawn Gargantua
Laughs down the castle
At the ford of Vede.

Afterthought

"You are late this morning, schoolmaster.
And you have lost your note?
Hold out your hand."

ROBERT ALDEN SANBORN

BOOK REVIEWS

NOTATIONS ON THE CAPTAIN'S DOLL

The Captain's Doll, by D. H. Lawrence. New York. Thomas Seltzer. $2.00.

The purpose of the three stories: The Captain's Doll, The Fox, and The Ladybird, grouped in this volume, is to convey a serious sense of the unusual. For this enterprise, Mr. D. H. Lawrence employs the following equipment:

(1) A narrative technic which makes use of symbols: a doll, a fox, a ladybird, to gear and regulate the tales. Necessarily, the results are rather slight and somewhat artificial, for such devices can be nothing more than anemic substitutes for the natural depth and drive of generative ideas and essentialized design.

In the first story, a portrait doll of Captain Hepburn, made by his mistress, is dangled about until it is finally forced to serve as starting point for the following observation:

"And you can say what you like, but *any* woman, today, no matter *how* much she loves her man—she could start any minute and make a doll of him. And the doll would be her hero: and her hero would be no more than her doll."

Which is the climax of this episode. The fox is more effectively an instrument of the second narrative. For the effect it has upon the girl Ellen, and the compelling fascination which Henry Grenfel exercises over her are similar and interchangeable. But the importance and function of the ladybird, aside from certain irrelevant comments made concerning it and the fact that it is a descendant of the Egyptian scarabeus, are questionable, trivial.

(2) A descriptive faculty that tends to overshadow or ignore the essential progression of the characters. Excessive and repeated description of a glacier, for example, all but obliterates the central figures who technically should be working towards a rapid climax while ascending it. This over-description often comes in large undigested chunks directly to the reader. Hence the characters are not served by it. Rather, one feels that they exist for the purposes of the descrip-

tion. This faculty is perhaps at its best when concerned with physical attractiveness:

"The women, old and young, paraded in the peasant-costume, in flowery cotton dresses with gaudy, expensive silk aprons: the men wore the Tyrolese costume, bare knees and little short jackets. And for the men the correct thing was to have the leathern hose and the blue linen jacket as old as possible. If you had a hole in your leathern seat, so much the better."

(3) An ability to conceive, but not to inevitably unfold and realize character. Doubtless the five or six major figures of this volume were possessed with unusual qualities and important problems of development, as Mr. Lawrence saw them. And it must be granted that as creations Captain Hepburn, Ellen March, Grenfel, and Psanek have a certain objective validity. The soft, amusing indifference and indecision of the first, Ellen's rapid shifts from surface efficiency to deep, subconscious dreams and brooding, Grenfel's foxiness and determination, Psanek's solitary hate and his intense sub-surface power—these qualities exist in the pages of this book. But because Mr. Lawrence fails to finally grip and develop them, they tend to a static rather than to a dynamic and cumulative reality. Hence one sees them; one does not always feel and know them to be there. And with his minor figures Mr. Lawrence is even less successful. Why Hepburn's mistress, for example, should invariably be amazed at him, is anything but clear. To state that she is, by the repeated use of this convention: "in the midst of her indignant amazement" or "she turned on him with wide-open eyes of amazement" simply begs the labor of convincing creation. And so, the relations between Hepburn and his lover approach the absurd. In fact the element of absurdity is often so near the surface of these tales, that one with difficulty restrains the conviction that Mr. Lawrence is laughing all the while.

(4) A prose style, not far removed from the accents and texture of conversation, most at ease in dialog, most competent in narrative passages and in description. A style rarely or never luminous and dense, muscular and racy. Nor has it those finished periods that distinguish traditional English prose. Cliché, ineffective images and figures of speech, however, generously stud it:

"It was all like a mystery to her, as if one of the men from Mars were loving her;" "it was exactly like day in some other planet;" "he was just committed to her, as he might have been committed to gaol, or committed to paradise;" "so he had seemed to her: like a mute Caesar. Like Germanicus;" "the strange look, like destiny, in his wide-open,

almost staring eyes;" "she could feel the arrows of desire rankling;" "but also, the queer figure that sat alone on the roof watching the stars! The wonderful red flower of the cactus;" "like a flown bird;" "and you giving off beams of bright effulgence like a Gloria!" "it (the glacier) seemed to her like a grand beast;" "so, after a while of this valley of the shadow of death."

And so on. Now one or two more acceptable images by way of balance:

"The sky from above was like a sharp wedge forcing its way into the earth's cleavage, and that eternal ferocious water was like the steel edge of the wedge, the terrible tip biting into the rock's intensity;" "she could faintly see the flesh through his beard, as water through reeds." " 'Yes, I do know what you are talking about. Yes, I do,' he persisted softly, as if he were producing his voice in her blood."

(5) A solemnity of background and underlying temperament, an evidently earnest purpose that destroys the fun one might have from those incidents that are frankly absurd, or approach the absurd. Take the passage where Hepburn is frightened at seeing himself in a still-life painting along with two sun-flowers in a glass and a poached egg on toast. Quite amusing, really. But immediately following this we are assured that the Captain is not a person to be spoofed with, for "fatigued and furious he arrived in Salzburg, seeing no beauty in anything." And the whole thing is spoiled.

This seriousness will not permit of the volume being taken as a bit of incidental writing. Unfortunately, on no other basis can one claim for it a literary value.

JEAN TOOMER

POETS OF THE CATACOMBS

Black Armour, by Elinor Wylie. New York. George H. Doran Company. $1.75.

Sea-Change, by Muna Lee. New York. The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

The Hundred and One Harlequins, by Sacheverell Sitwell. New York. Boni and Liveright. $1.75.

The large, imaginative, daring, formidable people in America are mostly to be found on the vaudeville stage, in the movies, the advertising business, prize-fighting, railroads, Wall Street. One is led to this conclusion by observing to what an alarming extent those who produce poetry lack such virtues. Art is purveyed for small persecuted

colonies, dispersed throughout this continent, and hidden away among its stone walls and steel foundations. They simply do not join in the great funny time that is being had by all—I mean, the *Zeitgeist* spouts and blows great storms against which they are thoroughly cellared. Thus, while the age itself is given to upheaval, our poets, insensibly enough, strike perfectly traditional poses and have nothing to say which would place them in this time rather than in Heine's or Landor's time. Miss Wylie, for instance, is still "the inscrutable woman:"

"But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile."

For our feminine lyricists, it is still fashionable to be wistfully ironical, to hope tenderly but to know that all will go badly after all, to idealize love with knights and kings, to fling a rose wash over love. But it is all very astonishing in this time, which demands hardier poets, such as can straddle the language of our people, or know the genius of this people as well as a vaudeville comedian or an advertising copy-writer, positive, voluble, sententious, and yet by their form and attitude defining the very nature of their age. Unfortunately, neither Elinor Wylie nor Muna Lee are of this mould. Miss Wylie, who has been somewhat indiscriminately complimented for her virtuosity, is generally more dexterous than most of her lyrical colleagues in her use of the older verse forms; nevertheless she is precipitated by these very forms into familiar subterfuges which arouse impatience and resentment, viz.: "delicate and slim," (Hamlet!) "exquisite and thin," "ingenuous shepherd boy," "Passion in the night," "could not pity nor forget," "submit my spirit to the storm." At her best, she is quainter and more charming than the others, as witness "Lilliputian," but the conventional lyric is by now a single fine violin note of pathos which has become nearly insufferable.

Miss Lee's register is plainly that of Sara Teasdale, Grace Conkling, Wytter Bynner, and a vast chorus of soprano singers. Her theme in "Sea-Change" is Love—the love of popular magazines: a love that desires all of the beloved, that "gives but does not give all," that sings when "the dawn grows red," that wanes upon a large hill at sunset. In short Miss Lee does not express in her love songs an unforgettable personal equation as did Sir Philip Sidney, or D. G. Rossetti, whose opinions are invaluable documents for any history of the reproductive instinct in mankind. Her verses are facile; at their best they are modelled after Blake's irregular metrics:

The East unrolled a sheet of gold,
Gold for river and flower and limb;

but her images do not have the same air of being accurate statements. Nor is she as frequently happy in playing with her iambs, as witness:

The blackbirds fly before the cold,
The painted grosbeaks go;
Not any tanager is so bold
As to brave the snow.

The last line scans very badly. By the functioning of the preceding three, one is led to beat a solid accent in the wrong place: "As *TO* brave the snow." Judged by her own intentions, Miss Lee has not mastered the trade secrets of her medium. The American warblers are a little less painstaking than the English Georgians. A sequence of sonnets concludes Miss Lee's book, but they can scarcely be considered an advance upon the Masefield sonnet: her versification is extremely uneven in a form where departure from orthodox rhythms must be brilliantly executed if at all.

Sacheverell Sitwell, (the youngest of the three Sitwells) has much real wit and virtuosity. A prolific and gifted youth, cynical beyond his years, he has adopted the manner of the Seventeenth-Century and Metaphysical poets to lampoon us with. The "manner" comprises fantasy, explosive rhymes, elaborate and unruly metaphors, and a persistently extravagant vocabulary. At his own game, Mr. Sitwell can be most entertaining—always for the particular colony in the catacombs whom this pose pleases best. (For a time, after the arrival of Mr. Eliot, we all thought that we had better rush off and read our Donne, Chapman, Vaughan, Marvell and steal their fantasy and wit as the best retort to the pressure of modern conditions.) And so, Mr. Sitwell can be pert and buffoonish with the language:

Who taught the centaur first to drink
Ladling his huge hands from the brink—
When other monsters lie and lap
The waters like a fruitful pap.

In the "Hochzeit of Hercules" he is purely the satirist; the fun consists of mixing modern figures with ancient ones: Hercules "has taken from fat kings, their motorcars and diamond rings." It is all frankly disappointing. Satire produces essentially negative qualities: a compromised withdrawal from this ubiquitous and consternating existence.

M. J.

The Orissers, by L. H. Meyers. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.00.

The 553 pages of this work are an easy evidence of a quantitative energy seeking expression in the novel form. Upon a plot of intrigue

and domestic complications it erects a structure that is intended to measure the psychological processes and the cultural-social tendency of people fashioned by modern industrial civilization. Which is to say: it attempts the larger possibilities of the novel.

As background, The Orissers gives an industrial city and an adjacent country home. Springing from these, the characters, sufficiently concrete and personalized, are nevertheless frankly broadened and interpreted as types. John Mayne and Walter Standish, financiers, fit with an unusual efficiency into the dominant accepted order, while Lilian and Nicholas Orisser find the ease and solitude their sensitized, inbred natures need, at Eamor. Maladjustment and friction comes when one life tries to penetrate the domain of the other. The spiritual obtuseness of Mayne is pricked by his love for, and marriage to Lilian. Distemper and disease set in, and he finally dies at the home of the Orissers. Standish, forced to endure this place because of the sickness of his friend, escapes to his own sphere immediately after the death of this latter. Lilian's spiritual decay is hastened by the invasion. And Nicholas salvages nothing but bitterness from his contact with the material world. Two other major characters figure in this work: Cosmo Orisser and Allen. Cosmo, in addition to the spiritual values of the Orissers, is possessed by a vehement temperament that drives him into experience. Lacking direction, his fervor for a more perfect world degenerates to a hate that includes the place that cradled him and the social form that could find no function for his vision. His end is in near-insanity and complete frustration. Allen, by virtue of an interest in archeology and a less rigid and passionate nature, manages to straddle the two mutually exclusive worlds.

The analysis is thorough and convincing, though it is not complete.

Summarized, it might be stated thus: since power resides with the complacent, conformist materialists, those who possess dissenting spiritual values will abort (suffering in proporton to the passion with which they press their convictions) or be snowed under. And since an acceptable mixture is impossible, the commercial-financial class will over-ride and supplant the old landowners. As a limited cross-section of western experience—that is, in this novel, one accepts these conclusions. Here, surely, whatever the content of the coming years, it is not for Lilian or Nicholas; it is for Walter Standish. But as a general concept and interpretation, this view likewise is not complete. For it ignores the possible proletarian influence upon both of these classes. And it excludes the fact and force of creative values coupled with direction. It excludes the creator, strong enough to accept rather than reject. Here in America at least, it is still to be demonstrated

that the *artist* is unequal to the task of transforming the crude energy of his material world. But perhaps after all one should not look for too inclusive a vision in this work. Perhaps it should be accepted simply as a novel of more than usual scope.

The Orissers is not a great novel, in the sense that the lesser novels of Dostoyevski are great. But within the limits of its psychological type content and design it is a volume to be welcomed as a needed departure from provincial episodes and narratives of sex.

Castle Conquer, by Padraic Colum. New York. The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

The material is rich and interesting: a feudal Ireland for a background; a plot of political conspiracy and peasant revolt; a love tale; Irish tenant farmers, peddlers, soldiers, landowners; Irish songs, frolics, dancing, fairs. The prose is fresh and easy-flowing. And a music comes into it by way of lovely Irish names and the peculiar Irish-English dialog. Nor, given the peasant rhythm, can one seriously object to the book's slow movement, or to the somewhat episodic way in which it unfolds. What, then, is wrong? This: for some reason, perhaps because Mr. Colum has placed too much reliance upon his content, upon its inherent soil-ness and lyricism, upon the general interest in Ireland's struggle for political autonomy, because he has given himself too sparingly unto his work, the poetry of the material and the poetry of the prose fail to achieve a mutually transforming contact. There is no sustained interchange between them. There is no complete intersaturation. (One's standards tend to be exacting of the literature that produced John M. Synge.) Hence Castle Conquer, for all its fresh loveliness and health, misses that living beauty which one somehow expects from it.

A History of Art (Volume I), by H. B. Cotterill. New York. Frederick Stokes Company. $10.

Mr. Cotterill's pretentious and beautifully illustrated History purports to be a "popular" and readable Outline of Art, after the modern fashion of purveying a vast subject in condensed form. It would have been far more interesting if Mr. Cotterill had brought to his subject the point of view of modern artists, as Mr. Wells did that of modern historians and scientists.

On the contrary, Mr. Cotterill is consistently academic, breathing the nineteenth-century scholar's rapture for Hellenic and Renaissance art. From the angle of today, a treatment of Egyptian, Assyrian and Archaic sculpture offers an enviable scope. The distortion, the form-

alism, the absence of perspective in Assyrian and Egyptian reliefs and statues suggest new principles which are being brilliantly applied in contemporary painting. Discussing Egyptian sculpture of the New or Second Empire, Mr. Cotterill: " . . . a freer style is observable, but the old frontal profile distortion is often found, and there is no attempt at perspective."

Further, he protests against the "materiality" of Egyptian architecture and sculpture, in a land of "those monstrous temples and pyramids and colossi," "of desperate craving for an eternity of material existence," against which even the "politically and religiously half-awakened Hebrew" revolted. Is it not rather true that this mad absorption in *the material* led to the Egyptian's extraordinary understanding of the laws of an art, based on the use of such material. In their sculpture in stone or wood, the Egyptians displayed a genius for pure plastic composition which we are struggling to perfect today, and in their "monstrous" architecture a faculty for adjusting harmoniously huge blocks of stone, which is the basis for the new architecture of America.

There is the same lack of sympathy for archaic Greek and primitive Italian art, as against the "Idealism" of Fourth Century Greek.

As a compendium, however—and this is an age of compendiums—this two-volume History with its hundreds of excellent reproductions promises to be extremely useful.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED

MEN LIKE GODS, by H. G. Wells. New York. The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

TEODORO THE SAGE, by Luigi Lucatelli. New York. Boni and Liveright. $2.00.

THROUGH THE WHEAT, by Thomas Boyd. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.75.

THE CRAFTSMANSHIP OF THE ONE-ACT PLAY, by Percival Wilde. Boston. Little Brown and Company. $3.00.

STORIES, DREAMS AND ALLEGORIES, by Olive Schreiner. New York. Frederick Stokes Company. $1.75.

FIERY PARTICLES, by C. E. Montague. New York. Doubleday, Page and Company. $1.75.

MAN'S PREHISTORIC PAST, by H. H. Wilder. New York. The Macmillan Company. $5.00.

COMMENT

BROOM: 1921—1923

In October 1921, from the charming converted villa of its Roman printer just outside the Porto del Popolo, the first number of BROOM issued forth. In October 1922 the eleventh issue set off on its voyage from Berlin. Now a new series, beginning with the seventeenth number, picks up the thread of continuity in a third great city, the city of its birth. The chronicle of BROOM'S vicissitudes among the nations would be of interest, but it is not so important as an account of the internal evolution of its editorial policy.

Whenever a producer in America is censured for the cheapness, triviality or vulgarity of the creation he sponsors, he shrugs the responsibility from his shoulders with the platitude, "It is what the public wants." Such an abstraction as "the public" is of course fallacious, there being many publics and more potential ones. The inception of BROOM was based on the faith that there is a public which wants to read sincere contemporary work, regardless of whether or not it has been prepared by advance publicity, regardless of the difficulty in understanding writing which follows experimental and novel modes.

The first problem of BROOM was to find this public. Since it lacked the means to attempt the usual publicity, it had to invent other methods. Printing in Europe was the first stratagem. Owing to *valuta*, it was possible to provide an exotic luxury in make-up, which attracted many readers who otherwise would have failed to single it out from the scores of literary periodicals that spring up and pass away with the seasons. Also, the unusualness of an American magazine which proclaimed the Eternal City as its home aroused a curiosity among readers which was increased by the nature of the material it published. A small and reliable public was soon accumulated.

The second problem of BROOM proved more difficult of solution. To find little-known writers worth printing and unrecognized artists worth reproducing has taken many months of hard work. The sifting of material in foreign languages has rivalled in difficulty the cajoling of Americans to risk their manuscripts on a journey which at best would last two months. But as the issues succeeded each other and

BROOM began to be known from Japan to Russia, a rough grouping took shape, and by now a definite number of individuals, widely scattered territorially, are bound together by a thread of common aims expressed in BROOM.

Their centre is a nucleus of American writers of the youngest generation. To define their common properties is not easy, for it is a sign of health that as yet their opinions and methods are not cast in definite moulds. One trait is so obvious that it has often been over-emphasized: a whole-hearted disapproval of the generation that preceded them.

From the days of Irving and Prescott till the early years of the twentieth century, our literature believed, like our chambers of commerce, that Anglo-American civilization was the highest form of culture attained by mankind. Our writers gloried in the virtues of America and expounded its distinctive qualities. Even such individualists as Whitman were proud to be American. The iconoclasts were the exception, and usually objected to certain specific maladjustments.

Then came the muck-rakers.

The general disillusionment of which they were the expression soon made itself felt among artists. Certain novelists became prominent whose chief tenet was the evil underlying the showy phenomena of our life. It is not necessary to follow the trend from Upton Sinclair and Dreiser to Anderson and Lewis; their point of attack shifts but the essence of their work is similar. With vision fixed on some Utopia they assail with all their force things as they are, at times supplying a good story or interesting documentation as well. The poetry revival first attracted public attention with the vitriolic denunciations of Masters, but broadened as it developed, and includes among its representatives several writers, such as Marianne Moore, Williams, Stevens and Kreymborg, who, by their concentration on aesthetics, may be considered precursors of the latest movement. However, the majority of poets, even though they veil their bias by a screen of objectivity, share the prevailing disillusion, and four of the more influential have put their belief into practice by exiling themselves voluntarily. The end of this phase is not yet in sight, and a considerable audience has become accustomed to weighing the merits of a work according to the vigour with which it assails their favorite antipathies.

BROOM had not gone very far before it discovered that a new generation was pushing upwards, distinct in more than years from the preceding.

The men of this group are not shocked by the disclosure that stock-

yards are congenial hang-outs for neither man nor beast. They cannot confess even to surprise when told that newspapers occasionally misrepresent the facts. Although interested in the social customs of Main Street, they are dubious whether a reformed Main Street, with a Little Theatre, Community Pageants, Modern Book Shop and Birth Control Club would be more attractive and happier. In fact they even question the "open door" woman, having known several in Greenwich Village who lost their virginity concomitantly with their first change of diet, and find little to choose between them and the Saturday Evening Post maiden lady, who was kissed for the first time by a Spanish gallant at the age of 43. They may like bill posters no more than does Van Wyck Brooks, but they do not contend that such things are done better in Europe. Rather they hold that there is a great deal to be said for the American system of going the limit if you are going to go it at all. They keep an open mind toward the phenomena of contemporary industrialism, and devote themselves to the more immediate task of men of letters: writing well.

I do not mean that they are unmoved by the problems of the day, or unconscious of the gross stupidities that falsify social, national and personal relations, but merely that they distrust "current panaceas" and find a little ridiculous the doctrines of poets on economics and of novelists on psychoanalysis. Knowledge has become so specialized that it is impossible to rival Jeremiah or even Jean-Jacques Rousseau. On the other hand these writers have realized that the literary ambition of evoking those aesthetic emotions they desire, by means of controlling their medium, is attainable, and this results in their unusual concentration on problems of form and style.

For example Kenneth Burke, perhaps stimulated by research in plastic mediums for what Clive Bell calls "significant form," has been studying its elusive equivalent in writing. His stories, which discard the old binding of plot or narrative, obtain unity by what he calls a super-plot: "the structural framework which appeals to us over and above the message of the line," or paragraph.

The experiments of Malcolm Cowley are even more diversified. He believes that every literary conception has an ideal form. In the search for it he has evolved nearly as many forms as he has written poems. He is not afraid to write about contemporary phenomena, and does not share the fashionable gesture of horror toward them. Matthew Josephson is another who is able to discover food for poetry in the "crackle of typewriters, comptographs, dictaphones and phonographs" or "dropping dishes in the effervescent crater" of that part of the

restaurant one doesn't think about. His talent is not quite so intellectualized as Burke's or Cowley's, not so dependent on theories based on reason, but more instinctive, drawing directly on the subconscious. Thus, his critical writing does not illuminate by studied analysis and synthesis so much as by the unexpected phrase or word that opens vistas of indefinite extension. Like his poetry, his prose is more suggestive and less conclusive.

All of these have a love of rhetoric, of mouth-filling explosive phrases, unlike the emotional breast-juggling of recent years and more akin to the eloquence of the Elizabethans. Hart Crane must also be mentioned in this connection. E. E. Cummings, the most inventive of all these experimenters, is somewhat older and already well known. The list can be continued farther. Slater Brown, Robert Coates, John Crawford, Charles Galwey, Jean Toomer, Glenway Wescott, Yvor Winters and several others are working along lines of equal interest, but it is premature to appraise or even define them, since the only quality they unquestionably share is that their best work is still to be done. Their history is the history of the future.

Most magazines are filled with the more or less diluted repetitions of authors whose positions are established and whose writing impetus has become tired. Such work is seldom the best work, although it has greater commercial value. Material of this kind seldom finds its way into BROOM, which rather errs in the other direction, and is more apt to accept work not quite mature. Thus the readers of BROOM are in a sense gamblers, like prospectors for oil. The reward is of a different kind, but so is the cost.

BROOM is able at last to give up its vagabond career and to settle in the country to which it belongs. Its collaborators have slowly drawn together into an effective and unified working force. It has connections and friends in such distant places as Moscow and Prague. BROOM looks to the future in the expectation of exceeding all that has already been accomplished, and of progressing even faster than the writers whose words form designs on its pages.

HAROLD A. LOEB

TOWARD A PROFESSIONAL PROSE

American literature within recent years has been sufficiently experimental and enterprising to justify terming the present period one of transition toward resolved forms. Poetry, especially, has been profitably exploited; an astonishing variety of genres has been essayed and the medium has been enriched. And, notably enough, spirited controversies have been maintained over questions which the new writings posed. The atmosphere of controversy and doubt with regard to known methods of working must have done much to stimulate writers as unlike as Carl Sandburg or T. S. Eliot. It is essential to maintain interest at a high temperature in such problems, since it is still an open question whether great artists arouse discussion or are roused by it. Undoubtedly the alertness of the better part of their audience, the other writers, causes them to work under higher pressure.

In prose, American writers have shown less impulse to explore and plunder. Contemporary prose causes speculation largely by virtue of the uncertainty with which it faces its audience. At any rate, a certain interest in the mechanics of prose is beginning to be manifested, much like that in poetry a decade ago.

The problem of immediate expression has absorbed the attention of most of the venturesome writers since James Joyce's Ulysses and Dorothy Richardson's epics appeared. In a measure, writers such as these have been instrumental in making the modern language more fluid; but the temper of the age, which is one of prodigious social transformation, must be contributing far more in the way of new names, technical and colloquial, new compounds, neologisms, word-structures. Another period of language expansion, such as occurred in the sixteenth century, has set in. (The reader is here referred to H. L. Mencken's The American Language.)

Revolt against traditional style takes many shapes; one writer employs violent thought-dissociations; another ripe colloquialisms, and the terminology of our popular magazines, newspapers, advertisements; others, again, employ the most shocking opposition in word-relationships, distort syntax, and punctuation and typography. Even at this, modern writers of English scarcely exceed the violent figures of speech and the vigorous profanity which were seemly to the courtliest ears of earlier centuries.

Granted, a more muscular speech, we still face the problem of form. Consider "form" in prose literature as disposition of subject-matter in a progression of some kind which is aesthetically satisfying. The more aggressive expression of today will scarcely alter this broad and quite traditional definition of "form," but it will oppose the compromises which prose fiction has made in the past.

A conventional chain of narrative, corresponding to the pictorial element in the plastic arts or in music has always comprised the homely machinery of nineteenth century prose. The inclusion of social or political propaganda has also hastened the adulteration of prose fiction. No objection is made here to utilizing the English language for business correspondence or publicity or useful journalism. It is simply patent that in approaching the common medium of prose as an artist, the new writer must be guided by something equivalent to plastic laws, rather than popular prejudices. Necessarily, his adventuring with expression will lead him to cast about boldly for subject-matter which leaves his manner of working unrestricted. Certainly, he will become more despotic with relation to subject, both in his selection and his control thereof. The parallel with modern painting is very helpful here. Instead of attempting to paint flesh so "real" that one is prone to step forward and squeeze the figure in the canvas (an obsession with older schools of painters) the modern painter *disposes* his subject with the most heedless cruelty: the form of the domestic object is treated in accordance with a relentless intellectual design; the tint of the flesh, or whatever texture is used, he decides with the view of supporting his design. These analagous tendencies are not accidental; art is becoming, at once, more specialized and more primitive. That is to say, the building of a satisfying skyscraper may be a highly complicated feat of engineering, but its architecture may involve only a certain sensitiveness for the proper arrangement of simple masses. The African native with his playing-building-carving instinct, we have discovered, produces a sculpture whose form obeys the inherent plastic laws of that medium. Form may remain as perfectly simple in our hands, despite the extreme complexity of our instruments, whether in building a tower or a novel.

Guillaume Apollinaire, whose "Poet Assassinated" continues in this number of BROOM, summarizes for us the specialized interest in expression. Speech, or better, the Word, has been given to man to do with as he wills. Apollinaire's picaresque narrative is eternally the pursuit of the Word. One episode may succeed another without reason or sequence, in utter contradiction; there is always the play of

the Word. (There is unquestionably a religious element in modern writing: "The Word has been given. . . . ," etc.) Or that Malcolm Cowley should use the detective story as a medium is another instance of the bold casting about for subject-matter. The distinction between romanticism and naturalism disappears—both tendencies, *per se*, were concomitants of social upheaval at the opening and close of the past century. E. E. Cummings, in The Enormous Room, wrote down the most sordid experiences with the utmost fantasy: a few rather commonplace adventures induce extraordinary ones in prose rhythm. In France, Pierre MacOrlan writes romances; but his sophisticated and arbitrary diction contrives an air of supreme unreality. A novel recently published in Paris, *Sur le Fleuve Amour*, by Joseph Delteil, goes perhaps farther than any of the others in the quest of an organic prose. A perfectly incredible *plot* develops briskly amid the rather gorgeous rhythms of a style that outdoes the sententious grandeur of a Barrès. It is really the arc of sentences, building up into a greater solar system of arcs that composes Delteil's "form."

Once in such hands, prose is on the way to becoming as organically an art as sculpture or music. The tendency, here, on the part of writers like Sherwood Anderson or D. H. Lawrence, to proceed from a closer and closer scrutiny of human nature to the creation of prose fiction, may prevail for some time. But others are beginning to work from the opposite end, i. e., a profound scrutiny of the artist's own will.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

* * *

It is with deep regret that we announce the resignation of Miss Lola Ridge. Much of the progress which BROOM *has made toward establishing itself in America can be ascribed to Miss Ridge's wholehearted and unselfish labors.*—THE EDITORS.

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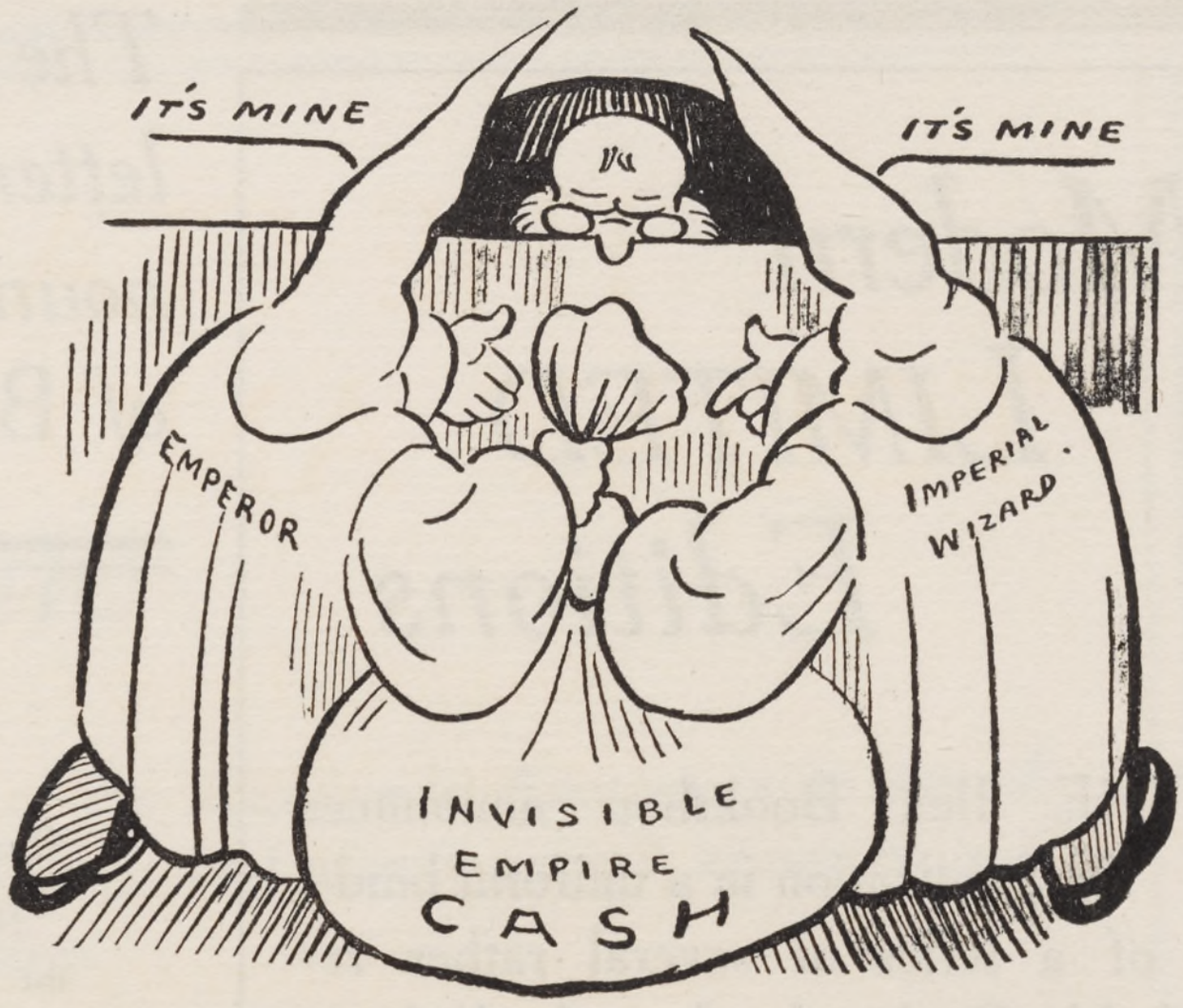

The Nation

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, *Editor*

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June 22, 1923.

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(Signed) L. LIBERTHSON.

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