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BETTER READING 2

Literature

BETTER READING 2

Literature

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Scott, Foresman and Company
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INTRODUCTION

Concerning this book

PRACTICALLY all of us learn to enjoy some forms of literature without much conscious effort. Shortly after we learn to talk, we find that it is fun to recite or to sing Mother Goose rhymes and to listen to stories. A few years later, we discover the charms of comic books, fairy tales, cowboy stories, and moving pictures. After we have grown up, generally even those of us who have eluded education enjoy literature of some sort—movies, radio thrillers, campfire yarns, magazine stories, detective novels, or the popular songs which are sung for us or which we ourselves sing to delight ourselves and, if possible, others.

An untutored, instinctive enjoyment of literature probably is a form of "the pursuit of happiness," and as such should be, in general, unconfined. Anyone should be allowed to read in any fashion he likes—in bed or in a swimming pool, from right to left or left to right, upside down or right side up, stupidly or wisely; he should be allowed to hear songs sung or to watch movies or plays as he pleases, provided he doesn't interfere with other people. Similarly, anyone should be allowed to golf, swim, shoot, and make remarks about the universe in his own sweet way, subject only to the same sensible limitations.

It is quite likely, however, that even a natural athlete will golf, swim, or shoot better if he has some training in the art. And a natural-born orator will talk better, not only about the universe but about any other subject, if he has learned something about it. Similarly, almost any reader of literature will benefit from instruction in the art of understanding and judging what he reads. And almost any reader will talk more interestingly and informa-

tively about what he has read if he knows something about literature in general and certain works in particular.

This is the justification for this book. *Better Reading: Literature* is designed to help its readers cultivate skill in understanding and appreciating the fiction, drama, and poetry which they read, and to help them to tell what they see and what they find good or bad in works of this kind.

There are several ways of teaching people how to read literature. We, the editors, believe that a good way is to start with simple problems and to work gradually to more complex ones. We also believe that, just as the athlete acquires skill not only by receiving instruction but also by practicing, the reader will make progress not only by being told how to solve certain problems but also by practicing their solution himself. Our beliefs have shaped this book. We concentrate upon imaginative literature, since it demands reading skills by and large quite different from those required by factual prose.[1] And we start with uncomplicated though fundamental matters and proceed, by degrees, to more complicated ones, with exercises along the way.

Part I helps the reader discover the nature of imaginative literature in general—not one type but all three types: fiction, drama, and poetry. Since his concern is with no particular type but with fundamental aspects of all types, throughout this section the reader is asked to look in turn at fictional works, plays, and poems. The starting point is a contrast between "fact" and "fiction"—between informative prose and imaginative writing, which shows what the latter achieves and what, therefore, its readers should ordinarily expect of it. We discuss in detail such a contrast between specific passages of fact and of fiction. Then, in order that the reader may himself notice the unique qualities of literature, we provide other specific passages—fictional, poetic, and dramatic—followed by questions requiring similar and supplementary contrasts.

In a like way, the "Manner and matter" of literary works are then discussed and studied, the elements which are shaped by the author's craftsmanship—"Happenings," "Characters," "Setting," and "Language." Then, through reading discussions and working out exercises, the reader concludes this section with a study of two sum or end achievements of these parts—"Tone" and "Meanings." Part I, then, offers a survey of fundamentals—of the basic ingredients of all types of literature and the way authors control them.

In Part I, the emphasis is upon the reader's simply seeing clearly and describing what he has read—details in the selection itself. Far too many readers become so preoccupied with their own reactions that they never

[1]We have dealt with the reading of explanatory and persuasive prose in *Better Reading: Factual Prose.*

see the works themselves distinctly. Yet insight into the precise nature of the works is a prerequisite, we believe, to intelligent evaluation. Here therefore we encourage objective insights rather than personal reactions. The reader proves statements made in answer to questions about each selection by pointing to relevant passages. The problem of evaluation is avoided as much as possible: the emphasis is upon provable statements about the work.

But of course really good reading requires more than a scrutiny of a work, more than a dispassionate description of it. No one can or should read literature without reacting personally to it. Reading is a personal activity which everyone carries on to meet his own requirements and to satisfy his own needs. When he talks about his discoveries and adventures in stories, plays, and poems, the reader needs to talk not only about the works but also of their values for him.

Part II takes up this important aspect of reading—"Evaluations." We use the plural of the word since we think that there are many literary values. And because we believe that the keenest reader and wisest critic should be aware, both in theory and practice, of several possible approaches, several possible "dividends," we consider a number in turn and then provide exercises which will give the reader experiences with all of them. Several exercises now require evaluations of selections in Part I; others require evaluation of new material. Thereafter, we encourage the reader to determine which method of evaluation—or preferably which ones—will best satisfy him.

Parts I and II, in dealing with general aspects of literature and literary evaluations, have not distinguished between varied types of literature. But, of course, each type—fiction, drama, and poetry—has its own peculiar limitations and potentialities. It is important for the reader to know about these. Therefore, in Part III, we turn to a consideration of types, in order. An introductory discussion of each type points out its main characteristics, and headnotes for particular works or groups of works are provided when needed. Because of the importance of contemporaneous audiences and theaters in shaping plays, we precede each drama with a relevant historical discussion and with illustrations designed to help the reader visualize the production of the play in its own period. For the selections in the third part of the book, we have provided no exercises, since we believe that by this time the reader will have learned to design his own. Here, as elsewhere in the book, our selections range from the distant past to the present, representing some of the greatest imaginative artists of all times as well as other artists of varying excellence.

In the last pages of the book, we have placed two indexes. The first is a "Glossary and Index of Critical Terms" which defines terms or cites passages

in the text which treat them. Because many terms are valuable for communicating different insights and evaluations, we have tried to provide readers with a fairly large number of the most useful ones. The second index is an "Index of Titles and Authors," which indicates passages included and also provides essential facts and vital statistics.

To James V. Cunningham, Clarence H. Faust, Ernest P. Kuhl, Gerald Else, Charles T. Miller, and Victor Harris, our colleagues, we give our sincere thanks for helpful suggestions concerning our general plan, our working out of details, and our selection of literary works. We also wish to thank the many authors and publishers who have permitted us to include selections from their books. Their cooperation is specifically indicated either in the credit lines accompanying the selections or in the list of acknowledgments on pages v-vi.

W. B.

J. C. G.

PART ONE

The nature of imaginative writing

'Fiction' versus 'fact'

A NATURAL question at the beginning of a study of the reading of fiction, drama, and poetry is, "What is it that literature does that other types of writing do not do?" Common sense suggests that we may answer this question, in part at least, by contrasting the purposes and achievements of literature on the one hand and of nonliterary accounts on the other. Let us compare several factual passages and a literary passage, all of our selections dealing with similar subject matter, whales and whaling. Our first three passages have been drawn respectively from science, economics, and history, the fourth from a novel. The group will help us contrast informative writing ("fact") with imaginative writing ("fiction"). The scientific selection follows:

AMONG mammals which have turned to aquatic life, the whales—the order Cetacea—constitute the largest and most important group and the best adapted to an existence in the water. Both structurally and functionally they have become completely divorced from their former land life and are helpless if stranded. Only in their need for air breathing do they exhibit any functional reminiscence of their former terrestrial existence. . . .

Marine life has been accompanied by many internal modifications. The original whales appear to have been fish-eating carnivores. The majority of modern whales are still toothed, but, as in the seals, the teeth have been simplified, usually to simple pegs. The number has in many cases increased greatly over the primitive placental forty-four; in others teeth have been reduced in number or entirely abandoned for a straining apparatus of whalebone. The anterior portion of the skull has been elongated from the first. But in correlation with the breathing problem in diving types, the nostrils have moved backward in the skull and in typical living whales are placed, as the blowhole, on the top of the head. . . .

Whales may be divided into three suborders: the Archaeocetes, of the early Tertiary; and two living groups—the Odontoceti, or toothed whales, and the Mysticeti, or whalebone whales.—ALFRED S. ROMER, *Vertebrate Paleontology* (University of Chicago Press, 1945), pp. 486 f.

Clearly Romer here wanted to do one thing only: to instruct us about whales. To this end, he set down what we popularly call "facts"—phenomena which, in this case, can and have been observed, counted, measured, compared, and contrasted. When he says that in typical living whales the nostrils are placed "as the blowhole, on the top of the head," he is not guessing or imagining: he is

describing an observed phenomenon. Even when Romer compares primitive whales with modern whales, he is still basing his statements upon observed material—in this case upon skeletal remains. Where the author is not completely certain, he takes pains to indicate the fact. The original whales, for example, he says, "*appear* to have been fish-eating carnivores." Note that he does not say that they *were* such creatures: he uses a word which distinguishes a likelihood from a certainty. In short, the passage consists of (a) statements describing and comparing what has been observed, and (b) statements that draw carefully weighed conclusions about what has been observed.

Since the conclusions are reached only after a methodical sorting of the facts, we find it useful to observe how the facts are ordered to convey information to us. After reading the first sentence, we know the scientific name for whales, we know that they belong to the class of mammals, and that within that class they are the group (or order) which is the largest, the most important, and the best adapted to water. We start, then, with a careful definition. The next two sentences tell us general facts about the adaptation of whales to marine life. The second paragraph, in the excerpted form given here, describes specific internal characteristics which developed as a result of this shift to an aquatic environment. Then the third paragraph separates members of the order into suborders. If you have studied much science, you will know that the author here is beginning the process called classification, and you will guess that his next step will be to describe each class of whales in detail.

Observe what the author does not do. Notice that he does not spin a yarn, describe a scene, or re-create an experience. Therefore, his statements here, based though they are on concrete details, are abstract. Notice that he does not employ words which either evoke pictures in the mind of the reader or stimulate emotional reactions. He does not order his material in such a way as to communicate an experience or a mood, but in such a way as to unfold a series of ideas. Finally, observe that *human* judgments and evaluations are not involved. The author does not maintain that the toothed whales, for example, are the best of living whales, or the most beautiful, or the truest to their class.

What we have noticed about this selection can be noticed about almost any typical work strictly in the natural sciences. The material consists of facts discovered and verified by observation and of hypotheses and of conclusions arrived at through an orderly consideration of the facts. The statements are ordinarily abstract rather than concrete, emotionless rather than emotive, and descriptive rather than evaluative. Turn now to a somewhat different—but also factual—passage:

THE PHYSICAL losses [in whaling] resulting from the destruction of vessels, cargoes, and equipment were indeed formidable when considered in the absolute; but when compared with the size of the entire fleet at sea during any given year, they constituted a smaller percentage of the whole than might reasonably have been expected as a result of the nature of the

industry. One contemporary writer stated that the number of vessels which were totally wrecked each year seldom exceeded one per cent of the entire whaling fleet, while the losses which developed from partial wrecks and all other forms of accident accounted for only an additional one half of one per cent.[1] Insurance underwriters rarely charged a premium of more than 2½ per cent per annum, and it was asserted that at this figure they were enabled to pay good dividends.[2] Account-books and policy forms of whaling insurance companies which have been preserved show that the premiums ranged from one per cent to 9 per cent for an entire voyage, varying in accordance with the probable length of the proposed cruise, the regions to be visited, the size and condition of the vessel, and the type of whaling to be carried on.[3]

The heaviest financial burdens, however, were those connected with business risk. It was estimated that during the middle years of the nineteenth century approximately 10 per cent of all American whaling vessels made voyages which resulted in a net loss to their owners.[4] Even after allowance is made for a reasonable margin of error in the figures underlying this estimate, and after the allocation of 1½ per cent of all losses to physical factors and not more than a like percentage to labor risks, it is evident that deficits arising out of the quantity, quality, or price of the cargo comprised more than half of the total amount. It is probable, too, that the estimate of 10 per cent is not unduly liberal, since many years witnessed a far higher percentage of losing voyages. In 1837, for instance, 53 vessels made paying voyages, 8 made "saving" ones (in whaling parlance this term was used to describe a venture which escaped an actual loss, but in which the gain was negligible), and 20 sustained losses.[5]—ELMO PAUL HOHMAN, "Wages, Risk, and Profits in the Whaling Industry," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (August 1926), pp. 659-61.

Here again the author's main purpose is to impart information—facts and interpretations. But both the facts and the kind of interpretation differ from those imparted in the first passage. In Romer's paragraphs, a fact was something which scientists had observed and could continue to observe again and again—as often as they could find whales to study. In all the biological and physical sciences one can reobserve or can repeat experiments until he is certain

[1]Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the U. S. Exploring Expedition, 1838-42*, v, 494 ff. [2]*Ibid.* [3]Figures taken from accounts and policy forms of the New Bedford Commercial Insurance Company for the years 1844 to 1848, and of a New Bedford mutual insurance organization for the year 1830. These manuscripts are now in the New Bedford Public Library. [4]Wilkes, *op. cit.*, v, 494 ff. [5]Alexander Starbuck, *History of the American Whale Fishery*, p. 149.

about his knowledge of what we all call facts. But the content of the second passage consists of dates, occurrences, statistics, and the interpretation of these. Repeated first-hand observations are impossible, since no one has found a way to project himself backward in time. Hence Hohman relies not upon personal observation but upon records, accounts, publications—every conceivable kind of document bearing upon his subject. It is to these that he calls attention in his footnotes, so that, if we wish, we may check upon his sources. He must watch that these sources are authoritative and unbiased, and he must make sure that he has hunted down all of them pertinent to his study. Furthermore, he must see that his own personal prejudices and attitudes do not warp his interpretation—sometimes a difficult problem when one is dealing not with animals or chemical elements but with men and women capable of experiencing joys and hopes, trials and troubles.

Like Romer, however, Hohman tries to be as objective, as emotionless, as possible. He is generalizing, and when he particularizes, he does so only to exemplify general statements. His material is organized to communicate knowledge, not to evoke an emotion: he writes one paragraph about one kind of risk (physical) and another about another kind of risk (business), arranging them in the order of their financial risk.

This selection is representative of a field called the social sciences or, often, the social studies. Roughly it includes economics, political science, and sociology. Subjects like psychology and anthropology can be classified as natural and social sciences, and a subject like history, depending upon its emphasis, can be either a social or (as we shall see) a humanistic study. This Hohman passage classifies as social science. Like the natural scientist, the social scientist tries to observe objectively, to reach hypotheses, to verify these hypotheses by further study, and finally to come to certain conclusions or laws. Dealing with human beings as he does, the social scientist cannot manipulate his materials for observation as handily or as surely as the natural scientist can —but he does his best to be sternly scientific.

At times, however, the historian writes passages in which he is not—does not even try to be—emotionless. Consider another passage by Hohman:

THOSE WERE the full, gala days of the industry [1830-1860]—when rugged New Bedford, in particular, was at the peak of a picturesque, salt-sprayed renown which took her name into the seven seas. This New England town, which became the greatest whaling port in the world despite population figures which were unimpressive even in an era of villages, learned to blend the strange and exotic with the native and homely in a manner both alluring and ludicrous.

New Bedford knew bearded and tattooed harpooners who sea-legged their way into brothels and grog-shops; timid and unsophisticated green hands from the farms of the interior, veteran tars who knew the price of a harlot in Zanzibar and the cost of ale in London; mutineers and masters who should

have been slave-drivers; sperm oil from the Seychelles Islands and whalebone from Kamchatka; barnacles acquired in every one of the seven seas, scrimshaw work and Chinese tea, Oriental silk and souvenirs from the Fiji Islands; bonanza voyages and penniless hands; log-books telling of stove boats and accounts telling of exorbitant charges; rope-walks and sail-lofts, outfitters and ship-chandlers; Quaker and Cape Verde half-breed, Puritan and Kanaka; pure sperm oil which has been bailed out of the head of a cachalot and black and stinking whale oil which has been four years at sea; stories of murder and of rape in the South Seas; yarns of cheap love in Paita and of frozen noses in the Sea of Okhotsk; Seamen's Bethel and dens of drunken vice; counting-houses with high stools....

Cosmopolitan and provincial, of the great outlying world and of pinched New England, pious and abandoned, aesthetic and ugly, alluring and repulsive, colorful and drab, adventurous and cautious, courting danger and loving security—such was New Bedford....—ELMO PAUL HOHMAN, *The American Whaleman* (Longmans, Green, 1928), p. 47.

The areas of man's intellectual enterprise are roughly considered to be three: the natural sciences, the social studies, and the humanities. The passage just quoted is history not as social science but as humanistic evaluation. Those working in the humanities are not primarily interested in the description of our natural and social worlds: their chief concern (to which other concerns to be sure are subordinated) is in human values. Such workers are forever weighing human experience on scales of the good, the true, and the beautiful. The field includes such subjects as ethics, religion, philosophy, languages, the fine arts, literature, and certain kinds of history. In subjects such as religion and philosophy, the process of evaluation is usually clear and explicit. The process is also clear in the historical passage on New Bedford just quoted. The town in the great days of whaling, says Hohman, was "alluring and ludicrous"; it was "pious and abandoned, aesthetic and ugly." Obviously, human values are involved in these statements as well as in others in the passage.

The passage is made up of such generalizations (pars. 1 and 3) plus a number of details in the New Bedford scene which justify them (par. 2). The catalogue in the second paragraph typifies what has been called "impressionistic presentation." The author wishes to convey a certain impression or mood compounded of certain thoughts and certain feelings. He therefore presents a number of details which contribute to that impression. As always, the historian here, of course, is basing what he writes on his study of sources—histories of the town, newspapers, documents. As always, he is generalizing and presenting facts. This is factual writing, but in some ways it approaches imaginative literature.

However, literature—fiction, drama, and poetry—ordinarily differs markedly from all factual writings, even those in the humanistic fields. With the previous factual passages, let us contrast the fic-

tional excerpt which follows. During the voyage recounted in Herman Melville's famous novel *Moby Dick,* the crew of the *Pequod* has sighted a whale. Stubb (the second mate) in command of a whaling boat, Tashtego (the harpooner), and the crew are in pursuit as the passage begins:

AND THUS with oars and yells the keel cut the sea. Meanwhile, Stubb retaining his place in the van, still encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from his mouth. Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the welcome cry was heard—"Stand up, Tashtego!—give it to him!" The harpoon was hurled. "Stern all!" The oarsmen backed water; the same moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists. It was the magical line. An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled with the steady fumes from his pipe. As the line passed round and round the loggerhead, so also, just before reaching that point, it blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from which the hand-cloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at these times, had accidentally dropped. It was like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out of your clutch.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub oarsman (him seated by the tub) who, snatching off his hat, dashed the sea-water into it. More turns were taken, so that the line began holding its place. The boat now flew through the boiling water like a shark all fins. Stubb and Tashtego here changed places—stem for stern—a staggering business truly in that rocking commotion.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of the upper part of the boat, and from its now being more tight than a harpstring, you would have thought the craft had two keels—one cleaving the water, the other the air—as the boat churned on through both opposing elements at once. A continual cascade played at the bows; a ceaseless whirling eddy in her wake; and, at the slightest motion from within, even but of a little finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over her spasmodic gunwhale into the sea. Thus they rushed; each man with might and main clinging to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the foam; and the tall form of Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost double, in order to bring down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight.

"Haul in—haul in!" cried Stubb to the bowsman! and, facing round towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to him, while yet the

boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his flank, Stubb, firmly planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart after dart into the flying fish; at the word of command, the boat alternately sterning out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow, and then ranging up for another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the spiracle of the whale, and vehement puff after puff from the mouth of the excited headsman; as at every dart, hauling in upon his crooked lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb straightened it again and again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwhale, then again and again sent it into the whale.

"Pull up—pull up!" he now cried to the bowsman, as the waning whale relaxed in his wrath. "Pull up!—close to!" and the boat ranged along the fish's flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb slowly churned his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there, carefully churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to feel after some gold watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he was fearful of breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he sought was the innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck; for, starting from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his "flurry," the monster horribly wallowed in his blood, overwrapped himself in impenetrable, mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled craft, instantly dropping astern, had much ado blindly to struggle out from that phrensied twilight into the clear air of the day.

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view; surging from side to side; spasmodically dilating and contracting his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized respirations. At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red wine, shot into the frighted air; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!

"He's dead, Mr. Stubb," said Daggoo.

"Yes; both pipes smoked out!" and withdrawing his own from his mouth, Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water; and, for a moment, stood thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made.

Immediately we notice that Melville, in contrast to Romer and Hohman, is communicating not factual information but an imagined experience. Where the factual writers have generalized, he particularizes: He tells us not about whales and whalers in general but about one whale, one crew, and what happened to

them. Whereas the whales and whalers of the other passages actually existed, neither the whale nor the crew of Melville's account is historically "real"; Melville has "imagined" them (see p. 36). Romer and Hohman give us their ideas in an order like that of thought. Melville tells of the experiences of his whalers and his whale in an order like that of experiences in life itself. The factual passages cover ages or decades; this passage, though much longer, covers in concrete detail only a few minutes. And details are not classified and generalized: they are offered to our senses—as pictures, sounds, movements—individually, as they would come to us if we ourselves were on the scene.

As a result (if the author achieves the effect at which he aimed), when we read this last passage, we should react very differently from the way we should react when we read the factual passages. While reading the factual passages, we react intellectually; while reading Melville, we react both intellectually and emotionally. From the first two passages and even from the third we get more of a sense of watching a man thinking than we get of watching things happen in the actual world. The account drawn from *Moby Dick*, imagined though it is, gives us a sense of sharing a real experience.

At least part of our emotional reaction is the result of the fact that (unlike the authors of the passages concerning whales and whaling risks) Melville shows his own feelings about his subject matter. Even more than the passage about New Bedford, the selection from *Moby Dick* indicates by its details and its wording what its author's emotions are. Leo Stein suggested a contrast we notice in these passages when he said:

Art is the union of man and nature; its realities are essentially man-made. Science is the separation of man and nature, so far as in a man's universe this is possible. Science tries to see things as a disembodied intelligence, a robot intelligence, would see them. It prefers the testimony of a registering apparatus and pointer readings to the testimony of 'a simple separate person.' But without that simple separate person, there is no art.

Melville's way of writing indicates not only his emotional reactions but also his judgments of human affairs. Even in so brief a passage as this, we learn something of his way of looking at life; and when we read the whole novel of which this is a part, we see that the incident contributes its share to a work which sets forth a profound view of human life. We note, though, that neither here nor elsewhere in the novel does Melville state his interpretations explicitly, but that he *embodies* them in an imaginative narrative. They are implied rather than explicitly stated.

These, then, are some of the differences between one literary and three factual handlings of similar materials. How many of the contrasts noticed between the selections from Romer and Hohman, on the one hand, and from Melville, on the other, will be found if similar contrasts are made between other parallel factual and literary accounts? What generalizations are possible about the aims and the methods of imaginative authors, whether they write fiction or drama or poetry? What do these generalizations mean to you as readers? These are questions which you are to try to solve as you study the selections which follow.

'WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR WORK'

Three passages, one factual and two imaginative, which develop similar subjects, are printed on the pages which follow. Your purpose as you read the passages and answer the questions about them is to test and supplement what has been said in the preceding pages about the aims and methods (and therefore the value to you as a reader) of imaginative literature. The first passage is the factual one—a section from a book about labor problems. The second passage is from a novel which tells how the Joad family, victims of drought in Oklahoma, went as migratory workers to California and encountered many difficulties both along the way and in the coastal state. The excerpt, to which we have given a title, tells of the Joads' first overnight stop in California. The final passage is a poem about an unemployed New Yorker.

W. V. OWEN

Migratory labor

THERE are two types of migratory labor in the United States which Mr. Nolles calls removal migrants and constant migrants.[1] Removal migrants are those who shift about in response to fundamental changes in opportunities for employment, while the constant migrants are those who move once or more than once each year in search of seasonal work. There are some 300,000 constant migrants who work in the beet fields, harvest fields, lumber camps, and orchards. The removal migrants move from farms to cities and back again, either in answer to an increased demand for them in each place, or because of drought, flood, or declining industries. From 1920 to 1930 urban areas showed a net gain of 6.3 millions of persons from the farms. In 1932 the movement back to the farm resulted in the rural areas showing a net gain from cities of 266,000 persons. The tide shifted

From *Labor Problems*, reprinted by permission of The Ronald Press Company.

[1]*Monthly Labor Review*, July 1937, Vol. 45, No. 1—"A Survey of Labor Migration Between States," by N. A. Nolles of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

toward the cities with recovery of the middle 1930's until in 1936 the cities had a net gain of 450,000 persons. It is estimated that the drought drove 200,000 persons from the plains states; not all of whom went to cities. A return of the western plains to grazing land would necessitate the movement of 900,000 persons. World War II civilian migration resulted in a net gain of 1,200,000 for the West, with a 900,000 loss for the South, and a 300,000 loss for the North.

Contrary to general opinion, migrant workers are not the dregs of the labor supply. There is an increasing proportion of migrant workers who are native white Americans, members of families, relatively young, and highly employable. A Chicago employment office placed 24 per cent of migrant applicants while only 7 per cent of the earlier migrants who had established residence in Chicago were placed on non-relief jobs. Of those receiving aid under the Federal Transient Program[2] of 1934-1935, 94 per cent were native-born persons. In 1930, 40 per cent of the working population fell outside the ages of 21 to 45 years while less than 30 per cent of the migrants aided by the Federal Transient Service were either younger than 21 years or older than 45 years.

The migrant worker and his family are faced with many special problems. He has taken the place of the immigrant worker who formerly provided us with a large part of our transient labor supply. Relief is obtained with great difficulty because the migrant frequently does not establish a legal settlement. Health service is not always available and the sanitation of farm camps, trailer camps, and labor camps is not always the best. The children for the most part do not attend school regularly if at all. Vagrancy laws and border controls are a constant cause of irritation and confusion. Migrant workers are welcomed for the labor they perform but repulsed as local citizens. They are economic refugees to be passed on to another community. Their wages are very low; the average (median) yearly income for seasonal workers in California for 1934-1935 was $437.

[2]Federal Transient Program was discontinued in 1935.

JOHN STEINBECK

'So they move you along'

"WHERE we goin'?" Tom asked.

Pa raised his hat and scratched among his hair. "Camp," he said. "We ain't gonna spen' what little's lef' till we get work. Drive out in the country."

Tom started the car and they rolled through the streets and out toward the country. And by a bridge they saw a collection of tents and shacks. Tom said, "Might's well stop here. Find out what's doin', an' where at the work is." He drove down a steep dirt incline and parked on the edge of the encampment.

There was no order in the camp; little gray tents, shacks, cars were scattered about at random. The first house was nondescript. The south wall was made of three sheets of rusty corrugated iron, the east wall a square of moldy carpet tacked between two boards, the north wall a strip of roofing paper and a strip of tattered canvas, and the west wall six pieces of gunny sacking. Over the square frame, on untrimmed willow limbs, grass had been piled, not thatched, but heaped up in a low mound. The entrance, on the gunnysack side, was cluttered with equipment. A five-gallon kerosene can served for a stove. It was laid on its side, with a section of rusty stovepipe thrust in one end. A wash boiler rested on its side against the wall; and a collection of boxes lay about, boxes to sit on, to eat on. A Model T Ford sedan and a two-wheel trailer were parked beside the shack, and about the camp there hung a slovenly despair.

Next to the shack there was a little tent, gray with weathering, but neatly, properly set up; and the boxes in front of it were placed against the tent wall. A stovepipe stuck out of the door flap, and the dirt in front of the tent had been swept and sprinkled. A bucketful of soaking clothes stood on a box. The camp was neat and sturdy. A Model A roadster and a little home-made bed trailer stood beside the tent.

And next there was a huge tent, ragged, torn in strips and the tears mended with pieces of wire. The flaps were up, and inside, four wide mattresses lay on the ground. A clothes line strung along the side bore pink cotton dresses and several pairs of overalls. There were forty tents and shacks, and beside each habitation some kind of automobile. Far down the line a few children stood and stared at the newly arrived truck, and they moved toward it, little boys in overalls and bare feet, their hair gray with dust.

From *The Grapes of Wrath.* Copyright 1939 by John Steinbeck. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

Tom stopped the truck and looked at Pa. "She ain't very purty," he said. "Want to go somewheres else?"

"Can't go nowheres else till we know where we're at," Pa said. "We got to ast about work."

Tom opened the door and stepped out. The family climbed down from the load and looked curiously at the camp. Ruthie and Winfield, from the habit of the road, took down the bucket and walked toward the willows, where there would be water; and the line of children parted for them and closed after them.

The flaps of the first shack parted and a woman looked out. Her gray hair was braided, and she wore a dirty, flowered Mother Hubbard. Her face was wizened and dull, deep gray pouches under blank eyes, and a mouth slack and loose.

Pa said, "Can we jus' pull up anywheres an' camp?"

The head was withdrawn inside the shack. For a moment there was quiet and then the flaps were pushed aside and a bearded man in shirt sleeves stepped out. The woman looked out after him, but she did not come into the open.

The bearded man said, "Howdy, folks," and his restless dark eyes jumped to each member of the family, and from them to the truck to the equipment.

Pa said, "I jus' ast your woman if it's all right to set our stuff anywheres."

The bearded man looked at Pa intently, as though he had said something very wise that needed thought. "Set down anywheres, here in this place?" he asked.

"Sure. Anybody own this place, that we got to see 'fore we can camp?"

The bearded man squinted one eye nearly closed and studied Pa. "You wanta camp here?"

Pa's irritation arose. The gray woman peered out of the burlap shack. "What you think I'm a-sayin'?" Pa said.

"Well, if you wanta camp here, why don't ya? I ain't a-stoppin' you."

Tom laughed. "He got it."

Pa gathered his temper. "I jus' wanted to know does anybody own it? Do we got to pay?"

The bearded man thrust out his jaw. "Who owns it?" he demanded.

Pa turned away. "The hell with it," he said. The woman's head popped back in the tent.

The bearded man stepped forward menacingly. "Who owns it?" he demanded. "Who's gonna kick us outa here? You tell *me*."

Tom stepped in front of Pa. "You better go take a good long sleep," he said. The bearded man dropped his mouth open and put a dirty finger against his lower gums. For a moment he continued to look wisely, specula-

tively at Tom, and then he turned on his heel and popped into the shack after the gray woman.

Tom turned on Pa. "What the hell was that?" he asked.

Pa shrugged his shoulders. He was looking across the camp. In front of a tent stood an old Buick, and the head was off. A young man was grinding the valves, and as he twisted back and forth, back and forth, on the tool, he looked up at the Joad truck. They could see that he was laughing to himself. When the bearded man had gone, the young man left his work and sauntered over.

"H'are ya?" he said, and his blue eyes were shiny with amusement. "I seen you just met the Mayor."

"What the hell's the matter with 'im?" Tom demanded.

The young man chuckled. "He's jus' nuts like you an' me. Maybe he's a little nutser'n me, I don' know."

Pa said, "I jus' ast him if we could camp here."

The young man wiped his greasy hands on his trousers. "Sure. Why not? You folks jus' come acrost?"

"Yeah," said Tom. "Jus' got in this mornin'."

"Never been in Hooverville before?"

"Where's Hooverville?"

"This here's her."

"Oh!" said Tom, "We jus' got in."

Winfield and Ruthie came back, carrying a bucket of water between them.

Ma said, "Le's get the camp up. I'm tuckered out. Maybe we can all rest." Pa and Uncle John climbed up on the truck to unload the canvas and the beds.

Tom sauntered to the young man, and walked beside him back to the car he had been working on. The valve-grinding brace lay on the exposed block, and a little yellow can of valve-grinding compound was wedged on top of the vacuum tank. Tom asked, "What the hell was the matter'th that ol' fella with the beard?"

The young man picked up his brace and went to work, twisting back and forth, grinding valve against valve seat. "The Mayor? Chris' knows. I guess maybe he's bull-simple."

"What's 'bull-simple'?"

"I guess cops push 'im aroun' so much he's still spinning."

Tom asked, "Why would they push a fella like that aroun'?"

The young man stopped his work and looked in Tom's eyes. "Chris' knows," he said. "You jus' come. Maybe you can figger her out. Some fellas says one thing, an' some says another thing. But you jus' camp in one place

a little while, an' you see how quick a deputy sheriff shoves you along." He lifted a valve and smeared compound on the seat.

"But what the hell for?"

"I tell ya I don't know. Some says they don' want us to vote; keep us movin' so we can't vote. An' some says so we can't get on relief. An' some says if we set in one place we'd get organized. I don't know why. I on'y know we get rode all the time. You wait, you'll see."

"We ain't no bums," Tom insisted. "We're lookin' for work. We'll take any kind a work."

The young man paused in fitting the brace to the valve slot. He looked in amazement at Tom. "Lookin' for work?" he said. "So you're lookin' for work. What ya think ever'body else is lookin' for? Di'monds?" He twisted the brace back and forth.

Tom looked about at the grimy tents, the junk equipment, at the old cars, the lumpy mattresses out in the sun, at the blackened cans on fire-blackened holes where the people cooked. He asked quietly, "Ain't they no work?"

"I don' know. Mus' be. Ain't no crop right here now. Grapes to pick later, an' cotton to pick later. We're a-movin' on, soon's I get these here valves groun'. Me an' my wife an' my kids. We heard they was work up north. We're shovin' north, up aroun' Salinas."

Tom saw Uncle John and Pa and the preacher hoisting the tarpaulin on the tent poles and Ma on her knees inside, brushing off the mattresses on the ground. A circle of quiet children stood to watch the new family get settled, quiet children with bare feet and dirty faces. Tom said, "Back home some fellas come through with han'bills—orange ones. Says they need lots a people out here to work the crops."

The young man laughed. "They say they's three hundred thousan' us folks here, an' I bet ever' dam' fam'ly seen them han'bills."

"Yeah, but if they don' need folks, what'd they go to the trouble puttin' them things out for?"

"Use your head, why don'cha?"

"Yeah, but I wanta know."

"Look," the young man said. "S'pose you got a job a work, an' there's jus' one fella wants the job. You got to pay 'im what he asts. But s'pose they's a hundred men." He put down his tool. His eyes hardened and his voice sharpened. "S'pose they's a hundred men wants that job. S'pose them men got kids, an' them kids is hungry. S'pose a lousy dime'll buy a box of mush for them kids. S'pose a nickel'll buy at leas' somepin for them kids. An' you got a hundred men. Jus' offer 'em a nickel—why, they'll kill each other fightin' for that nickel. Know what they was payin', las' job I had? Fifteen

cents an hour. Ten hours for a dollar an' a half, an' ya can't stay on the place. Got to burn gasoline gettin' there." He was panting with anger, and his eyes blazed with hate. "That's why them han'bills was out. You can print a hell of a lot of han'bills with what ya save payin' fifteen cents an hour for fiel' work."

Tom said, "That's stinkin'."

The young man laughed harshly. "You stay out here a little while, an' if you smell any roses, you come let me smell, too."

"But they is work," Tom insisted. "Christ Almighty, with all this stuff a-growin': orchards, grapes, vegetables—I seen it. They got to have men. I seen all that stuff."

A child cried in the tent beside the car. The young man went into the tent and his voice came softly through the canvas. Tom picked up the brace, fitted it in the slot of the valve, and ground away, his hand whipping back and forth. The child's crying stopped. The young man came out and watched Tom. "You can do her," he said. "Damn good thing. You'll need to."

"How 'bout what I said?" Tom resumed. "I seen all the stuff growin'."

The young man squatted on his heels. "I'll tell ya," he said quietly. "They's a big son-of-a-bitch of a peach orchard I worked in. Takes nine men all the year roun'." He paused impressively. "Takes three thousan' men for two weeks when them peaches is ripe. Got to have 'em or them peaches'll rot. So what do they do? They send out han'bills all over hell. They need three thousan', an' they get six thousan'. They get them men for what they wanta pay. If ya don' wanta take what they pay, goddamn it, they's a thousan' men waitin' for your job. So ya pick, an' ya pick, an' then she's done. Whole part a the country's peaches. All ripe together. When ya get 'em picked, ever' goddamn one is picked. There ain't another damn thing in that part a the country to do. An' then them owners don' want you there no more. Three thousan' of you. The work's done. You might steal, you might get drunk, you might jus' raise hell. An' besides, you don' look nice, livin' in ol' tents; an' it's a pretty country, but you stink it up. They don' want you aroun'. So they kick you out, they move you along. That's how it is."

Tom, looking down toward the Joad tent, saw his mother, heavy and slow with weariness, build a little trash fire and put the cooking pots over the flame. The circle of children drew closer, and the calm wide eyes of the children watched every move of Ma's hands. An old, old man with a bent back came like a badger out of a tent and snooped near, sniffing the air as he came. He laced his arms behind him and joined the children to watch Ma. Ruthie and Winfield stood near to Ma and eyed the strangers belligerently.

Tom said angrily, "Them peaches got to be picked right now, don't they? Jus' when they're ripe?"

" 'Course they do."

"Well, s'pose them people got together an' says, 'Let 'em rot.' Wouldn' be long 'fore the price went up, by God!"

The young man looked up from the valves, looked sardonically at Tom. "Well, you figgered out somepin, didn' you. Come right outa your own head."

"I'm tar'd," said Tom. "Drove all night. I don't wanta start no argument. An' I'm so goddamn tar'd I'd argue easy. Don' be smart with me. I'm askin' you."

The young man grinned. "I didn't mean it. You ain't been here. Folks figgered that out. An' the folks with the peach orchard figgered her out too. Look, if the folks gets together, they's a leader—got to be—fella that does the talkin.' Well, first time this fella opens his mouth they grab 'im an' stick 'im in jail. An' if they's another leader pops up, why, they stick *'im* in jail."

Tom said, "Well, a fella eats in jail anyways."

"His kids don't. How'd you like to be in an' your kids starvin' to death?"

"Yeah," said Tom slowly. "Yeah."

"An' here's another thing. Ever hear a' the blacklist?"

"What's that?"

"Well, you jus' open your trap about us folks gettin' together, an' you'll see. They take your pitcher an' send it all over. Then you can't get work nowhere. An' if you got kids—"

Tom took off his cap and twisted it in his hands. "So we take what we can get, huh, or we starve; an' if we yelp we starve."

The young man made a sweeping circle with his hand, and his hand took in the ragged tents and the rusty cars.

Tom looked down at his mother again, where she sat scraping potatoes. And the children had drawn closer. He said, "I ain't gonna take it. Goddamn it, I an' my folks ain't no sheep. I'll kick the hell outa somebody."

"Like a cop?"

"Like anybody."

"You're nuts," said the young man. "They'll pick you right off. You got no name, no property. They'll find you in a ditch, with the blood dried on your mouth an' your nose. Be one little line in the paper—know what it'll say? 'Vagrant foun' dead.' An' that's all. You'll see a lot of them little lines, 'Vagrant foun' dead.' "

Questions

To which of the three main areas of intellectual enterprise does "Migratory Labor" belong? Justify your classification of it, and compare it with the passage in the same field quoted in the introduction to this section. What does your classification indicate about a suitable way of reading it?

2. Find passages in the two excerpts given here which convey similar facts about migrant workers. What contrasts are there between the ways the facts are conveyed to the reader in the two excerpts? How are these contrasts related to Joseph Wood Krutch's statement that when we read literature "we are not only learning about people, places, and manners of living of which we are ignorant, but learning about them by what seems actual experience"?

3. How is "Migratory Labor" organized? Why is such an organization appropriate for it? "So They Move You Along" has a chronological, i.e., a time, organization: the Joads arrive at the camp, and then they talk to the "Mayor," and then Tom talks to the young man, glancing at intervals at the Joad family, which is setting up the tent. Why is this an appropriate organization? Why, in particular, should the section start with their talk with the mayor, and why should Tom be shown looking over at the family at certain points in the conversation?

4. Contrast the spatial area and the time span considered in "Migratory Labor" with those represented in "So They Move You Along." How would you account for the contrasts you find? What do these contrasts imply about appropriate reading methods for the two selections?

5. How many details, comparatively, do the two passages cause you to visualize (i.e., to see as if you were looking at actual people and events)? How many individuals, comparatively, do you come to know well as a result of reading the two passages? Discuss the accuracy of the following statement by E. M. Forster:

Human intercourse, as soon as we look at it for its own sake and not as a social adjunct, is seen to be haunted by a specter. We cannot understand each other, except in a rough and ready way; we cannot reveal ourselves, even when we want to; what we call intimacy is only a makeshift; perfect knowledge is an illusion. But in the novel we can know people perfectly, and, apart from the general pleasure of reading, we can find a compensation for their dimness in life. In this, fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond the evidence....

6. In which passage are judgments made of man's actions and attributes—i.e., are some actions and attributes made to seem admirable, some reprehensible? What, so far as the passages show, is (a) Owen's feeling about migrant workers? (b) Steinbeck's feeling about them? What do you feel about the workers as you read each passage? Account for the contrasts.

7. Discuss the difference between the kinds of language used in the two passages. How is this difference, in your opinion, related to the contrasting aims and methods of the two writers?

MURIEL RUKEYSER

Boy with his hair cut short

SUNDAY shuts down on this twentieth-century evening.
The L passes. Twilight and bulb define
the brown room, the overstuffed plum sofa,
the boy and the girl's thin hands above his head.
A neighbor radio sings stocks, news, serenade.

He sits at the table, head down, the young clear neck exposed,
watching the drugstore sign from the tail of his eye,
tattoo, neon, until the eye blears, while his
solicitous tall sister, simple in blue, bending
behind him, cuts his hair with her cheap shears.

The arrow's electric red always reaches its mark,
successful neon! He coughs, impressed by that precision.
His child's forehead, forever protected by his cap,
is bleached against the lamplight as he turns head
and steadies to let the snippets drop.

Erasing the failure of weeks with level fingers,
she sleeks the soft hair, combing: "You'll look fine tomorrow!
You'll surely find something, they can't keep turning you down;
the finest gentleman's not so trim as you!" Smiling, he raises
the adolescent forehead wrinkling ironic now.

He sees his decent suit laid out, new-pressed,
his carfare on the shelf. He lets his head fall, meeting
her earnest hopeless look, seeing the sharp blades splitting,
the darkened room, the impersonal sign, her motion,
the blue vein, bright on her temple, pitifully beating.

Questions

WHAT do the following details contribute (i.e., what should they help convey to the reader): the thin hands of the girl, the neon sign, the beating blue vein in the sister's temple?

2. Why would such details be unlikely to occur, say, in a section on "Unemployment" in a textbook on labor problems? Suggest how such a section might be presented, and contrast the

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section which you have outlined with the poem.

3. What contrasts found between your imaginary section and the poem also are found when you compare "Migratory Labor" with the poem? How many of these contrasts also appear in a comparison of "So They Move You Along" with "Migratory Labor"? What generalizations about the nature of imaginative writing have been suggested by these comparisons you have made?

4. According to your remembrance of other works, do these generalizations hold for literature in general?

5. The sentences in "Boy with His Hair Cut Short" are not printed as sentences in prose ordinarily are. What does this arrangement achieve for the reader? Why should not a writer of factual prose arrange his sentences in a similar fashion?

RIOT IN ROME

So far, the contrasts you have found between factual writing and imaginative writing have been relatively easy ones to formulate because the factual passages involved have been "purely" factual. We all know, however, that some factual works, unlike dispassionate treatises in the natural sciences and the social sciences, have aims and appeals in some ways like those of literature. In particular, histories and biographies in the field of the humanities are likely to offer us entertainment, excitement, and vivid depictions of the characters and actions of individuals. How do such writings as these contrast with stories, plays, and poems?

To answer this question—and to add to your conclusions about the aims and methods of imaginative works—we now ask you to contrast a passage from The Life of Brutus *by the famous Greek biographer, Plutarch, with a passage from Shakespeare's drama,* Julius Caesar. *Your contrast should help you reach valuable conclusions because (a) both the passages concern the same characters and practically the same events, and (b) both selections are by masters, and differences, therefore, will not result from the ineptitude of either author.*

If, as we hope, you have read Julius Caesar, *you will recall what happened before these passages begin: Julius Caesar, having won fame as a military leader and a governor, attained the height of his glory in 44* B.C., *when he was made dictator of Rome "for life." Some Romans became fearful that he had won too much power and that he coveted more. A group therefore conspired against him, led by Brutus, a high-minded but somewhat impractical idealist. On March 15, the conspirators slew Caesar. Most of the conspirators wanted to slay Antony also, but they were dissuaded by Brutus. Both passages begin with a meeting of the conspirators following the assassination.*

PLUTARCH *from* The Life of Brutus

WHEN this was done, they came to talk of Cæsar's will and testament, and of his funerals and tomb. Then Antonius thinking good his testament should be read openly, and also that his body should be honourably buried, and not in hugger-mugger, lest the people might thereby take occasion to be worse offended if they did otherwise: Cassius stoutly spake against it.

But Brutus went with the motion, and agreed unto it: wherein it seemeth he committed a second fault. For the first fault he did was, when he would not consent to his fellow-conspirators, that Antonius should be slain. And therefore he was justly accused, that thereby he had saved and strengthened a strong and grievous enemy of their conspiracy. The second fault was, when he agreed that Cæsar's funerals should be as Antonius would have them: the which indeed marred all. For first of all, when Cæsar's testament was openly read among them, whereby it appeared that he bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome, seventy-five drachmas a man, and that he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on this side of the river of Tiber, in the place where now the temple of Fortune is built: the people then loved him, and were marvellous sorry for him.

Afterwards when Cæsar's body was brought into the market-place, Antonius making his funeral oration in praise of the dead, according to the ancient custom of Rome, and perceiving that his words moved the common people to compassion: he framed his eloquence to make their hearts yearn the more, and taking Cæsar's gown all bloody in his hand, he laid it open to the sight of them all, shewing what a number of cuts and holes it had upon it.

Therewithal the people fell presently into such a rage and mutiny, that there was no more order kept amongst the common people. For some of them cried out, Kill the murtherers: others plucked up forms, tables, and stalls about the market-place, as they had done before at the funerals of Clodius, and having laid them all on a heap together, they set them on fire, and thereupon did put the body of Cæsar, and burnt it in the midst of the most holy places. And furthermore, when the fire was thoroughly kindled, some here, some there, took burning firebrands, and ran with them to the murderers' houses that had killed him, to set them afire. Howbeit the conspirators, foreseeing the danger before, had wisely provided for themselves and fled.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

from The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

Act III, Scene I. *Rome. Before the Capitol.*

(*Enter a* SERVANT)

BRUTUS. Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's.
SERVANT. Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel;
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down;
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say:
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest;
Cæsar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving;
Say I love Brutus, and I honor him;
Say I fear'd Cæsar, honor'd him, and lov'd him.
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him, and be resolv'd
How Cæsar hath deserv'd to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Cæsar dead
So well as Brutus living; but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.
BRUTUS. Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied, and, by my honor,
Depart untouch'd.
SERVANT. I'll fetch him presently. (*Exit*)
BRUTUS. I know that we shall have him well to friend.
CASSIUS. I wish we may, but yet have I a mind
That fears him much, and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.
(*Re-enter* ANTONY)
BRUTUS. But here comes Antony. Welcome, Mark Antony!
ANTONY. O mighty Cæsar! dost thou lie so low?

122. *Soft!* an interjection meaning "Wait!" 126. *honest,* honorable. 131. *be resolv'd,* have his doubts dispelled. 136. *Thorough,* a dissyllabic form of "through." 140. *so please him,* if it please him. 142. *presently,* immediately. 143. *to friend,* as a friend. 145. *still,* always. 146. *shrewdly,* mischievously. Hence the meaning is "When I have misgivings, they always turn out to be mischievously correct."

Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well!
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank;
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Cæsar's death's hour, nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so apt to die;
No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Cæsar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

BRUTUS. O Antony, beg not your death of us.
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,
As, by our hands and this our present act,
You see we do, yet see you but our hands
And this the bleeding business they have done.
Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful;
And pity to the general wrong of Rome—
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity—
Hath done this deed on Cæsar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:
Our arms, in strength of malice, and our hearts
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

CASSIUS. Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.

BRUTUS. Only be patient till we have appeas'd
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
And then we will deliver you the cause
Why I, that did love Cæsar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.

ANTONY. I doubt not of your wisdom.

152. *let blood,* bled. An allusion to "bleeding" as a remedy for illness. *rank,* diseased from repletion. The remedy was blood-letting. 157. *bear me hard,* bear a grudge against me. 158. *purpled hands,* blood-covered hands. 159. *Live,* if I live. 160. *apt,* ready. 161. *mean,* means. 162. *by Cæsar,* beside Caesar. 174. *in strength of malice,* violent in enmity. 178. *dignities,* offices. 181. *deliver,* report.

Let each man render me his bloody hand.
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;
Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours, Metellus;
Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius.
Gentlemen all,—alas, what shall I say?
My credit now stands on such slippery ground
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,
Either a coward or a flatterer.
That I did love thee, Cæsar, O, 'tis true;
If then thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death,
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,
Most noble! in the presence of thy corse?
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close
In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;
Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy Lethe.
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.
How like a deer, strucken by many princes,
Dost thou here lie!

CASSIUS. Mark Anthony,—

ANTONY. Pardon me, Caius Cassius.
The enemies of Cæsar shall say this;
Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.

CASSIUS. I blame you not for praising Cæsar so;
But what compact mean you to have with us?
Will you be prick'd in number of our friends;
Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

ANTONY. Therefore I took your hands, but was indeed

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191. *credit*, honor. 192. *conceit*, believe. 196. *dearer*, more keenly. 202. *close*, compromise. 204. *bay'd*, brought to bay. *hart*, a stag (a pun upon "heart" and "hart" is involved). 206. *Sign'd in*, marked with the signs of. *Lethe*, oblivion, hence, death. 213. *modesty*, moderation. 215. *compact*, agreement. 216. *prick'd*, marked.

Sway'd from the point, by looking down on Cæsar.
Friends am I with you all and love you all,
Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons
Why and wherein Cæsar was dangerous.
BRUTUS. Or else were this a savage spectacle.
Our reasons are so full of good regard
That were you, Antony, the son of Cæsar,
You should be satisfied.
ANTONY. That's all I seek;
And am, moreover, suitor that I may
Produce his body to the market-place;
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the order of his funeral.
BRUTUS. You shall, Mark Antony.
CASSIUS. Brutus, a word with you.
(Aside to BRUTUS*)* You know not what you do. Do not consent
That Antony speak in his funeral.
Know you how much the people may be mov'd
By that which he will utter?
BRUTUS. By your pardon.
I will myself into the pulpit first,
And show the reason of our Cæsar's death.
What Antony shall speak, I will protest
He speaks by leave and by permission,
And that we are contented Cæsar shall
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.
CASSIUS. I know not what may fall; I like it not.
BRUTUS. Mark Antony, here, take you Cæsar's body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,
But speak all good you can devise of Cæsar,
And say you do't by our permission;
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral. And you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,
After my speech is ended.
ANTONY. Be it so.
I do desire no more.

---

224. *full . . . regard,* worthy of approval, well considered. 228. *Produce,* bring forward. 230. *order,* course. 238. *protest,* make known. 242. *advantage,* benefit. 243. *fall,* befall.

BRUTUS. Prepare the body then, and follow us. *(Exeunt all but* ANTONY)

ANTONY. O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue:
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use
And dreadful objects so familiar
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds;
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry "Havoc," and let slip the dogs of war
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

(Enter OCTAVIUS' SERVANT)

You serve Octavius Cæsar, do you not?

SERVANT. I do, Mark Antony.

ANTONY. Cæsar did write for him to come to Rome.

SERVANT. He did receive his letters, and is coming;
And bid me say to you by word of mouth—
O Cæsar!— *(Seeing the body)*

ANTONY. Thy heart is big; get thee apart and weep.
Passion, I see, is catching; for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Began to water. Is thy master coming?

SERVANT. He lies to-night within seven leagues of Rome.

ANTONY. Post back with speed and tell him what hath chanc'd.

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257. *tide of times,* the ebb and flow of the ages. 264. *cumber,* encumber, burden. 266. *objects,* sights. 268. *quarter'd,* slaughtered. 269. *fell,* cruel. 271. *Ate,* goddess of vengeance. 272. *confines,* regions. 273. *"Havoc,"* a cry which meant "Kill without quarter." *let slip,* unleash. 274. *That,* so that. 275. *carrion,* dead and putrefying. 283. *Passion,* sorrow. 286. *lies,* is camped.

Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet;
Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet, stay a while;
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse
Into the market-place. There shall I try,
In my oration, how the people take
The cruel issue of these bloody men;
According to the which, thou shalt discourse
To young Octavius of the state of things.
Lend me your hand. *(Exeunt with Cæsar's body)*

Scene II. *Rome. The Forum.*

(Enter BRUTUS *and* CASSIUS, *with the* PLEBEIANS*)*

PLEBEIANS. We will be satisfied! Let us be satisfied!

BRUTUS. Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.
Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
And public reasons shall be rendered
Of Cæsar's death.

1. PLEBEIAN. I will hear Brutus speak.

2. PLEBEIAN. I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them rendered.

(Exit CASSIUS, *with some of the* PLEBEIANS. BRUTUS *goes into the pulpit)*

3. PLEBEIAN. The noble Brutus is ascended; silence!

BRUTUS. Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear; believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, that you may believe; censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: Not that I lov'd Cæsar less, but that I lov'd Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all

292. *try,* experiment to discover. 294. *issue,* deed. 295. *the which,* public sentiment. ACT III, SCENE II. 1. *satisfied,* completely informed. 4. *part the numbers,* divide the crowd. 10. *severally,* individually. 17. *censure,* judge. 18. *senses,* intellectual powers.

free-men? As Cæsar lov'd me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honor for his valor; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

ALL. None, Brutus, none.

BRUTUS. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enroll'd in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforc'd, for which he suffered death.

(Enter ANTONY *and others, with Cæsar's body)*

Here comes his body, mourn'd by Mark Antony; who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart, that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

ALL. Live, Brutus! live, live!

1. PLEBEIAN. Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

2. PLEBEIAN. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

3. PLEBEIAN. Let him be Cæsar.

4. PLEBEIAN. Cæsar's better parts
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

1. PLEBEIAN. We'll bring him to his house
With shouts and clamors.

BRUTUS. My countrymen,—

2. PLEBEIAN. Peace, silence! Brutus speaks.

1. PLEBEIAN. Peace, ho!

BRUTUS. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony.
Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Cæsar's glories, which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke. *(Exit)*

1. PLEBEIAN. Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

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34. *rude,* boorish. 41. *question of . . . enroll'd.* The reasons for his death are recorded. 42. *extenuated,* understated. 43. *enforc'd,* exaggerated.

3. PLEBEIAN. Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.
ANTONY. For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you. *(Goes into the pulpit)*
4. PLEBEIAN. What does he say of Brutus?
3. PLEBEIAN. He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.
4. PLEBEIAN. 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.
1. PLEBEIAN. This Cæsar was a tyrant.
3. PLEBEIAN. Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.
2. PLEBEIAN. Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.
ANTONY. You gentle Romans,—
ALL. Peace, ho! let us hear him.
ANTONY. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest
(For Brutus is an honorable man;
So are they all, all honorable men),
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept;
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

70. *beholding*, beholden. 85. *answer'd it*, paid for it. 90. *just*, exact and punctual. 94. *general coffers*, public treasury.

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And, sure, he is an honorable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

1. PLEBEIAN. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

2. PLEBEIAN. If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Cæsar has had great wrong.

3. PLEBEIAN. Has he not, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

4. PLEBEIAN. Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

1. PLEBEIAN. If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

2. PLEBEIAN. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

3. PLEBEIAN. There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

4. PLEBEIAN. Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

ANTONY. But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world. Now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters, if I were dispos'd to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honorable men.
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honorable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar;
I found it in his closet; 'tis his will.
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which (pardon me) I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,

119. *dear abide it,* pay dearly for it. 125. *to do,* as to do. 134. *closet,* private room. 135. *commons,* common people. 138. *napkins,* handkerchiefs.

And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.
4. PLEBEIAN. We'll hear the will. Read it, Mark Antony.
ALL. The will, the will! we will hear Cæsar's will.
ANTONY. Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Cæsar lov'd you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men:
And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!
4. PLEBEIAN. Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony.
You shall read us the will, Cæsar's will.
ANTONY. Will you be patient? Will you stay a while?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.
I fear I wrong the honorable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar; I do fear it.
4. PLEBEIAN. They were traitors; honorable men!
ALL. The will! the testament!
2. PLEBEIAN. They were villains, murderers. The will! read the will.
ANTONY. You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Cæsar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?
ALL. Come down.
2. PLEBEIAN. Descend.
3. PLEBEIAN. You shall have leave.
(ANTONY *comes down from the pulpit)*
4. PLEBEIAN. A ring; stand round.
1. PLEBEIAN. Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.
2. PLEBEIAN. Room for Antony, most noble Antony.
ANTONY. Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.
ALL. Stand back; room; bear back!
ANTONY. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle; I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on.
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii.

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169. *hearse,* bier.

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
See what a rent the envious Casca made;
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd,
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel.
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar lov'd him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him. Then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look you here: *(Lifting Cæsar's mantle)*
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

1. PLEBEIAN. O piteous spectacle!
2. PLEBEIAN. O noble Cæsar!
3. PLEBEIAN. O woeful day!
4. PLEBEIAN. O traitors, villains!
1. PLEBEIAN. O most bloody sight!
2. PLEBEIAN. We will be reveng'd!

ALL. Revenge! About!
Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!
Let not a traitor live!

ANTONY. Stay, countrymen.

1. PLEBEIAN. Peace there! hear the noble Antony.
2. PLEBEIAN. We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANTONY. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

179. *envious*, malicious. 183. *resolv'd*, assured. 185. *angel*, guardian spirit. 198. *dint*, impact. 215. *mutiny*, disorder.

They that have done this deed are honorable.
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it; they are wise and honorable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him;
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech
To stir men's blood; I only speak right on.
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor, dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

ALL. We'll mutiny.

1. PLEBEIAN. We'll burn the house of Brutus!

3. PLEBEIAN. Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY. Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

ALL. Peace, ho! hear Antony, most noble Antony!

ANTONY. Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.
Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserv'd your loves?
Alas, you know not; I must tell you, then.
You have forgot the will I told you of.

ALL. Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will.

ANTONY. Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

2. PLEBEIAN. Most noble Cæsar! We'll revenge his death.

3. PLEBEIAN. O royal Cæsar!

ANTONY. Hear me with patience.

ALL. Peace, ho!

ANTONY. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,

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225. *wit,* intelligence. 226. *Action,* gesture. *utterance,* good delivery. 232. *ruffle up,* arouse. 247. *drachmas,* Roman coins, each worth only about nineteen cents, but with a high purchasing power.

His private arbors and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs forever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Cæsar! When comes such another?
1. PLEBEIAN. Never, never! Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.
2. PLEBEIAN. Go fetch fire!
3. PLEBEIAN. Pluck down benches!
4. PLEBEIAN. Pluck down forms, windows, anything!
(Exeunt PLEBEIANS *with the body)*
ANTONY. Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot.
Take thou what course thou wilt!

253. *orchards,* gardens. 255. *common pleasures,* parks. 264. *forms,* long benches.

Questions

STATE as specifically as you can the purposes of a typical biographer. To what extent does Plutarch achieve these purposes? Can you find, in this passage, any support for the claim of some that Plutarch was one of the "great" biographers?

2. (a) Plutarch says that Antony, in his talk with the conspirators, urged that Cæsar's will be made public. He also indicates that the will was read before the funeral address was delivered. What purposes of biography required that he set down these details?

(b) Shakespeare, by contrast, includes no mention of the will in Antony's conversation with the conspirators. Furthermore, he shows Antony first making public the contents of the will at the time when he delivers his funeral address. What purposes of drama—as distinguished from the purposes of biography—justified these manipulations?

3. Plutarch does not quote directly the remarks of any of the characters; Shakespeare quotes all their words throughout. Considering the different aims of the two authors, how may this difference be justified? (We don't want this answer: You don't have a play unless people talk.) Note, for instance, the protests of Cassius—III, i, 144-146, 211, 214-217, 232-235, 243.

4. Contrast the language employed by the two authors. How are the differences you find related to the differences between their aims?

5. Here are a few passages in the drama which parallel nothing in the biography and which, therefore, Shakespeare apparently invented. How did the invention and handling of each passage contribute to the drama—in other words, what justified his inventing the happenings?

(a) Antony's servant conveys Antony's regards and exacts a promise that Antony will not be harmed by the conspirators (III, i, 123-137). It may be

helpful to compare Antony's speech (III, i, 151-163).

(b) Antony addresses the dead Cæsar (III, i, 148-150, 194-210, 254-275), converses with Octavius' servant (III, i, 276-296), and comments upon the results of his funeral address (III, ii, 265-266).

(c) Brutus makes a speech and the populace reacts to it (III, ii, 1-76). Contrast Antony's speech and the public reaction.

(d) Antony not only shows Cæsar's gown and the "number of cuts and holes it had upon it"; he points out exactly which hole was made by each of the conspirators (III, ii, 178-190).

6. (a) Granville Barker classifies Shakespeare's Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, respectively, as "the idealist, the egoist, and the opportunist." He says that "the contrast between them, the action and reaction of one upon the other, is most carefully contrived." Are his statements about these men and the contrast between them justified by this scene? Contrast the way Plutarch portrays them in his biography, and explain why his treatment has to be different.

(b) E. K. Chambers sees the conflict between Brutus and Antony as "righteousness massed against efficiency and showing itself clearly impotent in the unequal contest." "Had we only to do with the fate of individuals," he continues, "it might pass. But the selection of the artist makes the puppets more than individuals. They stand for spiritual forces, and in the spiritual order the triumph of efficiency over righteousness is tragic stuff." What does he mean? How valid is the claim as a statement about the play? As a statement about Plutarch's biography? What does your consideration of play and biography in this light suggest about the aims and methods of imaginative literature?

7. Why is it more difficult to formulate differences between Plutarch's biography and Shakespeare's scenes than between (a) Romer and Melville, (b) Hohman and Melville, (c) Owen and Steinbeck?

8. On the basis of your reading so far, what generalizations are possible about (a) aims and methods of authors of imaginative works? (b) the values to the reader of imaginative writing?

9. What do your generalizations imply about an appropriate way to read fiction, drama, and poetry as contrasted with an appropriate way to read factual works?

MATTER AND MANNER

Happenings

Your contrasts between factual writing and imaginative writing have shown you what the latter, in some instances at least, may do. As you read other imaginative works, you will, of course, enlarge your list of possible achievements. Just now it is enough to say that typical imaginative writing may effectively show human feelings, motives, actions, and experience; that such writing may embody an emotional interpretation—the author's interpretation—of life; and that imaginative writing, therefore, may affect not only the thoughts but also the feelings of the reader.

How does an author shape his writings so they will do these things?—that is the next question for you to consider. The world, as we know it, is a collection of varied scenes thronging with multitudes of people whose characters and actions vary greatly. The author, looking at the world in his own individual way, is eager to represent and interpret it in a story, a drama, or a poem. How will he go about his task?

He will, of course, select characters, happenings, and scenes. Suppose that he decides that he will write about one man of the many he knows in life and in books: suppose that he decides to write about Andrew Jackson. A scientific biographer of Jackson might feel impelled to set down every detail about Jackson ascertainable from birth to death. The imaginative author, by contrast, might treat only a few hours in Jackson's life (as Vachel Lindsay did in his poem, "Old, Old, Old Andrew Jackson"). And certainly the imaginative writer would include only those details, real and imagined, which he thought significant for his representation and interpretation. Every imaginative author thus selects and arranges details, and uses words as well as he can, to communicate his insights to the reader. He strives to make all the elements in his work, all his technical procedures, contribute to his saying what he has to say.

Your purpose as you study the rest of this section is to learn about the manner of the author—the selection, the arrangement, and the handling of the matter of life in fiction, drama, and poetry. In other words you will be studying the craftsmanship used in managing important elements in imaginative literature. The elements to be studied will include *Happenings, Characters, Setting, Language, Tone,* and *Meaning.*

Selection and arrangement of happenings

The happenings in an imaginative work ordinarily are not chosen or set down in an aimless and unthinking fashion. Rarely does a storyteller follow a character from his birth to his death: usually he follows him through only a few years, days, or even minutes. And even when his narrative covers a brief period, the author usually leaves out many details. Probably very few authors would say, for instance: "Pete awoke at seven, yawned, scratched his nose, cleared his throat, decided that he must

get up, crawled out of the left side of bed, donned his slippers, went to the closet and got his bathrobe, went to the bathroom, took a shower, shaved, returned to the bedroom, dressed . . ." and so on interminably. A much wiser author quite possibly might skip all these dull and meaningless details and simply write, "Next morning Pete, at the office, began work on the big deal."

A moment's examination of almost any imaginative work will show that the author has taken for granted some incidents, merely referred to others, and recounted still others in great detail. Often authors take still other liberties and arrange occurrences in orders which do not follow the order of time. For instance, an author may outline his whole story and then go back to the start and cover the same time span for a second time; or he may confine his narrative to a single scene and outline what has gone before and imply what will follow.

Such omissions, simplifications, and manipulations are justified if they help the author create a work with more form, and therefore with more articulated meaning and impact, than life has. When an author selects and arranges happenings so that every gesture, every fleeting thought, every movement, and every deed has been related to a perceivable scheme or pattern, he has made a good start toward expressing such an articulated meaning. (The pattern itself, quite often, will have an implied meaning.) And when he has so handled other elements in the story—character and setting, for instance—as to make them, too, contribute their share to the whole work, the artist will have achieved his aim.

How, then, may an author select and arrange *happenings* so that they will follow such a pattern? He may "plot" his narrative in such a way as to make it both complete and economical. His "plot," as some critics call a patterned series of interrelated happenings, will be complete if it tells one story from beginning to end. The completeness will be perceivable if the happenings add up to a single significant change or lack of change, and if reasons may be found for the narrative's beginning, developing, and ending exactly as it does. The account will be economical if, as Edgar Allan Poe has put it in describing a perfect plot, "no part can be displaced without ruin to the whole." Aristotle, who, though a philosopher, had a good deal of common sense, suggested long ago that a patterned narrative—a plot—"must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole."

Patterns of action

An author may create such a unified work in various ways. A detective story offers a completed line of action when it shows a brilliant sleuth who has been confronted with a problem working out a solution. The pattern properly starts with the problem and the detective, the development properly consists of a growing comprehension of the solution, and a proper ending is the solution of the problem. Another unified story may trace the growing love of a character for another from its beginning to an ending wherein the character's great love is proved beyond a doubt. Still another complete story—a typical one by Poe, say—may tell of a graduated development of some emotion, terror perhaps, which ends when the emotion reaches a

crescendo. In still another unified story, an ambitious character may decide to reach some goal, he may then strive to reach it, and the story may conclude when the goal is reached. Thus happenings which add up to a completely developed knowledge, a completely developed attitude, a completely developed emotion, or a completely developed achievement, may be complete and economical wholes. A scheme of this sort might be pictured thus:  The rising line would represent a graduated change.

Another type of story might tell of a character or situation which does *not* change. Suppose the leading character is a rascal at the start of the story, that most of the happenings consist of people's trying to convert him, and that, at the end, he continues to be a reprobate. The significant fact would be that the character remains the same, and perhaps the picture would be this one: 

Still another type of unified narrative might, by contrast, be pictured thus:  Such a "two part" or "complex" narrative would involve a reversal. There is such a reversal in the scenes from *Julius Cæsar* (pp. 22-34): during the first (rising) part of the action, Brutus wins over the mob, then comes a turning point, or climax, and during the second (falling) part of the action, Antony, Brutus' rival, wins the mob's approval. In another such schematized narrative, after a character has been deceived for a time, he may catch a glimpse of truth, and from that time on his comprehension may grow. In still another, an emotion may change: terror, say, may be supplanted by bravery. Or a character, after progressing toward his goal, may fail. Such complex developments would contrast with the simple development of an attitude, or knowledge, or emotion, or achievement, described a couple of paragraphs ago. The counterpart of the reprobate story discussed above would, of course, be a narrative in which a character undergoes conversion.

Conflict

All three kinds of action patterns, more often than not, will involve one or more conflicts, contests between opposing forces—man versus nature, perhaps, man versus society, man versus "fate." Or the conflict may be an "internal" one—between two parts of a man's nature. In the simple scheme, one force will consistently move toward victory; in the "unchanging" scheme, a stubborn force will successfully resist change; in the complex scheme, one force will win for a time, and then the opposing force will gain the upper hand and go on to triumph.

In many narratives, not one but several strands such as these are followed to completion. In Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath,* for instance, the characters battle against an economic situation and are rather consistently defeated; they triumph over the obstacles of nature as they make their way to California; and they gradually comprehend their problem and its solution.

An imaginative writer who deals with happenings, then, copes with the problem of finding some complete and economic scheme for plotting and relating his incidents. A careful reader has the task of seeing what the happenings in a narrative are and how the author gives—or fails to give—unity to the pattern of action.

This is a simple account in verse of the exciting and sad adventures of the woman Frankie and the man who "done her wrong." It has been memorized and sung by thousands of people, both educated and uneducated, who are evidently enthralled by the story and the way it is told. Who wrote the first version (about 1888), nobody knows, and nobody knows how the words went in that first version because people have sung it from memory and some have consciously or unconsciously changed it. This does not mean—as the reader will see—that the account in the form presented below is not well handled.

ANONYMOUS

Frankie and Johnny

FRANKIE and Johnny were lovers, O, how that couple could love.
Swore to be true to each other, true as the stars above.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie she was his woman, everybody knows.
She spent one hundred dollars for a suit of Johnny's clothes.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie and Johnny went walking, Johnny in his bran' new suit,
"O good Lawd," says Frankie, "but don't my Johnnie look cute?"
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie went down to Memphis; she went on the evening train.
She paid one hundred dollars for Johnny a watch and chain.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie went down to the corner, to buy a glass of beer;
She says to the bartender, "Has my loving man been here?
He is my man; he wouldn't do me wrong."

"Ain't going to tell you no story, ain't going to tell you no lie,
I seen your man 'bout an hour ago with a girl named Alice Fry.
If he's your man, he's doing you wrong."

Frankie went back to the hotel, she didn't go there for fun,

Under her long red kimono she toted a forty-four gun.
He was her man, he was doing her wrong.

Frankie went down to the hotel, looked in the window so high,
There was her lovin' Johnny a-lovin' up Alice Fry;
He was her man, he was doing her wrong.

Frankie threw back her kimono; took out the old forty-four;
Roota-toot-toot, three times she shot, right through that hotel door.
She shot her man, 'cause he done her wrong.

Johnny grabbed off his Stetson. "O good Lawd, Frankie, don't shoot."
But Frankie put her finger on the trigger, and the gun went roota-toot-toot.
He was her man, but she shot him down.

"Roll me over easy, roll me over slow,
Roll me over easy, boys, 'cause my wounds is hurting me so,
I was her man, but I done her wrong."

With the first shot Johnny staggered; with the second shot he fell;
When the third bullet hit him, there was a new man's face in hell.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

"Oh, bring on your rubber-tired hearses, bring on your rubber-tired hacks,
They're takin' Johnny to the buryin' groun' but they'll never bring him back.
He was my man, but he done me wrong."

Happenings

Do the happenings in this narrative have a unified pattern? If not, prove that they do not. If so, state the exact nature of the unity and justify your answer by referring to the text.

2. What do the repetitions and the variations in the final lines of all the stanzas accomplish in the telling of the story? Precisely how?

3. Lines 1-12 set forth the situation and acquaint us with each of the lovers. How do they do this? Thereafter, the rest of the narrative is presented in a series of scenes. How many scenes are there? How can you account for the relative length of the development of each? Is the omission of some events justified or unjustified?

4. Which of the following does Johnny have: vanity, good taste, impeccable manners, fickleness, complete lack of moral sense, gratitude? Point out passages which lead you to draw your conclusions about him. How do his qualities make possible some of the happenings? What kind of person is Frankie? Relate her qualities to the events in the poem.

5. Are some stanzas unnecessary? Would you suggest rearranging any of the stanzas? Why or why not?

6. One version of the song adds the following four stanzas to the stanzas we have given:

The judge he said to the jury, "It's plain
as plain can be.
This woman shot her man, so it's mur-
der in the second degree.
He was her man, though he done her
wrong."

Now it wasn't murder in the second
degree, it wasn't murder in the
third.
Frankie simply dropped her man, like
a hunter drops a bird.
He was her man, but he done her wrong.

"Oh, put me in that dungeon. Oh, put
me in that cell.
Put me where the northeast wind blows
from the southwest corner of hell.
I shot my man 'cause he done me
wrong."

Frankie walked up to the scaffold, calm
as a girl could be,
She turned her eyes to heaven and said,
"Good Lord, I'm coming to thee.
He was my man, and I done him wrong."

How would the addition of these stanzas change the whole nature of the narrative? Would the new pattern be a unified one? How might Frankie's remark in the final line be justified as the culmination of the development which these stanzas trace?

7. In your opinion, do the happenings in this poem by themselves account for its continued fascination? If not, how would you account for the popularity of "Frankie and Johnny"?

Lord Dunsany by his own account has devoted ninety-seven per cent of his life to athletic activities and only three per cent to writing. Included in the "athletic activities" was his service in the Boer War and World War I. Although his writing seemingly has occupied a small part of his time, he has been a prolific author of plays and short stories. The combination of melodrama and fantasy in this play, his most famous, is found in many of his works.

LORD DUNSANY

A night at an inn

CHARACTERS

A. E. SCOTT-FORTESCUE (THE TOFF) — *a dilapidated gentleman*
WILLIAM JONES (BILL) — *merchant sailors*
ALBERT THOMAS — *merchant sailors*
JACOB SMITH (SNIGGERS) — *merchant sailors*
1ST PRIEST OF KLESH
2ND PRIEST OF KLESH
3RD PRIEST OF KLESH
KLESH

The Curtain rises on a room in an inn. SNIGGERS *and* BILL *are talking.* THE TOFF *is reading a paper.* ALBERT *sits a little apart.*

SNIGGERS. What's his idea, I wonder?

BILL. I don't know.

SNIGGERS. And how much longer will he keep us here?

BILL. We've been here three days.

SNIGGERS. And 'aven't seen a soul.

BILL. And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the pub.

SNIGGERS. 'Ow long did 'e rent the pub for?

BILL. You never know with him.

SNIGGERS. It's lonely enough.

BILL. 'Ow long did you rent the pub for, Toffy?

(THE TOFF *continues to read a sporting paper; he takes no notice of what is said*)

SNIGGERS. 'E's such a toff.

BILL. Yet 'e's clever, no mistake.

SNIGGERS. Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle. Their plans

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From *Plays of Gods and Men,* by Lord Dunsany. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

are clever enough, but they don't work, and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me.

BILL. Ah!

SNIGGERS. I don't like this place.

BILL. Why not?

SNIGGERS. I don't like the looks of it.

BILL. He's keeping us here because here those niggers can't find us. The three heathen priests what was looking for us so. But we want to go and sell our ruby soon.

ALBERT. There's no sense in it.

BILL. Why not, Albert?

ALBERT. Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull.

BILL. You give 'em the slip, Albert?

ALBERT. The slip, all three of them. The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads. I had the ruby then, and I give them the slip in Hull.

BILL. How did you do it, Albert?

ALBERT. I had the ruby and they were following me . . .

BILL. Who told them you had the ruby? You didn't show it?

ALBERT. No . . . But they kind of know.

SNIGGERS. They kind of know, Albert?

ALBERT. Yes, they know if you've got it. Well, they sort of mouched after me, and I tells a policeman and he says, O they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me. Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim.

BILL. Yes, and to George in Bombay before we started.

SNIGGERS. Ugh!

BILL. Why didn't you give 'em in charge?

ALBERT. What about the ruby, Bill?

BILL. Ah!

ALBERT. Well, I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.

SNIGGERS. What?

ALBERT. No heathen black devils with gold spots on their face. I give 'em the slip.

BILL. Well done, Albert.

SNIGGERS *(after a sigh of content).* Why didn't you tell us?

ALBERT. 'Cause 'e won't let you speak. 'E's got 'is plans and 'e thinks we're silly folk. Things must be done 'is way. And all the time I've give 'em the slip. Might 'ave 'ad one o' them crooked knives in him before now but for me who give 'em the slip in Hull.

BILL. Well done, Albert.
SNIGGERS. Do you hear that, Toffy? Albert has give 'em the slip.
THE TOFF. Yes, I hear.
SNIGGERS. Well, what do you say to that?
THE TOFF. O . . . Well done, Albert.
ALBERT. And what a' you going to do?
THE TOFF. Going to wait.
ALBERT. Don't seem to know what 'e's waiting for.
SNIGGERS. It's a nasty place.
ALBERT. It's getting silly, Bill. Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby. Let's get on to a town.
BILL. But 'e won't come.
ALBERT. Then we'll leave him.
SNIGGERS. We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull.
ALBERT. We'll go to London.
BILL. But 'e must 'ave 'is share.
SNIGGERS. All right. Only let's go. *(To* THE TOFF*)* We're going, do you hear? Give us the ruby.
THE TOFF. Certainly.
(He gives them a ruby from his waistcoat pocket: it is the size of a small hen's egg. He goes on reading his paper)
ALBERT. Come on, Sniggers. *(Exeunt* ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS*)*
BILL. Good-bye, old man. We'll give you your fair share, but there's nothing to do here, no girls, no halls, and we must sell the ruby.
THE TOFF. I'm not a fool, Bill.
BILL. No, no, of course not. Of course you ain't, and you've helped us a lot. Good-bye. You'll say good-bye?
THE TOFF. Oh, yes. Good-bye.
(Still reads paper. Exit BILL. THE TOFF *puts a revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his paper)*
SNIGGERS *(out of breath)*. We've come back, Toffy.
THE TOFF. So you have.
ALBERT. Toffy—how did they get here?
THE TOFF. They walked, of course.
ALBERT. But it's eighty miles.
SNIGGERS. Did you know they were here, Toffy?
THE TOFF. Expected them about now.
ALBERT. Eighty miles.
BILL. Toffy, old man—what are we to do?
THE TOFF. Ask Albert.

BILL. If they can do things like this there's no one can save us but you, Toffy —I always knew you were a clever one. We won't be fools any more. We'll obey you, Toffy.

THE TOFF. You're brave enough and strong enough. There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools. Jim would have none of my plans and where's Jim? And George. What did they do to him?

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy!

THE TOFF. Well, then, your strength is no use to you. You want cleverness; or they'll have you the way that they had George and Jim.

ALL. Ugh!

THE TOFF. Those black priests would follow you round the world in circles, year after year, till they got the idol's eye. And if we died with it they'd follow our grandchildren. That fool thinks he can escape men like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull.

ALBERT. God's truth, *you* 'aven't escaped them, because they're *'ere.*

THE TOFF. So I supposed.

ALBERT. You *supposed!*

THE TOFF. Yes, I believe there's no announcement in the Society papers. But I took this country seat especially to receive them. There's plenty of room if you dig; it is pleasantly situated and what is most important it is in a very quiet neighbourhood. So I am at home to them this afternoon.

BILL. Well, you're a deep one.

THE TOFF. And remember you've only my wits between you and death, and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman.

ALBERT. If you're a gentleman, why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

THE TOFF. Because I was too clever for them as I am too clever for you.

ALBERT. Too clever for them?

THE TOFF. I never lost a game of cards in my life.

BILL. You never lost a game?

THE TOFF. Not when there was money on it.

BILL. Well, well.

THE TOFF. Have a game of poker?

ALL. No, thanks.

THE TOFF. Then do as you're told.

BILL. All right, Toffy.

SNIGGERS. I saw something just then. Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

THE TOFF. No.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. Don't draw the curtains.

SNIGGERS. O all right.

BILL. But Toffy, they can see us. One doesn't let the enemy do that. I don't see why...

THE TOFF. No, of course you don't.

BILL. O all right, Toffy. *(All begin to pull out revolvers)*

THE TOFF *(putting his own away).* No revolvers, please.

ALBERT. Why not?

THE TOFF. Because I don't want any noise at my party. We might get guests that hadn't been invited. *Knives* are a different matter.

(All draw knives. THE TOFF *signs to them not to draw them yet.* TOFFY *has already taken back his ruby)*

BILL. I think they're coming, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Not yet.

ALBERT. When will they come?

THE TOFF. When I am quite ready to receive them. Not before.

SNIGGERS. I should like to get this over.

THE TOFF. Should you? Then we'll have them now.

SNIGGERS. Now?

THE TOFF. Yes. Listen to me. You shall do as you see me do. You will all pretend to go out. I'll show you how. I've got the ruby. When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye.

BILL. How can they tell like this which of us has it?

THE TOFF. I confess I don't know, but they seem to.

SNIGGERS. What will you do when they come in?

THE TOFF. I shall do nothing.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. They will creep up behind me. Then my friends, Sniggers and Bill and Albert, who gave them the slip, will do what they can.

BILL. All right, Toffy. Trust us.

THE TOFF. If you're a little slow you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim.

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy. We'll be there all right.

THE TOFF. Very well. Now watch me. *(He goes past the windows to the inner door* R.; *he opens it inwards. Then under cover of the open door he slips down on his knee and closes it, remaining on the inside, appearing to have gone out. He signs to the others who understand. Then he appears to re-enter in the same manner)* Now, I shall sit with my back to the door. You go out one by one so far as our friends can make out. Crouch very low

to be on the safe side. They mustn't see you through the window. (BILL *makes his sham exit)* Remember, no revolvers. The police are, I believe, proverbially inquisitive.

(The other two follow BILL. *All three are now crouching inside the door* R. THE TOFF *puts the ruby beside him on the table. He lights a cigarette. The door in back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began.* THE TOFF *picks up his paper. A* NATIVE OF INDIA *wriggles along the floor ever so slowly, seeking cover from chairs. He moves* L. *where* THE TOFF *is. The three sailors are* R. SNIGGERS *and* ALBERT *lean forward.* BILL'S *arm keeps them back. An armchair had better conceal them from the* INDIAN. *The black* PRIEST *nears* THE TOFF. BILL *watches to see if any more are coming. Then he leaps forward alone [he has taken his boots off] and knifes the* PRIEST. *The* PRIEST *tries to shout but* BILL'S *left hand is over his mouth.* THE TOFF *continues to read his sporting paper. He never looks round)*

BILL *(sotto voce).* There's only one, Toffy. What shall we do?

THE TOFF *(without turning his head).* Only one?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. Wait a moment. Let me think. *(Still apparently absorbed in his paper)* Ah, yes. You go back, Bill. We must attract another guest. Now are you ready?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. All right. You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence. You must receive guests for me. *(He leaps up in full view of the window, flings up both arms and falls on the floor near the dead* PRIEST.*)* Now be ready. *(His eyes close)*

(There is a long pause. Again the door opens, very, very slowly. Another PRIEST *creeps in. He has three golden spots upon his forehead. He looks round, then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over and looks inside each of his clenched hands. Then he looks at the recumbent* TOFF. *Then he creeps towards him.* BILL *slips after him and knifes him like the other with his left hand over his mouth)*

BILL *(sotto voce).* We've only got two, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Still another.

BILL. What'll we do?

THE TOFF *(sitting up).* Hum.

BILL. This is the best way, much.

THE TOFF. Out of the question. Never play the same game twice.

BILL. Why not, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Doesn't work if you do.

BILL. Well?

THE TOFF. I have it, Albert. You will now walk into the room. I showed you how to do it.

ALBERT. Yes.

THE TOFF. Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men.

ALBERT. But they're——

THE TOFF. Yes, they're dead, my perspicuous Albert. But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them——Come on. (BILL *picks up a body under the arms)* That's right, Bill. *(Does the same)* Come and help us, Sniggers. (SNIGGERS *comes)* Keep low, keep low. Wave their arms about, Sniggers. Don't show yourself. Now, Albert, over you go. Our Albert is slain. Back you get, Bill. Back, Sniggers. Still, Albert. Mustn't move when he comes. Not a muscle.

(A face appears at the window and stays for some time. Then the door opens and looking craftily round the third PRIEST *enters. He looks at his companions' bodies and turns round. He suspects something. He takes up one of the knives and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall. He looks to the left and right)*

THE TOFF. Come on, Bill. *(The* PRIEST *rushes to the door.* THE TOFF *knifes the last* PRIEST *from behind)* A good day's work, my friends.

BILL. Well done, Toffy. Oh, you are a deep one.

ALBERT. A deep one if ever there was one.

SNIGGERS. There ain't any more, Bill, are there?

THE TOFF. No more in the world, my friend.

BILL. Aye, that's all there are. There were only three in the temple. Three priests and their beastly idol.

ALBERT. What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

THE TOFF. It's worth all they've got in the shop. Worth just whatever we like to ask for it.

ALBERT. Then we're millionaires, now.

THE TOFF. Yes, and what is more important, we no longer have any heirs.

BILL. We'll have to sell it now.

ALBERT. That won't be easy. It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen. Hadn't the idol any other on him?

BILL. No, he was green jade all over and only had this one eye. He had it in the middle of his forehead, and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world.

SNIGGERS. I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy.

BILL. And indeed we ought.

ALBERT. If it hadn't 'ave been for him——

BILL. Yes, if it hadn't 'a' been for old Toffy . . .

SNIGGERS. He's a deep one.

THE TOFF. Well, you see, I just have a knack of foreseeing things.
SNIGGERS. I should think you did.
BILL. Why, I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee. Does it, Toffy?
THE TOFF. Well, I don't think it does, Bill. I don't think it often does.
BILL. Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff.
THE TOFF. Well, we've taken these fellows' trick.
SNIGGERS *(going to the window)*. It wouldn't do for any one to see them.
THE TOFF. O nobody will come this way. We're all alone on a moor.
BILL. Where will we put them?
THE TOFF. Bury them in the cellar, but there's no hurry.
BILL. And what then, Toffy?
THE TOFF. Why, then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business. We have really come through this job very nicely.
BILL. I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy. We'll bury these fellows to-night.
ALBERT. Yes, let's.
SNIGGERS. The very thing.
BILL. And we'll all drink his health.
ALBERT. Good old Toffy.
SNIGGERS. He ought to have been a general or a premier. *(They get bottles from cupboard, etc.)*
THE TOFF. Well, we've earned our bit of a supper. *(They sit down)*
BILL *(glass in hand)*. Here's to old Toffy who guessed everything.
ALBERT AND SNIGGERS. Good old Toffy.
BILL. Toffy who saved our lives and made our fortunes.
ALBERT AND SNIGGERS. Hear. Hear.
THE TOFF. And here's to Bill who saved me twice to-night.
BILL. Couldn't have done it but for your cleverness, Toffy.
SNIGGERS. Hear, hear. Hear, hear.
ALBERT. He foresees everything.
BILL. A speech, Toffy. A speech from our general.
ALL. Yes, a speech.
SNIGGERS. A speech.
THE TOFF. Well, get me some water. This whiskey's too much for my head, and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar.
BILL. Water. Yes, of course. Get him some water, Sniggers.
SNIGGERS. We don't use water here. Where shall I get it?
BILL. Outside in the garden. *(Exit* SNIGGERS)
ALBERT. Here's to fortune.
BILL. Here's to Albert Thomas Esquire.
ALBERT. And William Jones Esquire. *(Reënter* SNIGGERS *terrified)*

THE TOFF. Hullo, here's Jacob Smith Esquire, J. P., alias Sniggers, back again.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, I've been a thinking about my share in that ruby. I don't want it, Toffy, I don't want it.

THE TOFF. Nonsense, Sniggers, nonsense.

SNIGGERS. You shall have it, Toffy, you shall have it yourself, only say Sniggers has no share in this 'ere ruby. Say it, Toffy, say it.

BILL. Want to turn informer, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS. No, no. Only I don't want the ruby, Toffy . . .

THE TOFF. No more nonsense, Sniggers; we're all in together in this. If one hangs we all hang; but they won't outwit me. Besides, it's not a hanging affair; they had their knives.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, Toffy, I always treated you fair, Toffy. I was always one to say, Give Toffy a chance. Take back my share, Toffy.

THE TOFF. What's the matter? What are you driving at?

SNIGGERS. Take it back, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Answer me; what are you up to?

SNIGGERS. I don't want my share any more.

BILL. Have you seen the police? (ALBERT *pulls out his knife)*

THE TOFF. No, no knives, Albert.

ALBERT. What then?

THE TOFF. The honest truth in open court, barring the ruby. We were attacked.

SNIGGERS. There's no police.

THE TOFF. Well, then, what's the matter?

BILL. Out with it.

SNIGGERS. I swear to God . . .

ALBERT. Well?

THE TOFF. Don't interrupt.

SNIGGERS. I swear I saw something *what I didn't like.*

THE TOFF. What you didn't like?

SNIGGERS *(in tears).* O Toffy, Toffy, take it back. Take my share. Say you take it.

THE TOFF. What has he seen?

(Dead silence only broken by SNIGGERS' *sobs. Then stony steps are heard. Enter a hideous* IDOL. *It is blind and gropes its way. It gropes its way to the ruby and picks it up and screws it into a socket in the forehead.* SNIGGERS *still weeps softly; the rest stare in horror. The* IDOL *steps out, not groping. Its steps move off, then stop)*

THE TOFF. O great heavens!

ALBERT *(in a childish, plaintive voice).* What is it, Toffy?

BILL. Albert, it is that obscene idol *(in a whisper)* come from India.

ALBERT. It is gone.
BILL. It has taken its eye.
SNIGGERS. We are saved.
OFF, A VOICE *(with outlandish accent).* Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman.
(THE TOFF *has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror)*
BILL. Albert, Albert, what is this? *(He rises and walks out. One moan is heard.* SNIGGERS *goes to window. He falls back sickly)*
ALBERT *(in a whisper).* What has happened?
SNIGGERS. I have seen it. I have seen it. O I have seen it. *(He returns to table)*
THE TOFF *(laying his hand very gently on* SNIGGERS' *arm, speaking softly and winningly).* What was it, Sniggers?
SNIGGERS. I have seen it.
ALBERT. What?
SNIGGERS. O!
VOICE. Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.
ALBERT. Must I go, Toffy? Toffy, must I go?
SNIGGERS *(clutching him).* Don't move.
ALBERT *(going).* Toffy, Toffy. *(Exit)*
VOICE. Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able Seaman.
SNIGGERS. I can't go, Toffy. I can't go. I can't do it. *(He goes)*
VOICE. Meestaire Arnold Everett Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able Seaman.
THE TOFF. I did not foresee it. *(Exit)*

Happenings

WHAT has happened before the curtain rises? How are we informed of the preceding action? How is this action important to the play?

2. At what point does the "reversal" occur? State the nature of the action before and after this point. What preparation has there been for the reversal?

3. Before the priests enter, how do the words and actions of the other characters show (a) their fear, (b) the likelihood of their fear?

4. What qualities do the Toff and his followers have which make possible their victory over the priests? What qualities does the god have which account for his eventual triumph? How are these qualities shown?

5. Why should the Toff and his followers be called off the stage, one by one, in the order in which they are called? What is shown by their way of going?

6. Suggest the exact nature of the setting, the lighting, the costuming, and the acting which you believe would be best for this play. Support your suggestions with references to the text.

7. Compare this pattern of happenings with that of "Frankie and Johnny."

MATTER AND MANNER

Characters

THE problems of personality and the human emotions are usually dealt with deeply and in detail in imaginative writings. Hence one reason for the fascination of such writings is that, in them, most readers may meet many kinds of people unfamiliar to them in life. Again, they may come to know even familiar kinds of characters more intimately in books than they do in actuality. Knowing of people's interest in human nature, and fascinated themselves by it, authors as a rule make personalities—characters—their qualities and feelings, important elements in their works.

So important is personality in fiction, drama, and poetry that a character or an emotion at times may suffice to give a work its essential unity. Some novels, stories, and plays in which the happenings are not patterned but miscellaneous may be unified because one great character appears throughout (*Gil Blas,* for instance). Some character sketches are unified, despite the fact that they present no happenings in detail, because they offer insights concerning characters. And many lyrical poems, although they record no happenings, are unified by the expression of an emotion and—to some extent—the personality experiencing the emotion. In many imaginative works, therefore, the writer takes care to show the reader what the character is—his qualities, his likes and dislikes, how he lives and what he does. The sum total of such traits is the *character. Characterization* is the technique used by the writer to make these qualities known.

Personality of the character

THE reader who studies characters and characterization in a work should ask and answer three questions. The first is: What are the qualities—the characteristics—of the characters in the work? The reader, in other words, has the problem of describing the personality of each of the figures, major or minor, who appear in the work. Some characters, of course, will be nothing more than isolated traits or types or, perhaps, representatives of professions (e.g., a jealous man, a lover of sports, a housemaid). Others will be more complex, and several adjectives will be needed to describe them. If characters have several traits, the reader needs to see not only what those traits are but also how they are related. In some characters, all other traits will be subordinated to one dominating motive, drive, or passion (e.g., Macbeth, or Ahab in *Moby Dick*). Some will have qualities which contend for mastery; and their contending drives or motives may result from a single characteristic, or one contending drive may result from another. Some characters will be, essentially, contending drives—personalities which threaten to split under trying circumstances (Hamlet, for example). Whatever the traits or combinations of traits, the reader needs to discern what they are and what they cause the characters to like and dislike, to want to do and to shrink from doing.

Indications of personality

A SECOND question with which the reader copes is: How has the work indicated these qualities? For the author must, obviously, have the technical skill required to acquaint us with his creations, and if he is not to be obvious or monotonous, he will vary his methods. He may, for instance, *describe* a person in such a way as to indicate that he is arrogant or intelligent, or that he dislikes capitalists and likes women. The character's features, his dress, his gestures, the timbre and inflections of his voice, his facial expressions—all or any of these may be so delineated as to show us what he is. Or an author may characterize by *direct statement:* "Jones, of course, was an utter fool." He may indicate a character's traits by picturing his *surroundings:* "He lived in a huge and showy mansion, which was cared for by armies of servants." He may convey to us what a character is like by quoting his *dialogue:* both what he says and the kind of words in which he expresses himself will offer clues. He may tell us the character's *thoughts,* or he may give us the *opinions of others* about him. He may show us a trait by showing us an *action.* Often he will use not one but a combination of these methods to acquaint us with a character. And we as readers should note what methods an author uses to indicate what his characters are like.

Function of the characters and characterization

A THIRD question about characters and characterization with which the reader is concerned is: What is their function in the work? For they may be related to the happenings, to life, and to the interpretation of life which a work provides.

Unlike a painter or sculptor, the author—in most works—will not show his people frozen in one position. In imaginative writings, characters do things. They are intimately related to the patterns of happenings which you considered in the last series of exercises. Interrelationships between happenings almost always come about as a result of characters—because authors and readers logically relate certain kinds of characters in certain situations with certain actions. If, for instance, an author introduces a dishonest character, and then shows him, when tempted, lying to his mother, cheating in an examination, and deceiving his sweetheart, we say that it is "logical" for such a character, when tempted, to do such things. Our experience with similar individuals, in life, has shown us that such actions are logically probable. *A characterization, therefore, may prepare for a particular action.* Sometimes such preparation will be pretty simple: if the character's only chore is to say, "Tea is served, madam," it will be enough for the author simply to indicate that he is a butler. If, by contrast, the character is to be shown vacillating between kind acts and cruel ones, the author will need to equip him with traits which prepare for such vacillations.

Again, *a characterization may prepare for a change—a reversal*—which is at the heart of a pattern of happenings. Here is a play about Jane Roe, who loves her husband in Act I and who deliberately scalds the poor man with a pot of boiling tea in Act III. She may be given qualities which motivate both actions—the loving and the scalding—at the proper moments in the play. It will

be important for the reader to see exactly how the author's portrayal prepares or fails to prepare for her changing behavior.

In some works, *a character may offer signs of the progress and the completion of the narrative pattern.* Often the "exhaustion," so to speak, of possible actions for characters accompanies the working out of such a pattern. In such works, as Elizabeth Bowen has said:

Characters . . . . promote, by showing, the advance of the plot. How? By the advances, from act to act, in their action. By their showing (by emotional and physical changes) the effects both of action and the passage of time. The diminution of the character's alternatives shows . . . . advance—by the end of the novel the character's alternatives, many at the beginning, have been reduced to almost none . . . . the character has, like the silkworm at work on the cocoon, spun itself out . . . . Throughout the novel, each character is expending potentiality.

Her remarks, of course, hold good for short stories, plays, and narrative poems, as well as for novels.

Some qualities will be given to characters, on occasion, merely to make them "lifelike." Aware that readers cannot become interested in mere puppets on a string put through their paces by their creator, an author often endows his figures with traits which have no relationship to the happenings but which make them seem real. Of course, in a work containing several characters, the minor characters may do perfectly well if they are not *un*lifelike; and in a work which has action or setting sufficiently exciting, characters may be shown who have very few lifelike traits. Often, however, an author will take pains to give his creatures qualities which give the impression of life—and the reader should note that the characterization has this function.

Finally, some *characters may be given some traits which make them attractive or unattractive to the reader*—better than the reader, like the reader, or worse than the reader. Such traits practically always will be assigned to the protagonist (hero or heroine) and the antagonist (villain) — if there is one. Enough universal and enough specific traits will be assigned to them so that the reader will follow with interest their trials and their tribulations, their triumphs and their joys, and so that he will feel that there is meaning in their defeats or their triumphs. The physical aspects of the characters, their moral codes, their philosophies, their associations with good or bad friends, the way other characters feel about them, all will offer clues to the attitude readers are expected to adopt toward them. Note, for instance, how Stevenson shows the nature of the infamous Mr. Hyde:

Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice; all these were points against him, but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him. "There must be something else," said the perplexed gentleman. "There is something more, if I could find a name

for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? . . . . or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think, for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if I ever read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend."—The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Not only does the endowment of characters with sympathetic or unsympathetic qualities interest the reader; it also helps the author give his work meanings. The nature of these qualities will help him show the reader how he is interpreting the people and the events which his story, his drama, or his poem portrays.

The reader, then, who intelligently studies the characters and the characterization in an imaginative work will notice what the characters are like, how the author reveals those qualities, and what function each detail performs. The following passages are to be read with these ideas in mind.

Sinclair Lewis' novel Babbitt *was a best seller during the year of its appearance, 1922. Thousands of readers easily read it, understood it, and attacked or defended it. Its very popularity indicates that it was not a particularly subtle book. Nor was the characterization in this novel very subtle. Lewis tended to show the qualities of his characters so clearly that even the most casual reader would notice what they were, and he did not endow the people in his narrative with very large assortments of traits.*

All this doesn't mean that Lewis necessarily is a bad writer. He was preaching a sermon against the businessman, the Rotarian, of the day, and he wanted thousands of people to hear and understand what he had to say. Oversubtlety in a work addressed to a large audience would, of course, defeat his purposes. Lewis showed real skill in finding and using a number of characterizing methods to make the figures in his narrative crystal clear. Witness the way this excerpt shows us Eathorne and Babbitt.

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Babbitt visits Eathorne

THERE ARE but three or four old houses in Floral Heights, and in Floral Heights an old house is one which was built before 1880. The largest of these is the residence of William Washington Eathorne, president of the First State Bank.

From *Babbitt*, by Sinclair Lewis. Copyright, 1922, by Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.

The Eathorne Mansion preserves the memory of the "nice parts" of Zenith as they appeared from 1860 to 1900. It is a red brick immensity with gray sandstone lintels and a roof of slate in courses of red, green, and dyspeptic yellow. There are two anemic towers, one roofed with copper, the other crowned with castiron ferns. The porch is like an open tomb; it is supported by squat granite pillars above which hang frozen cascades of brick. At one side of the house is a huge stained-glass window in the shape of a keyhole.

But the house has an effect not at all humorous. It embodies the heavy dignity of those Victorian financiers who ruled the generation between the pioneers and the brisk "sales-engineers" and created a somber oligarchy by gaining control of banks, mills, land, railroads, mines. Out of the dozen contradictory Zeniths which together make up the true and complete Zenith, none is so powerful and enduring yet none so unfamiliar to the citizens as the small, still, dry, polite, cruel Zenith of the William Eathornes; and for that tiny hierarchy the other Zeniths unwittingly labor and insignificantly die.

Most of the castles of the testy Victorian tetrarchs are gone now or decayed into boarding-houses, but the Eathorne Mansion remains virtuous and aloof, reminiscent of London, Back Bay, Rittenhouse Square. Its marble steps are scrubbed daily, the brass plate is reverently polished, and the lace curtains are as prim and superior as William Washington Eathorne himself.

With a certain awe Babbitt and Chum Frink called on Eathorne for a meeting of the Sunday School Advisory Committee; with uneasy stillness they followed a uniformed maid through catacombs of reception-rooms to the library. It was as unmistakably the library of a solid old banker as Eathorne's side-whiskers were the side-whiskers of a solid old banker. The books were most of them Standard Sets, with the correct and traditional touch of dim blue, dim gold, and glossy calf-skin. The fire was exactly correct and traditional; a small, quiet, steady fire, reflected by polished fire-irons. The oak desk was dark and old and altogether perfect; the chairs were gently supercilious.

Eathorne's inquiries as to the healths of Mrs. Babbitt, Miss Babbitt, and the Other Children were softly paternal, but Babbitt had nothing with which to answer him. It was indecent to think of using the "How's tricks, ole socks?" which gratified Vergil Gunch and Frink and Howard Littlefield—men who till now had seemed successful and urbane. Babbitt and Frink sat politely, and politely did Eathorne observe, opening his thin lips just wide enough to dismiss the words, "Gentlemen, before we begin our conference —you may have felt the cold in coming here—so good of you to save an old man the journey—shall we perhaps have a whisky toddy?"

So well trained was Babbitt in all the conversation that befits a Good Fellow that he almost disgraced himself with "Rather than make trouble,

and always providin' there ain't any enforcement officers hiding in the waste-basket—" The words died choking in his throat. He bowed in flustered obedience. So did Chum Frink.

Eathorne rang for the maid.

The modern and luxurious Babbitt had never seen anyone ring for a servant in a private house, except during meals. Himself, in hotels, had rung for bell-boys, but in the house you didn't hurt Matilda's feelings; you went out in the hall and shouted for her. Nor had he, since prohibition, known any one to be casual about drinking. It was extraordinary merely to sip his toddy and not cry, "Oh, maaaaan, this hits me right where I live!" And always, with the ecstasy of youth meeting greatness, he marveled, "That little fuzzy-face there, why, he could make me or break me! If he told my banker to call my loans—! Gosh! That quarter-sized squirt! And looking like he hadn't got a single bit of hustle to him! I wonder— Do we Boosters throw too many fits about pep?"

From this thought he shuddered away, and listened devoutly to Eathorne's ideas on the advancement of the Sunday School, which were very clear and very bad.

Diffidently Babbitt outlined his own suggestions:

"I think if you analyze the needs of the school, in fact, going right at it as if it was a merchandizing problem, of course the one basic and fundamental need is growth. I presume we're all agreed we won't be satisfied till we build up the biggest darn Sunday School in the whole state, so the Chatham Road Presbyterian won't have to take anything off anybody. Now about jazzing up the campaign for prospects: they've already used contesting teams, and given prizes to the kids that bring in the most members. And they made a mistake there: the prizes were a lot of folderols and doodads like poetry books and illustrated Testaments, instead of something a real live kid would want to work for, like real cash or a speedometer for his motorcycle. Course I suppose it's all fine and dandy to illustrate the lessons with these decorated bookmarks and blackboard drawings and so on, but when it comes down to real he-hustling, getting out and drumming up customers—or members, I mean, why, you got to make it worth a fellow's while.

"Now, I want to propose two stunts: First, divide the Sunday School into four armies, depending on age. Everybody gets a military rank in his own army according to how many members he brings in, and the duffers that lie down on us and don't bring in any, they remain privates. The pastor and superintendent rank as generals. And everybody has got to give salutes and all the rest of that junk, just like a regular army, to make 'em feel it's worth while to get rank.

"Then, second: Course the school has its advertising committee, but, Lord, nobody ever really works good—nobody works well just for the love of it.

The thing to *do* is to be practical and up-to-date, and hire a real paid press-agent for the Sunday School—some newspaper fellow who can give part of his time."

"Sure, you bet!" said Chum Frink.

"Think of the nice juicy bits he could get in!" Babbitt crowed. "Not only the big, salient, vital facts, about how fast the Sunday School—and the collection—is growing, but a lot of humorous gossip and kidding; about how some blowhard fell down on his pledge to get new members, or the good time the Sacred Trinity class of girls had at their wieniewurst party. And on the side, if he had time, the press-agent might even boost the lessons themselves—do a little advertising for all the Sunday Schools in town, in fact. No use being hoggish toward the rest of 'em, providing we can keep the bulge on 'em in membership. Frinstance, he might get the papers to— Course I haven't got a literary training like Frink here, and I'm just guessing how the pieces ought to be written, but take frinstance, suppose the week's lesson is about Jacob; well, the press-agent might get in something that would have a fine moral, and yet with a trick headline that'd get folks to read it—say like: *Jake Fools the Old Man; Makes Getaway with Girl and Bankroll.* See how I mean? That'd get their interest! Now, course, Mr. Eathorne, you're conservative, and maybe you feel these stunts would be undignified, but honestly, I believe they'd bring home the bacon."

Eathorne folded his hands on his comfortable little belly and purred like an aged pussy:

"May I say, first, that I have been very much pleased by your analysis of the situation, Mr. Babbitt. As you surmise, it's necessary in My Position to be conservative, and perhaps endeavor to maintain a certain standard of dignity. Yet I think you'll find me somewhat progressive. In our bank, for example, I hope I may say that we have as modern a method of publicity and advertising as any in the city. Yes, I fancy you'll find us oldsters quite cognizant of the shifting spiritual values of the age. Yes, oh yes. And so, in fact, it pleases me to be able to say that though personally I might prefer the sterner Presbyterianism of an earlier era—"

Babbitt finally gathered that Eathorne was willing.

Chum Frink suggested as part-time press-agent one Kenneth Escott, reporter on the *Advocate-Times.*

They parted on a high plane of amity and Christian helpfulness.

Babbitt did not drive home, but toward the center of the city. He wished to be by himself and exult over the beauty of intimacy with William Washington Eathorne.

Characters and happenings

EXACTLY how are the general statements (opening 4 pars.) about the exterior of the "Mansion" and the particular details about its appearance valuable in introducing Eathorne? What do the following words suggest about the kind of person living in the house: "immensity," "anemic," "open tomb," "frozen cascades"?

2. (Par. 4) What is meant by "reminiscent of London, Back Bay, Rittenhouse Square"? How is the caretaking of the mansion related to Eathorne?

3. (Par. 5) What is the value of the word "catacombs" for characterizing Eathorne? (See "foil character" in Glossary of Critical Terms.) What is contributed by the details concerning his books, his fire, his desk, his chairs?

4. (Par. 6 and following) What kind of person is Babbitt? How is his nature shown? How does bringing together Eathorne and Babbitt help show the qualities of both? What is gained by telling Babbitt's thoughts during the visit and the interview?

5. (Par. 8 and following) Characterize the way Babbitt talks, the way his host talks. What is achieved, then, by quoting both of them? Why are the quotations from Babbitt's remarks properly longer than those from Eathorne's remarks?

6. How complete a description of the appearance of Eathorne may be based upon details in this passage? Is he old or young, large or small, smooth-shaven or bewhiskered? What is his posture during the interview? What is the value of having the details distributed, instead of concentrated in one paragraph?

7. Summarize everything that may be said about Eathorne's character after a careful study of this passage. Also, list all the methods whereby Lewis has set forth his character.

8. How, exactly, would you classify Eathorne? Is he a "type" character or is he highly individualized? Is he simple or complex?

9. How lifelike are these characters? Which would you classify as attractive, unattractive, a mixture? Why? How does the author make them so?

10. How probable would you say each of the following actions is for Babbitt, as shown here? Give reasons for your answers.

(a) He refuses to join a Good Citizens' League which has been founded to battle against "the Red Menace."

(b) He draws up a better plan for a membership campaign than Eathorne does.

(c) He changes an attitude when he learns that Eathorne disapproves.

(d) He approves when his son decides not to go to college but, instead, to work in a factory.

11. Contrast the characters and characterizations here with those in "Frankie and Johnny" (p. 39) and "A Night at an Inn" (p. 42). Relate these contrasts to those between happenings when the selections are compared.

In a picture gallery on an upper floor of a mansion in Ferrara, two men are talking. One is the duke, the owner of the mansion. The other is an envoy of a count whose daughter the duke is about to marry. The pair seat themselves before a portrait of the duke's deceased wife, and the poem tells what the duke says about the painting, his "last duchess," and the forthcoming marriage. (Any words which may have been uttered by the envoy are not recorded, but at one point the duke refers to an expression he notices on the envoy's face.) We learn about two characters—one directly, one indirectly. The things the duke says and the way he says them both characterize him and unfold a revealing story about him. What he says about his dead wife familiarizes us with her, and in the end the duke draws a picture of her which is much more favorable than he suspects. Every word of this poem is packed with implications: as William Lyon Phelps has said, "The whole poem contains only fifty-six lines, but it could easily be expanded into a three-volume novel." As a result, of course, the reader should carefully consider every word and what it implies.

ROBERT BROWNING

My last duchess

Ferrara

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive; I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps

Fra Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good; but thanked
Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

Characters and happenings

THE word "last" in line 1 should be stressed. What does the stress indicate about the duke's attitude toward his late wife?

2. The "Fra" in line 3 is a "brother"—a monk. "I said '*Fra* Pandolf' by design," says the duke. What is suggested by this emphasis on the religious nature of the painter in the speech to the envoy? What is the reader to deduce from these facts: (a) even a monk was allowed only one day to paint the portrait, (b) only the duke puts by the curtain which ordinarily covers the painting, (c) the duke carefully quotes (ll.16-19) what he believes the monk said while painting.

3. In lines 22-34, the duke offers examples to show that his wife "had a heart . . . too soon made glad." What do the examples indicate about her likings? Do the examples justify a critic's suggestion that "she was one of those lovely women whose kindness and responsiveness are as natural as sunlight"? Why or why not?

4. Precisely what does the duke seem to feel was wrong with the responsiveness of his former wife? What does the nature of his displeasure show about his character?

5. Why—according to lines 34-43—did the duke never reveal his displeasure to the woman? What does his justification of his silence show about him?

6. Says line 45: "I gave commands." What were the commands? (A knowledge of the history of Ferrara may help answer this, if considered in connection with the rather grim line which follows: "Then all smiles stopped together.") How does your knowledge of the character justify your interpretation?

7. What is to be learned about the duke from his remarks (ll. 48-53) concerning the dowry and his love for the count's daughter?

8. Since a duke was supposed to walk before a commoner, why did the duke say, "Nay, we'll go together down, Sir!"

9. Why, as the poem closes, does the duke call attention to the particular piece of statuary mentioned in lines 54-56? What bearing does his singling out of this work of art have upon this question: What were the motives for the whole conversation here recorded? Was the duke trying to tell the envoy something indirectly?

10. Summarize what you have learned about the characters of the duke and the duchess. Generalize about the methods of characterization in the poem.

11. Contrast the methods and the functions of characterization here with those in "Babbitt Visits Eathorne" (p. 55).

A practicing physician and writer, Anton Chekhov was a keen and sympathetic observer of the nineteenth-century Russian people. Although their frustration and sense of futility pervade his literary work, it is relieved by witty and tenderly-humorous interpretations of character. Often the people of his plays and short stories get nothing done, but they feel much and talk at great length, as does the old actor in the following short drama.

ANTON CHEKHOV

The swan song

CHARACTERS

VASILI SVIETLOVIDOFF, *a comedian, 68 years old*
NIKITA IVANITCH, *a prompter, an old man*

The scene is laid on the stage of a country theatre, at night, after the play. To the right a row of rough, unpainted doors leading into the dressing-rooms. To the left and in the background the stage is encumbered with all sorts of rubbish. In the middle of the stage is an overturned stool.

SVIETLOVIDOFF *(with a candle in his hand, comes out of a dressing-room and laughs).* Well, well, this is funny! Here's a good joke! I fell asleep in my dressing-room when the play was over, and there I was calmly snoring after everybody else had left the theatre. Ah! I'm a foolish old man, a poor old dodderer! I have been drinking again, and so I fell asleep in there, sitting up. That was clever! Good for you, old boy! *(Calls)* Yegorka! Petrushka! Where the devil are you? Petrushka! The scoundrels must be asleep, and an earthquake wouldn't wake them now! Yegorka! *(Picks up the stool, sits down, and puts the candle on the floor)* Not a sound! Only echoes answer me. I gave Yegorka and Petrushka each a tip to-day, and now they have disappeared without leaving a trace behind them. The rascals have gone off and have probably locked up the theatre. *(Turns his head about)* I'm drunk! Ugh! The play tonight was for my benefit, and it is disgusting to think how much beer and wine I have poured down my throat in honour of the occasion. Gracious! My body is burning all over, and I feel as if I had twenty tongues in my mouth. It is horrid! Idiotic! This poor old sinner is drunk again, and doesn't even know what he has

From *Plays by Anton Tchekoff*, translated by Marian Fell. Used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

been celebrating! Ugh! My head is splitting, I am shivering all over, and I feel as dark and cold inside as a cellar! Even if I don't mind ruining my health, I ought at least to remember my age, old idiot that I am! Yes, my old age! It's no use! I can play the fool, and brag, and pretend to be young, but my life is really over now, I kiss my hand to the sixty-eight years that have gone by; I'll never see them again! I have drained the bottle, only a few little drops are left at the bottom, nothing but the dregs. Yes, yes, that's the case, Vasili, old boy. The time has come for you to rehearse the part of a mummy, whether you like it or not. Death is on its way to you. *(Stares ahead of him)* It is strange, though, that I have been on the stage now for forty-five years, and this is the first time I have seen a theatre at night, after the lights have been put out. The first time. *(Walks up to the foot-lights)* How dark it is! I can't see a thing. Oh, yes, I can just make out the prompter's box, and his desk; the rest is in pitch darkness, a black, bottomless pit, like a grave, in which death itself might be hiding. . . . Brr. . . . . How cold it is! The wind blows out of the empty theatre as though out of a stone flue. What a place for ghosts! The shivers are running up and down my back. *(Calls)* Yegorka! Petrushka! Where are you both? What on earth makes me think of such gruesome things here? I must give up drinking; I'm an old man, I shan't live much longer. At sixty-eight people go to church and prepare for death, but here I am—heavens! A profane old drunkard in this fool's dress—I'm simply not fit to look at. I must go and change it at once. . . . This is a dreadful place, I should die of fright sitting here all night. *(Goes toward his dressing-room; at the same time* NIKITA IVANITCH *in a long white coat comes out of the dressing-room at the farthest end of the stage.* SVIETLOVIDOFF *sees* IVANITCH—*shrieks with terror and steps back)* Who are you? What? What do you want? *(Stamps his foot)* Who are you?

IVANITCH. It is I, sir.

SVIETLOVIDOFF. Who are you?

IVANITCH *(comes slowly toward him).* It is I, sir, the prompter, Nikita Ivanitch. It is I, master, it is I!

SVIETLOVIDOFF *(sinks helplessly onto the stool, breathes heavily and trembles violently).* Heavens! Who are you? It is you . . . you Nikitushka? What . . . what are you doing here?

IVANITCH. I spend my nights here in the dressing-rooms. Only please be good enough not to tell Alexi Fomitch, sir. I have nowhere else to spend the night; indeed, I haven't.

SVIETLOVIDOFF. Ah! It is you, Nikitushka, is it? Just think, the audience called me out sixteen times; they brought me three wreaths and lots of other things, too; they were all wild with enthusiasm, and yet not a soul came

when it was all over to wake the poor, drunken old man and take him home. And I am an old man, Nikitushka! I am sixty-eight years old, and I am ill. I haven't the heart left to go on. *(Falls on* IVANITCH's *neck and weeps)* Don't go away, Nikitushka; I am old and helpless, and I feel it is time for me to die. Oh, it is dreadful, dreadful!

IVANITCH *(tenderly and respectfully).* Dear master! It is time for you to go home, sir!

SVIETLOVIDOFF. I won't go home; I have no home—none!—none!—none!

IVANITCH. Oh, dear! Have you forgotten where you live?

SVIETLOVIDOFF. I won't go there. I won't! I am all alone there. I have nobody, Nikitushka! No wife—no children. I am like the wind blowing across the lonely fields. I shall die, and no one will remember me. It is awful to be alone—no one to cheer me, no one to caress me, no one to help me to bed when I am drunk. Whom do I belong to? Who needs me? Who loves me? Not a soul, Nikitushka.

IVANITCH *(weeping).* Your audience loves you, master.

SVIETLOVIDOFF. My audience has gone home. They are all asleep, and have forgotten their old clown. No, nobody needs me, nobody loves me; I have no wife, no children.

IVANITCH. Oh, dear, Oh, dear! Don't be so unhappy about it.

SVIETLOVIDOFF. But I am a man, I am still alive. Warm, red blood is tingling in my veins, the blood of noble ancestors. I am an aristocrat, Nikitushka; I served in the army, in the artillery, before I fell as low as this, and what a fine young chap I was! Handsome, daring, eager! Where has it all gone? What has become of those old days? There's the pit that has swallowed them all! I remember it all now. Forty-five years of my life lie buried there, and what a life, Nikitushka! I can see it as clearly as I see your face: the ecstasy of youth, faith, passion, the love of women—women, Nikitushka!

IVANITCH. It is time you went to sleep, sir.

SVIETLOVIDOFF. When I first went on the stage, in the first glow of passionate youth, I remember a woman loved me for my acting. She was beautiful, graceful as a poplar, young, innocent, pure, and radiant as a summer dawn. Her smile could charm away the darkest night. I remember, I stood before her once, as I am now standing before you. She had never seemed so lovely to me as she did then, and she spoke to me so with her eyes—such a look! I shall never forget it, no, not even in the grave; so tender, so soft, so deep, so bright and young! Enraptured, intoxicated, I fell on my knees before her, I begged for my happiness, and she said: "Give up the stage!" Give up the stage! Do you understand? She could love an actor, but marry him—never! I was acting that day, I remember—I had a foolish,

clown's part, and as I acted, I felt my eyes being opened; I saw that the worship of the art I had held so sacred was a delusion and an empty dream; that I was a slave, a fool, the plaything of the idleness of strangers. I understood my audience at last, and since that day I have not believed in their applause, or in their wreaths, or in their enthusiasm. Yes, Nikitushka! The people applaud me, they buy my photograph, but I am a stranger to them. They don't know me, I am as the dirt beneath their feet. They are willing enough to meet me . . . but allow a daughter or a sister to marry me, an outcast, never! I have no faith in them, *(sinks onto stool)* no faith in them.

IVANITCH. Oh, sir! you look dreadfully pale, you frighten me to death! Come, go home, have mercy on me!

SVIETLOVIDOFF. I saw through it all that day, and the knowledge was dearly bought. Nikitushka! After that . . . when that girl . . . well, I began to wander aimlessly about, living from day to day without looking ahead. I took the parts of buffoons and low comedians, letting my mind go to wreck. Ah! but I was a great artist once, till little by little I threw away my talents, played the motley fool, lost my looks, lost the power of expressing myself, and became in the end a Merry Andrew instead of a man. I have been swallowed up in that great black pit. I never felt it before, but tonight, when I woke up, I looked back, and there behind me lay sixty-eight years. I have just found out what it is to be old! It is all over . . . *(sobs)* . . . all over.

IVANITCH. There, there, dear master! Be quiet . . . gracious! *(Calls)* Petrushka! Yegorka!

SVIETLOVIDOFF. But what a genius I was! You cannot imagine what power I had, what eloquence; how graceful I was, how tender; how many strings *(beats his breast)* quivered in this breast! It chokes me to think of it! Listen now, wait, let me catch my breath, there; now listen to this:

> *"The shade of bloody Ivan now returning*
> *Fans through my lips rebellion to a flame,*
> *I am the dead Dimitri! In the burning*
> *Boris shall perish on the throne I claim.*
> *Enough! The heir of Czars shall not be seen*
> *Kneeling to yonder haughty Polish Queen!"*[1]

Is that bad, eh? *(Quickly)* Wait, now, here's something from King Lear. The sky is black, see? Rain is pouring down, thunder roars, lightning—zzz zzz zzz—splits the whole sky, and then listen:

[1]From "Boris Godunov," by Pushkin.

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ungrateful man!"

(Impatiently) Now, the part of the fool *(Stamps his foot)* Come take the fool's part! Be quick, I can't wait!

IVANITCH *(takes the part of the fool).* "O, Nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good Nuncle, in; ask thy daughter's blessing: here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools."

SVIETLOVIDOFF.

"Rumble thy bellyful! spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters;
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children."

Ah! there is strength, there is talent for you! I'm a great artist! Now, then, here's something else of the same kind, to bring back my youth to me. For instance, take this, from Hamlet, I'll begin . . . let me see, how does it go? Oh, yes, this is it. *(Takes the part of Hamlet)* "O! the recorders, let me see one.—To withdraw with you. Why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?"

IVANITCH. "O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly."

SVIETLOVIDOFF. "I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?"

IVANITCH. "My lord, I cannot."

SVIETLOVIDOFF. "I pray you."

IVANITCH. "Believe me, I cannot."

SVIETLOVIDOFF. "I do beseech you."

IVANITCH. "I know no touch of it, my lord."

SVIETLOVIDOFF. " 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops."

IVANITCH. "But these I cannot command to any utterance of harmony: I have not the skill."

SVIETLOVIDOFF. "Why, look you, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck

out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood! Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me!" *(Laughs and claps)* Bravo! Encore! Bravo! Where the devil is there any old age in that? I'm not old, that is all nonsense, a torrent of strength rushes over me; this is life, freshness, youth! Old age and genius can't exist together. You seem to be struck dumb, Nikitushka. Wait a second, let me come to my senses again. Oh! Good Lord! Now then, listen! Did you ever hear such tenderness, such music? Sh! Softly:

"The moon had set. There was not any light,
Save of the lonely legion'd watch-stars pale
In outer air, and what by fits made bright
Hot oleanders in a rosy vale
Searched by the lamping fly, whose little spark
Went in and out, like passion's bashful hope."

(The noise of opening doors is heard) What's that?

IVANITCH. There are Petrushka and Yegorka coming back. Yes, you have genius, genius, my master.

SVIETLOVIDOFF *(calls, turning toward the noise).* Come here to me, boys! *(To* IVANITCH) Let us go and get dressed. I'm not old! All that is foolishness, nonsense! *(Laughs gaily)* What are you crying for? You poor old granny, you, what's the matter now? This won't do! There, there, this won't do at all! Come, come, old man, don't stare so! What makes you stare like that? There, there! *(Embraces him in tears)* Don't cry! Where there is art and genius there can never be such things as old age or loneliness or sickness . . . and death itself is half . . . *(Weeps)* No, no, Nikitushka! It is all over for us now! What sort of a genius am I? I'm like a squeezed lemon, a cracked bottle, and you—you are the old rat of the theatre . . . a prompter! Come on! *(They go)* I'm no genius, I'm only fit to be in the suite of Fortinbras, and even for that I am too old . . . Yes . . . Do you remember those lines from Othello, Nikitushka?

"Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

IVANITCH. Oh! You're a genius, a genius!
SVIETLOVIDOFF. And again this:

"Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even:
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven."

(They go out together, the curtain falls slowly)

Characters and happenings

OF the innumerable times when a slice of the life of Svietlovidoff might be pictured by the playwright, why is this time well chosen to reveal the actor's character?

2. What facts about the old man are given in his opening soliloquy? What do these facts show about his personality?

3. The only character with whom Svietlovidoff talks is Ivanitch. What sort of person is Ivanitch? Why, of the many characters to whom Svietlovidoff might have talked, is he well chosen?

4. Construct as completely as you can the story of the old actor's life previous to this occasion. What does your biography indicate about his character?

5. "But what a genius I was!" says the old actor. What is the evidence for and against this estimate? What does the exclamation reveal?

6. What is the nature of the scenes from plays which the old man runs through? Why do you think he chooses these specific scenes? If you were acting his rôle, how would you read these passages?

7. If you were producing this play, how would you try to make details of the scenery, the costuming, and the lighting contribute to the characterization? To the happenings?

8. Which of the qualities of the old man motivate the happenings? Do any of those given merely make him lifelike?

9. Compare the methods of characterization used here with those used by Steinbeck in "So They Move You Along" (p. 12). How would you relate the differences between methods to the differences between apparent purposes?

MATTER AND MANNER

Setting

THE setting of "My Last Duchess" (p. 60) is the picture gallery on an upper floor of the duke's palace in Ferrara, Italy, at an unspecified time. That of the chapter from *Babbitt* (p. 55) is, at first, Eathorne's mansion, and later, the streets of Zenith, in the 1920's. That of Act III, Scene I, of *Julius Cæsar* (p. 22) is "Rome. Before the Capitol," in 44 B.C. The setting includes the details of background set forth in the narrative, the drama, or the poem. Such details may be presented at length or briefly. They may be concentrated at one point in the work or, as is more frequent these days, doled out bit by bit. Almost always a consideration of the employment of such details will be valuable for the reader.

The reader of poetry, fiction, or drama will find it illuminating to notice exactly how the author's handling of such details gives or fails to give that illusion of reality which is indispensable if imaginative works are to create interest and sympathy. More important, he should consider whether the details of time, of place, of social milieu, of emotional atmosphere, are functional or not —that is, whether they contribute to the unfolding of happenings, to the representation of character, and to the achievement of the work as a whole.

Setting as the shaper of events

THE great novelist and critic, Henry James, once said that he could not conceive of "a passage of description that is not in its intention narrative," and certainly it is clear that details in a scene may often be vital circumstances in a fictional work or in a poem which tells a story. The lay of the land may actually determine happenings in accounts of treasure hunts ("The Gold Bug" and *Treasure Island),* stories of pursuits *(The Thirty-nine Steps),* or narratives of journeys *(The Odyssey,* "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," *Huckleberry Finn).* At one point in *Les Miserables,* Hugo carefully describes the battlefield of Waterloo; at one point in *Henry Esmond,* Thackeray tells of the disposition of troops at Blenheim: in each instance the data show why a battle had to follow a predetermined pattern. So important is topography in many detective stories that their publishers often print maps as frontispieces. Not only topography but also climate and soil may determine events—as in many of Robert Frost's New England poems and Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth.* In stories of men in conflict with nature, the setting itself, in a sense, becomes a character—the antagonist.

Setting as an adjunct to plot and characterization

EVEN in works wherein the setting does not notably shape events, the author—as the alert reader should see—often uses scenes to help tell his story. In such works, in other words, setting becomes an adjunct in showing important changes and developments. By calling attention to the lengthening of shadows, or to the coming of autumn, or

to the growth of weeds in a garden, an author may be showing the passage of time. A character's sense of novelty in an unchanged scene may betoken a change in the character himself. An example is Hawthorne's passage about Minister Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter:*

As he drew near the town, he took an impression of change from the series of familiar objects.... There, indeed, was each former trace of the street, as he remembered it, and all the peculiarities of the houses, with the due multitude of gable-peaks, and a weathercock at every point where his memory suggested one. Not the less, however, came this importunately obtrusive sense of change. ... A similar impression struck him most remarkably, as he passed under the walls of his own church. The edifice had so very strange, and yet so familiar, an aspect, that Mr. Dimmesdale's mind vibrated between two ideas; either that he had seen it in a dream hitherto, or that he was merely dreaming about it now.

A character's sense of change in a scene which remains the same, in another narrative, may show a shift in thought and feeling: witness the difference between the initial description and the final description of the same nighttime scene in Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale." And in still another narrative, an author may show the reader the effect of a happening by emphasizing changes in a scene—for instance, a decaying house may indicate that the family living in it has deteriorated ("The Fall of the House of Usher").

Scene is often an adjunct, not only to plot, but also to character portrayal. A reader often comes to know a character by noticing how the author describes the character's dwelling ("Babbitt Visits Eathorne," p. 55), or by considering how an environment which has been described would be likely to shape the character's personality. Not only the physical climate but also the intellectual and moral climate, as revealed by the author, may clarify motives and possible actions. The words "Ancien Regime" beneath the title in Browning's poem, "The Laboratory," help explain why the heroine chose to get revenge by poisoning a successful rival; and at the start of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," John Oakhurst, gambler, notices "a change in the moral atmosphere since the preceding night... a Sabbath lull in the air" which heralds his ejection, by request, from the mining town. Again, the nature of a character may be revealed to the reader by the author's record of what the character notices in a scene: a businessman may see a waterfall as a source of power, a painter may see it as an arrangement of colors, a poet may see it as a symbol expressive of some high truth.

The emotional quality of setting

SPEAKING of one way of writing a story, Robert Louis Stevenson said, "You may take a certain atmosphere and get action and persons to express and realize it. I'll give you an example—*The Merry Men.* There I began with the feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and I gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me." Although this recipe probably is an unusual one for an author to follow, it does suggest one thing which setting may do—in the actual world or the

world of books: it may arouse emotions. In many plays (*The Glass Menagerie*, to cite a recent example), the manipulation of lighting has this effect. In many stories and poems, the author selects and records certain details in the landscape which body forth a mental or emotional state. Some poems completely communicate the thought and feeling of a poet simply by presenting aspects of a scene which are appropriate to his attitude. An "atmosphere" thus created may correspond in its emotional "feel" to the moods of the characters. Or it may heighten the representation of their emotions by a contrast. Consider the passage in *Moby Dick* which tells of the feelings of a crew after their boats have been smashed by the whale:

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury the minds of the whale's more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the chips of chewed boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam out of the white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene, exasperating sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

All these facts about the possible usefulness of setting mean that the reader who is interested in the craftsmanship of a work will notice how the author's management of this element contributes to the telling of a story, the representation of the motives and actions of a character, and the emotional overtones of the work.

This is a remarkably compressed story of revenge and of the emotions which accompanied that revenge. The opening sentence tells of the vow of the narrator to avenge an insult. The rest of the first paragraph tells what conditions were to be fulfilled in order to secure satisfactory revenge. Then the rest of the story tells how the conditions were fulfilled and indicates how both the narrator and his victim felt about the happenings. There is relatively little characterization—only enough to create sympathy at the start for the narrator and as the story progresses, for the helpless victim. Although the details of setting are relatively scant, careful study will show that they were selected and handled with unusual skill.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The cask of Amontillado

THE THOUSAND injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled; but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the

idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point, this Fortunato, although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack; but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk one evening, during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him: "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good-nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—"

"I have no engagement; come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are incrusted with niter."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaure* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and, giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe?" said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white webwork which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Niter?" he asked at length.

"Niter," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily; but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"[1]

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The niter!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

[1]No one injures me with impunity.

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure.*

"You jest! " he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and, finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key, I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado! " ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied: "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low, moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might harken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and, holding the flambeaux over the masonwork, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said:

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed, an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo,—the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I harkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud:

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again.

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*[1]

[1]May he rest in peace.

Setting, happenings, and characters

WHAT is the value, for the story, of presenting the first brief scene (par. 3, p. 73) "about dusk one evening, during the supreme madness of the carnival season"? Why is Fortunato's carnival costume appropriate for this story? In what two ways does the carnival help make Montresor's revenge possible?

2. In the fourth paragraph on page 74, the narrator first mentions the "insufferably damp" vaults "incrusted with niter." His expressed concern, of course, is not sincerely felt; he is being ironic. Point out other examples of irony—in the contrast between the scenes outside and inside the vaults, the names of the characters, the dialogue. What quality of Montresor does this irony underline? Why is such underlining desirable in motivating the action?

3. A few paragraphs later, Montresor calls attention to "the white webwork" on the walls. Why, in terms of the story, should he not talk instead of white crystals? The white material is identified as "niter." What chemical properties and uses of niter make continued emphasis upon it desirable?

4. A passage on page 75 concerns the coat of arms of the Montresors. Why are they particularly appropriate for the family of the character in this story?

5. Comment in detail upon the value for the narrative of the elements in the setting set forth on pages 75-77.

6. Trace Fortunato's changing emotions from the beginning to his final cry. What is indicated by Montresor's remark in the last paragraph, "My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs"?

7. Generalize about Poe's use of setting as an adjunct to this narrative.

8. What are the characteristics of Montresor and Fortunato? How are they shown? How are they related to the happenings?

9. Compare Poe's handling of setting with that of Steinbeck, page 12; Dunsany, page 42; and Lewis, page 55.

In this poem, one of the finest by a great nineteenth-century poet, almost everything accomplished is the result of the author's depiction of a setting. The setting is the English countryside in the autumn. This scene changes in a simple but highly meaningful fashion as the poem moves through its three brief stanzas. As a result of Keats' selection and handling of details, the setting subtly indicates the thought and the feeling of the poet.

JOHN KEATS

To autumn

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Settings, happenings, and characters

WHICH of these words best summarizes the concept of autumn chiefly developed in stanza 1: mists, mellow fruitfulness, bless? How do the verbs contribute to the expression of this concept? What is noteworthy about the verbs? the aspects of the scene emphasized? What details do not contribute to this concept?

2. Contrast the selection of details in Keats' first stanza with the selection of details in this stanza:

O gorgeous Autumn-tide, to thee I sing!
O thou art fairer, warmer, far, I ween,
Than is the time of blossom-dappled Spring,
Or Winter with red hearth and snowy scene.
Now meadows erstwhile wondrous green
Are dotted here and there with rain-greyed corn
In shocks, and in between,
The ground is black. Against the cloudy sky,
Black trees lift shivering leaves on high,
And night brings frosts and chill is every morn.
O Autumn, drenched with color, thee I sing—
And praise the fruits and leaves that thou dost bring.

3. What phase of autumn is depicted in stanza 2? What chronological progress is traced through these sets of lines: 12-15, 16-18, 19-20, 21-22? Suggest a summarizing word for the phenomena described in stanza 2.

4. Read line 22 aloud, and you will see that the sounds suggest weariness. Do other details in the stanza also suggest weariness? Be specific.

5. Sum up the contrasts between the picture of autumn in stanzas 2 and 3.

6. Stanza 3 begins by asking where the songs of Spring are. How does the inferred answer prepare for the concept of autumn given in this stanza? What is this concept, and what details enforce it?

7. How would the substitution of the following details spoil the impression of autumn set forth in stanza 3: "quick-passing" for "soft-dying" (25), "snarl" for "mourn" (27), "music" for "treble" (31)?

8. How does the last stanza justify these details in stanza 1: mists, conspiring, think, clammy?

9. What other relationships are there between the three stanzas? Why would it be undesirable to change the order of the stanzas?

10. What conclusions can you draw from "To Autumn" about the poet's character? How is it related to what happens in the poem?

11. Can you find any meaning in this poem? If so, state it, and suggest how the selection and handling of details in the setting contribute to it.

MATTER AND MANNER

Language

LANGUAGE used in imaginative works bodies forth the happenings, the settings, and the characters; it withholds or gives emphasis, emotional colorations, and interpretations. Therefore, the reader does well to notice how the author's manner of using words, phrases, sentences, and rhythms relates to the achievement of the story, the drama, or the poem.

Words, happenings, and settings

IN portraying either happenings or settings, the author may use language to convey emphasis and vividness, and to suggest emotional interpretations. If, for instance, he tells us merely, "After the three individuals departed, they encountered two other individuals," thereby he relegates this happening to an unimportant place. The account is unemphatic for two reasons—(1) because it is brief, and (2) because it is abstract. And if the encounter is actually unimportant in the particular chain of events being presented, the reader notes that the language is appropriately handled.

But suppose the event were important—how might the author use words to emphasize it? Note what Ernest Hemingway does in the following passage:

The three of them started for the door, and I watched them go. They were good-looking young fellows, wore good clothes.... As they turned out of the door to the right, I saw a closed car come across the square toward them. The first thing a pane of glass went and the bullet smashed into the row of bottles on the show case wall to the right. I heard the gun going and bop, bop, bop, there were bottles smashing all along the wall.

I jumped behind the bar on the left and could see over the edge. The car was stopped and there were two fellows crouched down by it. One had a Thompson gun and the other had a sawed-off automatic shotgun.... One of the boys was spread out on the sidewalk, face down, just outside the big window that was smashed. The other two were behind one of the Tropical beer ice wagons. ... One of the boys shot from the rear corner of the wagon and it ricocheted off the sidewalk.... You could see the buckshot marks all over the sidewalk like silver splatters.—To Have and Have Not

Here emphasis is achieved because the happening is treated at some length. Moreover, the author uses few abstract words such as "individuals," "departed," and "encountered." Rather, he uses *concrete words* which specify details in the happening, for instance, "closed car," "smashed," "ricocheted." Such image-bearing words convey sensory impressions, achieve vividness, and therefore give the passage more emotional impact than an abstract (and hence neutral) account possibly could have. Quintilian, the famous Roman critic, long ago pointed out that "he who says that a city is captured ... makes no impres-

sion on the feelings." "It is less impressive to tell the whole at once," he added, "than to specify the different particulars." A stanza shows how the poet Shakespeare "specified the different particulars" by using concrete words:

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit, tu-who! a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Words which evoke emotions

BUT it should be noticed that in using concrete words, both authors are *selective*. Hemingway has said that the writer's problem is to set down "the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which make the emotion. . . . If you get so you can give that to people then you are a writer." The author—not only Hemingway but any writer—therefore leaves out details irrelevant to such a sequence. The quiet sunlight on the square where the encounter took place, the beggars asleep in the sunlight (actually described by Hemingway in an earlier scene) here would spoil the record of tense and vicious action. Similarly, Shakespeare leaves out of his stanza a number of details which are characteristic of winter but not of the emotional concept of the season he is presenting.

Concrete words—and abstract ones as well—furthermore, are often valuable not only for denotations, or dictionary meanings, but also for their connotations, or *emotional associations*. You will see the importance of our accretions of feelings about certain words if you consider these possible (though not desirable) substitutions in the Hemingway passage: "disappeared" for "went," and "broke" for "smashed" in sentence 4; "shattering" for "smashing" in sentence 5; "leaped" for "jumped" in sentence 6; "squatted" for "crouched" in sentence 7; and "wrecked" for "smashed" in sentence 9. Substitutions in Shakespeare's poem will show that connotations there are also important for the expression of emotion.

Figurative phrases

WHEN, however, selected concrete words will not convey with sufficient precision the exact emotional quality of a scene, the author may use phrases or sentences making *poetic comparisons*. Figures of speech—metaphors, similes, hyperboles, and others—are valuable chiefly because they indicate the nature of an emotion. The phrase "buckshot marks . . . . like silver splatters" in the passage by Hemingway is a figurative one: literally, the marks are lead splatters, but the author figuratively compares them with silver. This particular simile is more valuable for its vividness than its emotional freighting, but compare a sailor's memory of his first impression of the East, in Joseph Conrad's *Youth:*

And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like a faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the

dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odors of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.

There are many concrete words here—Conrad once defined his task thus: "by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel .... before all, to make you *see*." But the end of such vividness, he went on to say, is to hold up a fragment of experience, "to show its vibration, its color, its form and through its movement, its form, its color, reveal the substance of its truth—disclose the inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment." The concrete words in the passage contribute much to the revelation of the "stress and passion" here—the impression of the East as "impalpable and enslaving"; but the figurative phrases contribute even more. The narrator who has achingly rowed across a seemingly shoreless "scorching blue sea" conveys his delight by telling how mountains changed from a figurative "faint mist at noon" to a palpable and cool-colored shape at sunset—figuratively, "a jagged wall of purple." He conveys his emotion when he tells how, storm-tossed and sun-parched, he looked at last upon a dark wide bay—figuratively, "smooth as glass and polished like ice." The "soft and warm" night figuratively suggests rest for his tired body. And the figurative characterization of the breeze as "the first sigh of the East .... impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight" gives more than a vivid account of a puff of wind: it conveys emotion by subtly likening this welcome haven to an entrancing yet enigmatic woman. Thus figures of speech help define an emotion precisely.

Sentences and rhythms

A COMPARISON between the passage by Hemingway and that by Conrad will suggest that, in addition to words and phrases, *sentences* and *rhythms* are important elements for representing happenings, settings, and emotions. The simple sentences and compound sentences, with a minimum number of modifiers, which make up the first passage are appropriate for describing rapid action. More complex sentences, with numerous appositions and figurative phrases which savor details, are appropriate for Conrad's lyrical account. In Hemingway's paragraphs, a large proportion of one-syllable words which frequently cluster accented syllables ("wóre goód clóthes," "clósed cár cóme," "gláss wént," "shów cáse wáll," "bóp, bóp, bóp," "fáce dówn," "béer íce wágons," etc.) achieve a staccato rhythm corresponding to the action. As writing comes nearer to poetry in expressing emotion, it tends to approach regular rhythms like those in poetry; therefore, Conrad's emotional passage is, for prose, remarkably close at times to iambic and anapestic verse. (See the consideration of rhythms in the introduction to poetry, Part III.) At an opposite extreme from the Hemingway passage is Shakespeare's stanza, with its regular use (after the opening line) of iambic

rhythm. Between these two extremes, all sorts of variations are available to the author.

Not only *accent patterns* but also *sound patterns* figure in one kind of rhythmical arrangement—one in which the handling of consonants and vowels suggests the kind of action or the scene. A simple example is the "bop, bop, bop" of the Hemingway passage—wherein the sounds imitate those of gun explosions. The consonants *b* and *p* here used—like hard *c, d, g, k,* and *t*—as a matter of fact, are called "explosives," because you pronounce them by closing your mouth and exploding them with your breath. Note how the use of such consonants helps Tennyson imitate the progress of a knight in his clanking armor:

Dry clashed his harness on the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him....

But contrast with this Herrick's

When as in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Here a predominance of "continuous consonants," so called because they may be prolonged indefinitely (drawn from "sibilants"—soft *c, f, s, v, z*—and "liquids"—*l, m, n, r, ng*), imitates the smooth movement of the lady in silks. And vowels as well as consonants may, at times, be so managed that, as Pope puts it, the sound will "seem an echo of the sense." Compare the vowels (as well as the consonants) in these passages:

The huge round stone resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.
—POPE, *Odyssey*, XI

... the spires
Pricked with incredible pinnacles into heaven. —TENNYSON, *Holy Grail*

Such suggestions by sound of sense are called *onomatopoeia.* Finally, there will be times, of course, when sound patterns are not used to imitate actions or scenes but to achieve sheer harmony which helps convey an emotion. At such times the author will use sounds of various sorts which blend melodiously.

Language and characterization

IN descriptions of the physical appearances or gestures of characters, an author uses language in ways comparable to those employed in describing happenings or scenes. Language is also important for characterization, in ways which we have not so far considered, when the work quotes the character—in first person narratives or in passages of dialogue. Here, of course, the choice of words, the figures of speech, the sentences and rhythms may be useful because they are in keeping.

The connotations or associations of words used in dialogue are as important as they are in descriptive passages, though in a rather different way. Here what might be called *"social" connotations* loom large. As H. J. C. Grierson remarks, words have *"color":*

I mean by "color" the associations which gather around a word by long usage. The meaning provides the first nucleus for this, and then come all the

accidental circumstances connected with our experience of the word—the people who use it, the places in which we have heard it, the other words and ideas it tends to evolve. And so we find that, against our will, some words are vulgarized, savor (for we might speak of "taste" as well as "color") of the streets and the music-hall; others are homely, though anything but vulgar, are redolent .... of home, of familiar objects and experiences, of the farm-yard, the fishing-boat and the workshop; others are pedantic, schoolmaster's words that no healthy boy would ever use on the playground .... and other words are dignified, learned but not pedantic, for a learned word is only pedantic when it takes the place of a simpler or more obvious one .... and again others are lovely exotics that only the poets have ventured to use: "At length burst in the argent revelry."

"Color" in words shows itself when a sailor says, "We shipped a sea that carried away our pinnace and our binnacle," and a landsman says "A heavy wave broke over our ship." It shows itself when a pompous man mouths what Thoreau called "bad words—words like 'tribal' and 'ornamentation,' which drag their tails behind them." It shows itself when a politician uses words which fill the air with glittering but not very meaningful generalities. The coloration of a character's words shows us something about her when she addresses her mother: whether she calls her Hazel, Mom, Maw, Mother, or Mother Darling, we shall learn something about the character from the form of address. The kinds of words a character uses may show whether he is educated or unread, whether he has a sense of humor or is humorless, whether he is sensitive or crass, refined or vulgar, intelligent or stupid.

Figurative phrases or sentences used in dialogue may also suggest much about the nature of the character. They may, by their allusions, suggest the character's background: witness how Huck Finn, born and reared in a river town, describes a room mussed up by his "pap"—"And when they come to look at that spare room they had to take soundings before they could navigate it." Trite figures may indicate unimaginativeness; literary figures, bookishness; original figures, imaginativeness; profane figures, irreligion; inept figures, a lack of a sense of proportion or a sense of humor, and so on.

Sentences, too, are important. In passages representing conversations or thoughts, authors often imitate the qualities of talk or of the thought processes. Perhaps they do this by suggesting the fumbling for words, the ambiguity, the repetition, the irrelevancies we hear in speech or notice in our thinking. Or they may construct sentences which have a fragmentary quality, awkwardness of arrangement, a frequent use of "and" and "but." Sometimes the constructions are not only lifelike but also characteristic of certain kinds of people—for instance, bad grammar for the uneducated man, choppy sentences for the decisive man, fragmentary sentences—never finished—for the indecisive character, orotund and long sentences for the orator.

These, according to the nature of the work, will be more or less stenographic. They will never be completely literal transcriptions, however, because the author has to select and condense talk or thought, like everything else in his lit-

erary work. Furthermore, the adaptation of such material must be in tune with the style of the whole work. Thus if the work is a poem, although the speech may have definite lifelike qualities (see "My Last Duchess," p. 60, for instance), it will naturally be far more condensed and far more rhythmical than speech is. Or if the work is a drama, the author may allow some characters to speak lifelike prose, and forfeit the right to be realistically lifelike as he allows other characters to speak in the heightened style of blank verse. (See, for instance, *The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar,* p. 22.)

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS

Storm on Jackson Island

Mark Twain once wrote this summary of part of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: *"An ignorant village boy, Huck Finn, son of the town drunkard . . . . has run away from his persecuting father, and from a persecuting good widow who wishes to make a nice, truth-telling, respectable boy of him; and with him a slave . . . . has also escaped." In the following selection from* The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, *Huck and the slave, Jim, are on Jackson's Island. They are in a cave to which they have gone because Jim, after watching the behavior of some young birds, has predicted a rain storm.*

PRETTY SOON it darkened up, and begun to thunder and lighten; so the birds was right about it. Directly it begun to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so. It was one of these regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—*fst!* it was as bright as glory, and you'd have a little glimpse of treetops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling, down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels down-stairs—where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.

Language, character, and setting

WHAT qualities in Huck's character may be deduced from his way of writing? How are the qualities appropriate for a character who has acted in the way indicated by Twain's synopsis? Precisely what qualities of his language indicate these traits?

2. Edgar Lee Masters has questioned the appropriateness of Huck's language in other parts of the book in this series of questions: "Would Huck, in speaking of his feeling, say 'very well satisfied'? Would he not rather say, 'and feelin' all right'? . . . . Would he not say 'et' instead of 'eat'? Would he not say 'the lightning showed her very plain,' instead of 'the lightning showed her very distinct'?" What is Masters' criterion? Might he have drawn any examples from this passage? If so, cite some examples. Do you agree or disagree with his criticism? Why?

3. Comment upon the relative number of concrete and abstract words here. What is noteworthy about the verbs which Huck uses?

4. What figures of speech do you find in this passage? Is the use of so many figures of speech in character? Are they the sort an uneducated river-town boy would be likely to use? Do they help make the scene vivid? Why or why not? What is Huck's feeling about the storm, and to what extent do the figures of speech indicate it?

5. Discuss the words, *"fst!"* and "you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling . . . ." in relation to (a) Huck's character, (b) their value in this description.

6. Are the sentences formed more like those in talk or those in written discourse? Cite details which support your answer. How appropriate for Huck is their length? kind? arrangement?

7. Discuss the rhythms in the passage. How would you describe them? Are they useful to characterize Huck, to indicate his feelings, or to make vivid the scene?

The language of a scene from a play as old as The Tempest *(c. 1611) offers some difficulties to students not familiar with the diction of Shakespeare's period. Such difficulties, however, may easily be overcome with the help of a small footnote glossary such as the one here supplied. Once you have understood the few unfamiliar words, you will find that this opening scene of one of the dramatist's late plays shows much about what a genius can do with words. The ship is one bearing Alonso, King of Naples; Sebastian, his brother; Antonio, the Duke of Milan; Ferdinand, Alonso's son; and Gonzalo, "an honest old Counsellor."*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

On a ship at sea

Act I, Scene I: *On a ship at sea; a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard. Enter a* SHIP-MASTER *and a* BOATSWAIN.

MASTER. Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN. Here, master: what cheer?

MASTER. Good, speak to the mariners. Fall to 't, yarely, or we run ourselves aground! Bestir, bestir! *(Exit, blowing his whistle)*

(Enter MARINERS*)*

BOATSWAIN. Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind, if room enough!

(Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, *and others)*

ALONSO. Good boatswain, have care. Where's the master? Play the men. 11

BOATSWAIN. I pray now, keep below.

ANTONIO. Where is the master, bos'n?

BOATSWAIN. Do you not hear him? You mar our labor. Keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.

GONZALO. Nay, good, be patient.

BOATSWAIN. When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king? To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not.

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2. *Master,* the captain. 3. *Good,* my good fellow. *Fall to 't, yarely,* go about it, quickly. 6. *my hearts!* the equivalent of the more modern "my hearties." *cheerly,* with good cheer. 7. *Take in the topsail.* This was done in order to check the drift to leeward. 8. *Tend,* attend. *Blow . . . enough!* This speech is addressed to the wind. *if room enough,* if there is enough open sea. 11. *Play the men,* act as men should. 19. *roarers,* both roaring waves and bullies.

GONZALO. Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

BOATSWAIN. None that I more love than myself. You are a counsellor; if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more; use your authority. If you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts! Out of our way, I say. *(Exit)*

GONZALO. I have great comfort from this fellow; methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable. *(Exeunt)*

(Re-enter BOATSWAIN*)*

BOATSWAIN. Down with the topmast! Yare! Lower, lower! Bring her to try with main-course. *(A cry within)* A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather or our office.

(Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, *and* GONZALO*)*

BOATSWAIN. Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

SEBASTIAN. A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

BOATSWAIN. Work you then.

ANTONIO. Hang, cur! hang, you insolent noisemaker! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

GONZALO. I'll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell.

BOATSWAIN. Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses off to sea again; lay her off.

(Enter MARINERS *wet)*

MARINERS. All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

BOATSWAIN. What, must our mouths be cold?

GONZALO. The king and prince at prayers! let's assist them,
For our case is as theirs.

SEBASTIAN. I'm out of patience.

ANTONIO. We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards:

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24. *work the peace of the present,* create peace immediately. 33. *the rope of his destiny,* the hangman's rope. 37. *Down with the topmast!* This is struck to take the weight from aloft and halt the drift leeward. 38. *Bring . . . main-course,* keep her close to the wind. 40. *our office,* our commands. 49. *for,* against. 52. *Lay her a-hold . . . off,* keep her to the wind, set her foresail and her mainsail to carry her to sea. 59. *merely,* utterly.

This wide-chapp'd rascal—would thou mightst lie drowning
The washing of ten tides!

GONZALO. He'll be hang'd yet,
Though every drop of water swear against it
And gape at widest to glut him.
(A confused noise within) 'Mercy on us!'—
'We split, we split!'—'Farewell my wife and children!'—
'Farewell, brother!'—'We split, we split, we split!'

ANTONIO. Let's all sink with the king.

SEBASTIAN. Let's take leave of him. *(Exeunt* ANTONIO *and* SEBASTIAN*)*

GONZALO. Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death. *(Exeunt)*

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60. *wide-chapp'd,* big-mouthed.

Language, setting, characters, and happenings

IT is important to remember that the stage on which *The Tempest* was first played was, by our standards, quite bare of scenery. The lines, therefore, had to do what scenery might do today, that is, give the audience a vivid sense of a high sea and a tossing ship. Exactly how did Shakespeare use words and actions which achieved this end?


The Shakespearean Theater

2. Do the seamen talk as seamen should? Is there any evidence that Shakespeare took any pains to make them do so? Cite passages to justify your answers.

3. Note the speeches of Antonio, who has been characterized by critics as "coarse, flippant, and familiar." Do his few speeches here begin to show such a character? Scholars have noticed that he says "bos'n" in line 13, whereas the word is spelled out in full ("boteswaine") elsewhere in the play. Is there any possible significance in this fact?

4. Critic Samuel Johnson said, "It may be observed of Gonzalo that, being the only good man that appears with the king, he is the only man that preserves his cheerfulness in the wreck . . . ." How does his way of talking indicate his cheerfulness?

5. A sailor, writing of the boatswain, has called him "a grand old seadog," and has claimed that in this brief passage "we learn to know him as thoroughly as though he lived and moved in our presence." Do you agree? Comment upon line 60.

6. A scholar has cited lines 1-9 as an instance of Shakespeare's rhythmical prose. How might he demonstrate that it is rhythmical? What value does rhythmical prose have here?

7. Coleridge has pointed out that this scene has been appropriately handled for the start of a romantic and imaginative play. "It is the bustle of a tempest," he says, "from which the real horrors are abstracted; therefore it is poetical, though not in strictness natural, and it is purposely restrained from concentrating the interest in itself, but used merely as an induction or tuning for what is to follow." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

These lines from Homer's Odyssey, *Book V, describe how Odysseus (Ulysses) encountered a storm loosed by Neptune. Ulysses, the King of Ithaca, had left his wife and his young son to fight in the Trojan War. Troy had finally been taken in the tenth year of the conflict, and Ulysses had started his long voyage home. Just before our selection begins, he had left Calypso's Isle on a raft and had sailed along, pleasantly enough, for seventeen days. Neptune, the god of the sea, then had sighted him and had announced that he would harass the wanderer. The passage tells of the storm which followed.*

HOMER

Translator: WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

'A fierce rush of all the winds'

He [Neptune] spoke, and round about him called the clouds
And roused the ocean, wielding in his hand
The trident, summoned all the hurricanes
Of all the winds, and covered earth and sky
At once with mists, while from above, the night
Fell suddenly. The east wind and the south
Rushed forth at once, with the strong-blowing west,
And the clear north rolled up his mighty waves.
Ulysses trembled in his knees and heart,
And thus to his great soul, lamenting, said:
"What will become of me? unhappy man!
I fear that all the goddess said was true,
Foretelling what disasters should o'ertake

My voyage, ere I reach my native land.
Now are her words fulfilled. Now Jupiter
Wraps the great heaven in clouds and stirs the deep
To tumult! Wilder grow the hurricanes
Of all the winds, and now my fate is sure.
Thrice happy, four times happy they, who fell
On Troy's wide field, warring for Atreus' sons:
O, had I met my fate and perished there,
That very day on which the Trojan host,
Around the dead Achilles, hurled at me
Their brazen javelins! I had then received
Due burial and great glory with the Greeks;
Now must I die a miserable death."
As thus he spoke, upon him, from on high,
A huge and frightful billow broke; it whirled
The raft around, and far from it he fell.
His hands let go the rudder; a fierce rush
Of all the winds together snapped in twain
The mast; far off the yard and canvas flew
Into the deep; the billow held him long
Beneath the waters, and he strove in vain
Quickly to rise to air from that huge swell
Of ocean, for the garments weighed him down
Which fair Calypso gave him. But, at length,
Emerging, he rejected from his throat
The bitter brine that down his forehead streamed.
Even then, though hopeless with dismay, his thought
Was on the raft, and, struggling through the waves,
He seized it, sprang on board, and seated there
Escaped the threatened death. Still to and fro
The rolling billows drove it. As the wind
In autumn sweeps the thistles o'er the field,
Clinging together, so the blasts of heaven
Hither and thither drove it o'er the sea.

Language

ANY author translating a poem tries, of course, to capture in his own language the qualities of the original. Bryant says, "The style of Homer is simple, and he has been praised for fire and rapidity of narrative .... Homer .... wrote in idiomatic Greek, and .... should have been translated into idio-

matic English." How well does Bryant's translation live up to this theory of his about the ideal translation?

2. Bryant criticized Cowper's translation of this poem for its lack of simplicity, its lack of "fire and rapidity." "Almost every sentence," he continued, "is stiffened by some clumsy inversion; stately phrases are used when simpler ones were at hand, and would have rendered the meaning of the original better. The entire version . . . . is cold and constrained . . . ." With these points in mind, compare the following lines from Cowper's translation with lines 19-26 of Bryant's version:

Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons
At Ilium slain for the Atridae' sake!
Ah, would to heav'n that, dying, I had felt
That day the stroke of fate, when me the dead
Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears
Troy's furious host assail'd! Funereal rites
I then had shared, and praise from ev'ry Greek,
Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.

3. Compare lines 27-39 of Bryant's translation with the following prose version written by S. H. Butcher and A. Lang:

Even as he spake, the great wave smote down upon him, driving on in terrible wise, that the raft reeled again. And far therefrom he fell, and lost the helm from his hand; and the fierce blast of the jostling winds came and brake his mast in the midst, and sail and yard-arm fell afar in the deep. Long time the water kept him under, nor could he speedily rise from beneath the rush of the mighty wave: for the garments hung heavy which fair Calypso gave him. But late and at length he came up, and spat forth from his mouth the bitter salt water, which ran down in streams from his head.

4. What is extraordinary about the figurative language in Bryant's passage? What values do you find in the kinds of figures here used?

5. Contrast Bryant's language with that of Keats in "To Autumn," page 79. How do the contrasts which you find relate to the differing purposes of the two authors?

The author of this poem believes in making his writings dramatic. "Everything written," he once said, "is as good as it is dramatic." Here he sets forth the drama of a New England farmer's thoughts and emotions as the farmer hears a nighttime storm raging outside his home. The concrete words, the figures of speech, and the rhythms show how a modern poet uses language to convey an emotion.

ROBERT FROST

Storm-fear

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lower chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
"Come out! Come out!"—
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length,—
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away,
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.

Language, characters, setting, and happenings

What can you learn about the character of the speaker of these lines from the kind of words he uses? Be specific.

2. Compared with this vivid figurative description of the storm, what would a vivid literal description lack? In your answer, take account of the following figures of speech: (a) "the wind works against us in the dark"; (b) "whispers with a sort of stifled bark,/ The beast"; (c) "How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length"; (d) "the comforting barn." Is it true, as Professor Lawrance Thompson has suggested,

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that here "words and images bring the attention to focus on the emotional sense which underlies the poem"?

3. What is the pattern of the happenings here presented? What change is there in the speaker's attitude? How is this change shown?

4. What is peculiar about the rhythmical structure? Is the peculiarity you find in any way appropriate to what is being expressed? Develop your answer. Does the use of rhyme help or hinder the development of the thought?

5. Contrast the use of figurative language in "Storm-Fear" with that in "Storm on Jackson's Island" (p. 86) and in "A Fierce Rush of All the Winds" (p. 91).

Tone

In a literary work, as a rule, the elements (happenings, characters, settings, and language) are so adapted and integrated as to form a harmonious whole. To you, the reader, this whole is of the utmost importance. When you read a complex sentence, you may find it useful to notice the parts of speech which form it. But it is hardly conceivable that you will be satisfied to stop with your perception of the parts. Instead, you will want to re-imbed the words in the whole sentence so that you may sense the emotional effect and come to grips with the meaning.

Similarly, when you read a story, a drama, or a poem, you are not satisfied with an analysis of its separate elements. You are not likely to want to stop before perceiving the accomplishment of the whole work. Actually, it may be argued that you have not "taken in" the work at all until you have shared with the author the emotions and the meaning embodied in his work. You do well, therefore, to consider the work in two different, but useful and supplementary ways: (a) as an emotional expression of the author, and (b) as an artistic embodiment of a meaning or set of meanings. In this section, we shall see how you consider it as the first of these; in the next section, as the second.

The nature of tone

Like all other human creatures, the author is a personality with his own peculiar tastes, his own store of knowledge, his own individual bents, prejudices, and emotions. When he creates an imaginative work about the world as he sees it, almost inevitably—consciously or unconsciously—he will give voice to certain phases of his personality. And you, if you are an alert reader, will, so to speak, hear that conscious or unconscious voicing. It will be somewhat as if by listening while the author read aloud, by noting his "tone"—the timbre of his voice, the intonations, the emphases—you came to know the *personal qualities and emotions embodied in the work.*

When Thomas Wolfe speaks, in *Of*

Time and the River, of "the lusty, vulgar and sweet-singing voice of Geoffrey Chaucer," of "Thackeray's sentimental gallantry," of "acid and tart-humored Horace," and of "the massy gold, the choked-in richness . . . . of John Keats," he is considering the tone of each of these authors. Young Walt Whitman had the tone of his early works in mind when he spoke of "shouting his barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world."

Limitations

Of course, all the aspects of an author's personality will not be perceivable in any one work, nor may all his feelings. An author is as complex as other human beings, and his moods vary. Furthermore, an author tends to write in the modes and forms fashionable during his day. Depending upon his period, for instance, he may be, say, a classicist, a romanticist, or a naturalist. The literary market of the period may be better for dramas than for sonnets, or for short stories than for plays, or for tragedies than for comedies. An author may not find that he can express as much as he would like in works that will sell, and after all an author must live—if possible.

Again the moral tastes of his potential audience may force a writer to use materials which he finds distressing, or to leave out materials of which he is fond. A prissy puritan writing a play in the bawdy Restoration period or a novel in the militantly frank 1920's probably had to forget some of his scruples. A writer during the strait-laced Victorian period, as both Mark Twain and Thackeray testified, was somewhat limited in manifesting his taste for earthy vulgarity. In other words, the author may be limited in various ways because of the tastes of the readers he hopes to attract. Somehow, he must win sympathetic attention, and if he does not appeal to readers in his most natural guise, he may assume a guise more likely to please.

If an author is completely enslaved by his period and by the taste of his immediate audience, later readers quite possibly will be unable to read his works sympathetically. A Victorian sentimentalist such as the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may seem funny or even disgusting to readers a few decades away. Such a nineteenth-century humorist as Petroleum V. Nasby or Bill Arp, who had readers in stitches during the Civil War, may seem funereal in tone to readers in more peaceful days. Readers may, for various reasons, find the assumed or real personality revealed in a work completely unsympathetic. In such cases, it will, of course, be important for the reader to understand exactly how the tone interposes itself between a work and its enjoyment.

In what we say about tone in the rest of this section, however, we shall take for granted that such limitations have been overcome—as they will have been by the best authors. We shall take for granted, in other words, that the author has surmounted limitations set by his period and by his audience, and that he has managed to win a sympathetic hearing. In the works of such an author, readers may find three kinds of indications of tone: (1) the author's choice of form, (2) his choice of materials, and (3) his personal interpretations.

The author's choice of form

The overall pattern which an author chooses for his work may well be determined by his attitude or his mood.

Granted that his audience allows him sufficient freedom, his attitudes, permanent or temporary, may cause him to write tragedy or comedy, melodrama or farce, parody or sober lyric. A pessimist, as a rule, will not be satisfied with a happy ending in a serious work. If he writes a narrative with a happy ending, he will find a way to make fun of it—perhaps by burlesquing it. An optimist or a writer who likes to create escapist literature will not be satisfied with an unhappy ending, seriously presented. A fanatic, a propagandist, a parodist, or an author who has no profound beliefs about human nature which he wishes to express may picture a group of angelic figures in a melodramatic or a farcical struggle with fiendish villains—and the course and the outcome of the struggle inevitably will show his attitude toward life.

Some authors always—and other authors in some moods—will find simple lyrics the only satisfactory forms to express their emotions. Others may be compelled by an inner urgency to write complex philosophical poems, and still others may need the wide scope provided by epic poetry. The tones of such expressions naturally will differ. A Lovelace's delicate lyrics will contrast with an Eliot's metaphysical poems, and these in turn will contrast with a Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Thus in fiction, drama, and poetry, one clue to the author's attitude will be provided by the form which he chooses to employ.

The author's choice of materials

Like everyone else, the author likes certain kinds of characters, certain kinds of settings, certain kinds of happenings; and he loathes others or finds them dull. Some human qualities will attract him or seem important to him, while others will be repugnant or will seem unimportant. The author's choice of characters to be treated at length will offer us insights. A Mark Twain will love the urchin Huckleberry Finn, but will find Jane Austen's heroines unattractive and boresome. A Henry James will shudder at the thought of writing about Huck: he himself will prefer writing about characters with subtle minds and with sensitivities similar to his own. An Ernest Hemingway will probably prefer Huck to James' delicate characters, but he will like even better stoical, tight-lipped heroes such as Nick Adams, Hank Morgan, and Robert Jordan. Understandably (unless he is writing satire), each author therefore will choose for detailed portrayal a character of the sort that particularly fascinates him.

Each fiction writer, also, will prefer certain settings—Twain the Mississippi River of his boyhood, James either British or continental drawing rooms, Hemingway, bedrooms, barrooms, or out-of-door scenes. A poet writing of nature will depict those scenes or aspects of scenes which he finds most interesting and moving. The dramatist, too, is likely to have preferences in backgrounds: witness the dramas on ships at sea written by the youthful Eugene O'Neill.

The happenings portrayed by an author will also be selected according to his taste. "If I write a story of action," says Carl Grabo, "I select my incidents to make my story interesting and effective; but I am further guided by an emotion which makes me select a certain kind of incident from the many incidents possible, a kind in harmony with my emotion. I have really two purposes which I endeavor to reconcile."

If the term "emotion" as used here includes preferences, the point is well taken. A Mark Twain, a Paul Green, or a Robert Frost will choose to present incidents which catch the qualities of life peculiar to a geographical region. A Henry James or a T. S. Eliot or a Eugene O'Neill will prefer to show speculative characters puzzling about motives and actions. A lyrical poet will concentrate upon intense thoughts and feelings—those based upon the poet's own experiences or the imagined experiences of others. A Wordsworth will be deeply moved by experiences in the world of nature, whereas an Edna St. Vincent Millay or a Dorothy Parker will be impelled to sing of a remembrance of a love which has ended.

The author's interpretations

THE tone of a work, finally, is manifest in the author's personal interpretations of the characters, the happenings, the settings, and the feelings of which he writes. These interpretations may be explicit or implicit. They will be explicit when the author becomes intrusive and speaks directly to the reader; they will be implicit when he colors his record in ways which indirectly convey his attitudes. In a sense, as we have seen, the author has the problem of winning over the reader to his own view of what he is portraying. He may, so to speak, step boldly upon the stage in a guise which he hopes will be ingratiating, and tell his views of what is happening. Or he may take the less obtrusive rôle of an author-producer, confident that his lighting and setting of the scenes, his costuming of the characters, and his devising and direction of dialogue and action will convey his attitudes.

THE INTRUSIVE AUTHOR

Throughout his great novel, *Vanity Fair,* William Makepeace Thackeray talks directly to the reader about his characters. They are, he indicates, "puppets" whom he may manipulate to illustrate his ideas. Whenever the spirit moves him, he stops his story to chat intimately about human nature and his attitudes toward it. Sometimes he is ironic, sometimes sentimental. Percy Lubbock, in *The Craft of Fiction,* instances Thackeray as the intrusive author whom we "can never forget" while reading his narrative:

> *. . . the general panorama . . . . becomes the representation of the author's experience, and the author becomes a personal entity, about whom we may begin to ask questions . . . . Thackeray, far from trying to conceal himself, comes forward and attracts attention and nudges the reader . . . . he likes the personal relation with the reader and insists on it.*

There is always the possibility that an author may thus assume the guise of a commentator talking directly to the reader. Kipling, in his early tales of India, assumed the rôle of a sophisticated member of the ruling group, learned in the ways of men and women and in the intricacies of British colonial government and army life. In "The Rout of the White Hussars," for instance, he steps forward to say:

> *You may know the White Hussars by their "side," which is greater than that of all the Cavalry Regiments on the roster. If this is not a sufficient mark, you may know them for their old brandy. It*

has been sixty years in the Mess and is worthy of going far to taste. Ask for the "McGaire" old brandy, and see that you get it. If the Mess Sergeant thinks that you are uneducated, and that the genuine article will be lost on you, he will treat you accordingly. He is a good man. But, when you are at Mess, you must never talk to your hosts about forced marches or long-distance rides. The Mess are very sensitive; and, if they think you are laughing at them, will tell you so.

From this and similar comments and asides, one who reads the early tales gets an impression, if not of the real twenty-two-year-old Kipling, at least of the worldly-wise, philosophical, witty club member the young author pretended to be.

The tone in Kipling's stories is conversational, man to man. Contrast this passage from William Saroyan's *The Human Comedy:*

The train was filled with American boys, among them Marcus and his friend Tobey—all of them dressed as soldiers and trained for war. But from their eyes, from their high spirits, and from their laughter and shouting and singing, you knew this was not an army alone, but a nation, and surely a good and great one. . . . You knew surely that while their noise came from deep inner fear, they were still utterly unafraid. . . . You knew they were American boys, some of them past forty even, but most of them kids —kids from big cities and little towns, from farms and offices, from rich families and poor families, kids lifted out of great worlds and kids lifted out of small worlds, some moved away from magnificent dreams of action and some from humble dreams of peace. . . .

This is a eulogy, a personal appeal to readers to have the same feelings Saroyan does about the soldiers he is portraying. The author, when he steps forward, assumes the rôle of a somewhat emotional advocate.

The least reticent of all intrusive authors are those who speak out in lyrical poetry. Like such figures in fiction, the speakers in lyrical poems may differ materially from the real authors of the works. Quite often, the "I" in the poem is an idealization of the author or of the author's mood. In a love poem, he may be the kind of lover the author admires—and his only qualities (as shown by the poem) may be those of an impassioned lover. Again, if the poem is sad, the "I" in it may be the ideal sufferer. And often the speaker in the poem will have none of the reticence, the shyness, the inarticulateness which the actual poet in real life may have: the character's every phrase and the very rhythms of his speech may eloquently voice his feeling. He will address a small audience, perhaps, but it will be one which he hopes will understand and sympathize with his deep feeling and with his complete expression of it.

IMPLICIT INTERPRETATIONS

In one of his short stories, Sherwood Anderson spoke of the advantage old-time storytellers had over moderns whose stories are printed. "They," he says, "were both storytellers and actors. As they talked they modulated their voices, made gestures with their hands. . . . All our modern fussing with style is an attempt to do the same thing." His point is that, deprived of the chance to speak aloud, an author "fusses" with his choice of details, words, and phrases

so that, in print, he may convey his feelings about elements in his narrative. Such care must have gone into the choices made in this description of Huck's pappy:

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn't no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white.

Every word conveys to the reader Mark Twain's distaste for this character; but instead of explicitly stating the attitude, the author lets the details convey it. The emphasis upon the dirt, the unhealthy lack of coloration, and particularly the comparison of the white face to cold, dead, "fish-belly white" reveal that this is an unattractive character. The way a character is presented can indicate clearly how his creator feels about that character. Details in presentation can indicate the condescension of a Bret Harte toward the folk in his stories, the sentimentalism of a Dickens, the compassion of a Dreiser. Even the dialogue of the characters will often imply the author's attitude toward characters. For, actually, when the author sets down his impression of their dialogue, in ways which are unmistakable, he heightens the traits which he likes or dislikes. Note, for instance, how the speeches which Lewis attributes to Babbitt (p. 55) imply the author's attitude toward his character.

Actions as well as characters will be interpreted in ways revelatory of the author's attitude toward them. If, for instance, he says that a character "smirked," he will imply a different attitude from the one implied by his saying that the character "giggled" or "laughed wryly." Contrast "walked" with "minced," "marched," "stalked," and "trod": each, used in relationship to other revelatory words, will help show approval or disapproval. All the devices of language which we have considered (pp. 81-86) may, in fact, be called upon by the author to communicate his feelings.

The tone of an author in parts of a work or throughout a whole work then may be, for instance, broadly comic, witty, ironic, satirical, disinterested, disillusioned, sentimental, idealistic, or tragic. Whatever it is, it will provide his commentary upon the people, the emotions, and the happenings presented in the work. All this means that a literary work involves not merely a number of elements but an author's emotional interpretation of them. It means that a work is, in miniature, a copy of the world as the author sees it, and that the tone which pervades his commentary upon that world gives the work unity. It means that the author tacitly asks the reader to join him in feeling as he does about this world and the things that happen in it.

The importance of tone to the reader

As readers, we are therefore faced with the necessity of coöperating with the author. We must become aware of what he feels, and, in order to share his imaginative experience with him, we must feel as he does. We must

join the storyteller, the dramatist, or the poet in liking and disliking. If he is sympathetic, we must be so, or if he is ironic, we must follow his lead.

But such coöperation between reader and author does not mean that our critical sense is completely numbed while we read. As Gordon Hall Gerould shrewdly remarks:

Somewhat as the writer in the act of composition must control his imagination, if he is to accomplish anything of value, rejecting this as wrong and choosing that as right, we can . . . . recognize that the guide to life whom we are following has here made a misstep or there quite badly stumbled. Only the naïf playgoer fails to observe a certain detachment as he watches a spectacle on the stage. The wiser auditor may be absorbed in the drama, and certainly he must let his imagination respond to that of playwright and actors; but he is at the same time able to evaluate the effect produced—even the effect on his own feelings. He does not try to shoot the villain. Just so the experienced reader keeps his critical judgment awake while he yields himself to the guidance of the author. Nor is his enjoyment lessened by so doing. Indeed, he comes into closer association with the writer, and participates more fully in the imaginative processes by which the story has been made, if he combines such control with sympathetic absorption.

Hall is speaking of the reading of fiction, but obviously the reading of drama and poetry also requires this combination of warm sympathy and cool detachment.

Your task, then, is to perceive as exactly as possible the nature of the tone in any literary work. By noting the author's choice of form, his preferences in subject matter, and his interpretations, you should learn what feelings are expressed and how the author has expressed them. You should be aware of what the author requires of you in the way of sympathy, and so far as is possible, you should imaginatively share the author's attitudes and emotions. You should also, in the end, see what the tone of the work does to give it its emotional impact, its emotional unity.

One review describes Dorothy Parker, a leading contemporary writer of light verse, as "fond of dogs, flowers, and pretty clothes . . . a very feminine person, emotional, rather timid, and confessedly superstitious." Another review says she "represents to perfection the deflationary mood of much post-war humor . . . deals lavishly and skillfully in anticlimax. . . ." It may be helpful to consider these characterizations after reading the following poem.

DOROTHY PARKER

Nocturne

ALWAYS I knew that it could not last
(Gathering clouds, and the snowflakes flying),
Now it is part of the golden past
(Darkening skies, and the night-wind sighing);
It is but cowardice to pretend.
Cover with ashes our love's cold crater—
Always I've known that it had to end
Sooner or later.

Always I knew it would come like this
(Pattering rain, and the grasses springing),
Sweeter to you is a new love's kiss
(Flickering sunshine, and young birds singing).
Gone are the raptures that once we knew,
Now you are finding a new joy greater—
Well, I'll be doing the same thing, too,
Sooner or later.

Tone and character

CHARACTERIZE with as much detail as possible the "I" who is speaking in this poem, and explain exactly how the poem has indicated her qualities.

2. In what ways is the overall pattern of "Nocturne" particularly well adapted to show the thoughts and feelings of such an intrusive character?

3. To what extent, in your opinion, does the "I" of the poem represent the personality and attitudes of Dorothy Parker? Justify your answer. In what different ways could you check on the accuracy of your answer?

From *The Portable Dorothy Parker*. Copyright 1926, 1944 by Dorothy Parker. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

4. How would you describe the tone of "Nocturne"? How would you relate it to the author of the poem? To the reader? What sorts of readers would be most likely to admire this poem?

5. On the basis of your reading of "My Last Duchess" (p. 60), how would you guess that Browning might develop a poem portraying a character similar to the "I" in "Nocturne"? Why?

The following selection is from Henry Fielding's novel The History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great *(1743). Jonathan Wild, an actual person, was a well-known "thief-taker" (i.e., "stool-pigeon") and an under-world tycoon who had built up a huge business—a "lost property office," as he called it. He arranged robberies wholesale, received the stolen goods, and returned them to the owners for a fee, which he shared—very reluctantly—with the thieves. The tone employed by Fielding in discussing the greatness of his hero is typified by this passage.*

HENRY FIELDING

The character of a great man

JONATHAN WILD had every qualification necessary to form a great man. As his most powerful and predominant passion was ambition, so nature had, with consummate propriety, adapted all his faculties to the attaining those glorious ends to which this passion directed him. He was extremely ingenious in inventing designs, artful in contriving the means to accomplish his purposes, and resolute in executing them: for as the most exquisite cunning and most undaunted boldness qualified him for any undertaking, so was he not restrained by any of those weaknesses which disappoint the views of mean and vulgar souls, and which are comprehended in one general term of honesty, which is a corruption of HONOSTY, a word derived from what the Greeks call an ass. He was entirely free from those low vices of modesty and good-nature, which, as he said, implied a total negation of human greatness, and were the only qualities which absolutely rendered a man incapable of making a considerable figure in the world. His lust was inferior only to his ambition; but, as for what simple people call love, he knew not what it was. His avarice was immense, but it was of the rapacious, not of the tenacious kind; his rapaciousness was indeed so violent, that nothing ever contented him but the whole; for, however considerable the share was which his coadjutors allowed him of a booty, he

was restless in inventing means to make himself master of the smallest pittance reserved by them. He said laws were made for the use of *prigs*[1] only, and to secure their property; they were never, therefore, more perverted than when their edge was turned against these; but that this generally happened through their want of sufficient dexterity. The character which he most valued himself upon, and which he principally honoured in others, was that of hypocrisy. His opinion was, that no one could carry *priggism* very far without it; for which reason, he said, there was little greatness to be expected in a man who acknowledged his vices, but always much to be hoped from him who professed great virtues: wherefore, though he would always shun the person whom he discovered guilty of a good action, yet he was never deterred by a good character, which was more commonly the effect of profession than of action: for which reason, he himself was always very liberal of honest professions, and had as much virtue and goodness in his mouth as a saint; never in the least scrupling to swear by his honour, even to those who knew him the best; nay, though he held good-nature and modesty in the highest contempt, he constantly practised the affectation of both, and recommended this to others, whose welfare, on his own account, he wished well to.

[1] *prigs*, thieves.

Tone and language

THE first sentence says that Wild "had every qualification necessary to form a great man." What, precisely, were his qualifications?

2. What kind of greatness did these qualifications prepare him to achieve? What would be the nature of such a great man's career?

3. What is the ostensible feeling of the author concerning (a) these qualifications? (b) Wild's greatness? Quote some passages which show Fielding's ostensible attitude.

4. Does Fielding, in your opinion, share this ostensible feeling? What words and phrases can you cite to show what Fielding thought of Wild?

5. Describe the tone of this passage. What does the appreciation of the passage demand of the reader?

6. What does Fielding have in common with Sinclair Lewis, as the latter is represented by the passage from *Babbitt* (p. 55)? How do their attitudes toward their characters differ? How is the difference between their attitudes evident in their selection of details? In their language?

S. J. Perelman has written for many periodicals, including College Humor *and the* New Yorker, *and he has also done some gagwriting for Marx Brothers films. Perelman is, according to one review, an exponent of the "screwball art" which "calls for an exquisite sense of cliché and mimicry." Robert Benchley held that he "took over the* dementia praecox *field . . . any further attempt to garble thought-processes sounded like imitation-Perelman." The following selection shows Perelman's art as a garbler of thought-processes.*

S. J. PERELMAN

The idol's eye

I HAD been week-ending with Gabriel Snubbers at his villa, "The Acacias," on the edge of the Downs. Gabriel isn't seen about as much as he used to be; one hears that an eccentric aunt left him a tidy little sum and the lazy beggar refuses to leave his native haunts. Four of us had cycled down from London together: Gossip Gabrilowitsch, the Polish pianist; Downey Couch, the Irish tenor; Frank Falcovsky, the Jewish prowler, and myself, Clay Modelling. Snubbers, his face beaming, met us at the keeper's lodge. His eyes were set in deep rolls of fat for our arrival, and I couldn't help thinking how well they looked. I wondered whether it was because his daring farce, *Mrs. Stebbins' Step-Ins,* had been doing so well at the Haymarket.

"Deuced decent of you chaps to make this filthy trip," he told us, leading us up the great avenue of two stately alms towards the house. "Rum place, this." A surprise awaited us when we reached the house, for the entire left wing had just burned down. Snubbers, poor fellow, stared at it a bit ruefully, I thought.

"Just as well. It was only a plague-spot," sympathized Falcovsky. Snubbers was thoughtful.

"D'ye know, you chaps," he said suddenly, "I could swear an aunt of mine was staying in that wing." Falcovsky stirred the ashes with his stick and uncovered a pair of knitting needles and a half-charred corset.

"No, it must have been the other wing," dismissed Snubbers. "How about a spot of whisky and soda?" We entered and Littlejohn, Snubbers' man, brought in a spot of whisky on a piece of paper which we all examined with interest. A splendid fire was already roaring in the middle of the floor to drive out the warmth.

From *Crazy Like a Fox* by S. J. Perelman. Copyright, 1944, by S. J. Perelman. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

"Soda?" offered Snubbers. I took it to please him, for Gabriel's cellar was reputedly excellent. A second later I wished that I had drunk the cellar instead. Baking soda is hardly the thing after a three-hour bicycle trip.

"You drank that like a little soldier," he complimented, his little button eyes fastened on me. I was about to remark that I had never drunk a little soldier, when I noticed Littlejohn hovering in the doorway.

"Yes, that will be all," Snubbers waved, "and, oh, by the way, send up to London tomorrow for a new wing, will you?" Littlejohn bowed and left, silently, sleekly Oriental.

"Queer cove, Littlejohn," commented Snubbers. "Shall I tell you a story?" He did, and it was one of the dullest I have ever heard. At the end of it Falcovsky grunted. Snubbers surveyed him suspiciously.

"Why, what's up, old man?" he queried.

"What's up? Nothing's up," snarled Falcovsky. "Can't a man grunt in front of an open fire if he wants to?"

"But . . ." began Snubbers.

"But nothing," Falcovsky grated. "You haven't lived till you've grunted in front of an open fire. Just for that—grunt, grunt, grunt," and he grunted several times out of sheer spite. The baking soda was beginning to tell on Snubbers.

"Remarkable thing happened the other day," he began. "I was pottering about in the garden . . ."

"Why must one always potter around in a garden?" demanded Couch. "Can't you potter around in an armchair just as well?"

"I did once," confessed Snubbers moodily, revealing a whitish scar on his chin. "Gad, sir, what a wildcat she was!" He chewed his wad of carbon paper reminiscently. "Oh, well, never mind. But as I was saying—I was going through some of my great-grandfather's things the other day . . ."

"What things?" demanded Falcovsky.

"His bones, if you must know," Snubbers said coldly. "You know, Great-grandfather died under strange circumstances. He opened a vein in his bath."

"I never knew baths had veins," protested Gabrilowitsch.

"I never knew his great-grandfather had a ba—" began Falcovsky derisively. With a shout Snubbers threw himself on Falcovsky. It was the signal for Pandemonium, the upstairs girl, to enter and throw herself with a shout on Couch. The outcome of the necking bee was as follows: Canadians 12, Visitors 9. Krebs and Vronsky played footie, subbing for Gerber and Weinwald, who were disabled by flying antipasto.

We were silent after Snubbers had spoken; men who have wandered in far places have an innate delicacy about their great-grandfathers' bones.

Snubbers' face was a mask, his voice a harsh whip of pain in the stillness when he spoke again.

"I fancy none of you knew my great-grandfather," he said slowly. "Before your time, I daresay. A rare giant of a man with quizzical eyes and a great shock of wiry red hair, he had come through the Peninsular Wars without a scratch. Women loved this impetual Irish adventurer who would rather fight than eat and vice versa. The wars over, he turned toward cookery, planning to devote his failing years to the perfection of the welsh rarebit, a dish he loved. One night he was chafing at The Bit, a tavern in Portsmouth, when he overheard a chance remark from a brawny gunner's mate in his cups. In Calcutta the man had heard native tales of a mysterious idol, whose single eye was a flawless ruby.

" 'Topscuttle my bamberger, it's the size of a bloomin' pigeon's egg!' spat the salt, shifting his quid to his other cheek. 'A bloomin' rajah's ransom and ye may lay to that, mateys!'

"The following morning the *Maid of Hull,* a frigate of the line mounting thirty-six guns, out of Bath and into bed in a twinkling, dropped downstream on the tide, bound out for Bombay, object matrimony. On her as passenger went my great-grandfather, an extra pair of nankeen pants and a dirk his only baggage. Fifty-three days later in Poona, he was heading for the interior of one of the Northern states. Living almost entirely on cameo brooches and the few ptarmigan which fell to the ptrigger of his pfowlingpiece, he at last sighted the towers of Ishpeming, the Holy City of the Surds and Cosines, fanatic Mohammedan warrior sects. He disguised himself as a beggar and entered the gates.

"For weeks my great-grandfather awaited his chance to enter the temple of the idol. They were changing the guard one evening when he saw it. One of the native janissaries dropped his knife. My great-grandfather leaped forward with cringing servility and returned it to him, in the small of his back. Donning the soldier's turban, he quickly slipped into his place. Midnight found him within ten feet of his prize. Now came the final test. He furtively drew from the folds of his robes a plate of curry, a dish much prized by Indians, and set it in a far corner. The guards rushed upon it with bulging squeals of delight. A twist of his wrist and the gem was his. With an elaborately stifled yawn, my great-grandfather left under pretense of going out for a glass of water. The soldiers winked slyly but when he did not return after two hours, their suspicions were aroused. They hastily made a canvass of the places where water was served and their worst fears were realized. The ruby in his burnoose, Great-grandfather was escaping by fast elephant over the Khyber Pass. Dockside loungers in Yarmouth forty days later stared

curiously at a mammoth of a man with flaming red hair striding toward the Bull and Bloater Tavern. Under his belt, did they but only know it, lay the Ruby Eye.

"Ten years to that night had passed, and my great-grandfather, in seclusion under this very roof, had almost forgotten his daring escapade. Smoking by the fireplace, he listened to the roar of the wind and reviewed his campaigns. Suddenly he leaped to his feet—a dark face had vanished from the window. Too late my great-grandfather snatched up powder and ball and sent a charge hurtling into the night. The note pinned to the window drained the blood from his face.

"It was the first of a series. Overnight his hair turned from rose-red to snow-white. And finally, when it seemed as though madness were to rob them of their revenge, *they came.*"

Snubbers stopped, his eyes those of a man who had looked beyond life and had seen things best left hidden from mortal orbs. Falcovsky's hand was trembling as he pressed a pinch of snuff against his gums.

"You—you mean?" he quavelled.

"Yes." Snubbers' voice had sunk to a whisper. "He fought with the strength of nine devils, but the movers took away his piano. You see," he added very gently, "Great-grandfather had missed the last four instalments." Gabrilowitsch sighed deeply and arose, his eyes fixed intently on Snubbers.

"And—and the ruby?" he asked softly, his delicate fingers closing around the fire-tongs.

"Oh, *that,*" shrugged Snubbers, "I just threw that in to make it interesting."

We bashed in his conk and left him to the vultures.

Tone, character, language, and happenings

JUDGING by his style and his expressions, what kind of person is the "I" in this piece—Clay Modelling? What does Perelman's choice of a name for him, and what do other details in the narrative, indicate about Perelman's attitude toward him?

2. What does the overall pattern of the work—including the conclusion—reveal about Perelman's attitude toward the characters and happenings?

3. A burlesque is a ludicrous treatment of a serious subject—perhaps of an institution. A pastiche is a careful imitation of the form and content of a work or of a group of works. A parody is a humorous exaggeration of the qualities of a serious work or of a species of serious works. Classify this work in relationship to "A Night at an Inn" (p. 42). What details in both works justify your classification?

4. How does the tone of Perelman's story differ from that of "A Night at an Inn"?

One December evening when Keats was visiting his friend, the poet Leigh Hunt, the talk somehow turned to crickets. Hunt proposed that he and Keats have a sonnet-writing contest, the subject to be "The Grasshopper and the Cricket." Keats, usually a careful reviser, completed his sonnet before Hunt completed his—and critics feel that Keats' poem is the better of the two. It shows no signs of the haste with which it was composed.

JOHN KEATS

On the grasshopper and cricket

THE poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

Tone and setting

COMPARE the tone of this poem and that of "To Autumn" (p. 79). Do you find evidences of similar interests and attitudes on the part of the author in the two poems?

2. Wolfe has spoken of "the massy gold, the choked-in richness" of Keats. Does this phrase apply in any way to this poem, or would you judge that it must apply (if it does) to other poems by this author?

3. On the basis of your reading of these two poems only, how would you characterize Keats' tone? What do you find congenial, and what do you find uncongenial, in the Keats' approach?

4. A critic of Keats has seen the poet's "passion for beauty" as an "essential quality" of his poetry. "It is this passion for beauty," says the critic, "working through an aesthetic organism of extraordinary delicacy and power, which gives to Keats' poetry its sensuous richness, and which makes it play magically upon the senses of the reader.... From the first his poetry had extraordinary freshness, gusto, energy." How sound does this statement seem to you?

Meanings

In "Wakefield," Nathaniel Hawthorne tells the story of a crafty Londoner who "under pretense of going a journey, took lodgings in the next street to his own house, and there, unheard of by his wife or friends, and without the shadow of a reason for such self-banishment, dwelt upwards of twenty years." Then, caught in a shower near his home one afternoon, he ascended his own steps once more and passed into his house—just as though his long absence had been nothing but a little joke at his wife's expense. The story of Wakefield ends thus:

This happy event—supposing it to be such—could only have occurred at an unpremeditated moment. We will not follow our friend across the threshold. He has left us much food for thought, a portion of which shall lend its wisdom to a moral, and be shaped into a figure. Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another and to a whole, that, by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe.

Were you to read the story in its entirety you would have little trouble in discovering how its form and tone have prepared for this conclusion. But the conclusion itself rather obviously involves something besides just form and tone—something very important to every perceptive reader.

What must occur to you as you read this ending is that it has converted the whole story into a springboard for something more general than the particular happenings, characters, and settings which up to this point the author has portrayed. Hawthorne's concern—and consequently your concern—has broadened beyond a *single* event which took place in London long ago. The concern now is with *all* events in which an individual steps outside his own little system of human affections. Hawthorne has caused you to shift your attention from Wakefield to man, from the specific to the general, and in so doing has made it clear that he is concerned not only with Wakefield but with himself and his readers—anyone who might be tempted to break off ties as Wakefield did.

As a reader, therefore, you are no longer simply a spectator watching a little drama play itself out; to a certain extent, at least, you are in the drama yourself. Let us put it another way. A story, a play, a poem, if it is to give the illusion of reality, must be about a particular experience taking place at one time and in one place and involving certain particular people. But though this experience may be in many ways unique, it can at the same time be representative of experiences which all of us have or will have. And to the degree that the affairs portrayed in a literary work are representative of your affairs

the work can be said to have meaning for you. If you want a more formal definition, it might run something like this: the meaning of a literary work for you is that insight into human affairs which it offers and which you find useful in understanding your experience.

At this point someone is bound to ask whether a work can have meanings which the author did not intend it to have. The answer is yes. For hundreds of years people have been finding various useful meanings in *Hamlet* and *Othello* and *Twelfth Night* that Shakespeare undoubtedly never knew were there. Every reader applies poetical, fictional, and dramatic representations to himself in the light of his own background, interests, and information. Indeed, the same reader coming to a work at two different times and in different moods may apply its representations to himself in two quite different fashions. Possibly you yourself have said of a book, "I got a lot more meaning out of it the second time I read it." By this, you indicate that your experience with life and literature has led you to see more implications in the book and more applications of the work to human affairs than you saw during your first reading. Actually, what meaning the author has in mind is unimportant unless the literary work makes it clear—and makes it clear, moreover, to you and other readers. Your task, therefore, is to find whatever clues to meaning there are in the work and to follow them through to their implications for you. Note that the implications are to be found *in the works*—that you should discover meanings in what the author has written as well as in your interpretations.

How do you discover meanings? There is no one answer to such a question, for the process of discovery changes with every work you read. There are certain guideposts to meaning, however, and these you should look for as you read. They are (1) statements of meaning provided by the author and expressed either directly by him or indirectly through one of his characters; (2) relations and conflicts of the characters which are representative of broader relations and conflicts. Let us examine these more closely.

Statements of meaning

STATEMENTS of meaning may be of three kinds: explicit, ironic, and symbolic. Of these the first is by far the easiest to detect. In an *explicit statement* of meaning the author simply tells you, or has an attractive character expressing his point of view tell you, what the meaning is which he has in mind. The example given from "Wakefield" shows you how it is done in a short story. Notice how Wordsworth does it in one stanza from "The Tables Turned":

> *One impulse from a vernal wood*
> *May teach you more of man,*
> *Of moral evil and of good,*
> *Than all the sages can.*

For an example of a meaning stated by an attractive character in a play, examine the ending to Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People.* Ibsen has dramatized the story of a Dr. Stockman, who discovers that the water in the town's Municipal Baths is polluted. But because the Baths provide the main income for the townsmen, Stockman is reviled and persecuted by the authorities, the local

paper, his father-in-law, who threatens to disinherit his wife and children, and the public in general, who brand him "an enemy of the people." For a while, Dr. Stockman considers the possibility of fleeing to America, but in the end he decides to stay and fight the thing out. The last few lines then run like this:

MRS. STOCKMAN. *Let us hope it won't be the wolves [narrow-minded leaders of the people] that will drive you out of the country, Thomas.*

DR. STOCKMAN. *Are you out of your mind, Katherine? Drive me out! Now —when I am the strongest man in the town!*

MRS. STOCKMAN. *The strongest—now?*

DR. STOCKMAN. *Yes, and I will go so far as to say that now I am the strongest man in the world.*

MORTEN [*his son*]. *I say!*

DR. STOCKMAN (lowering his voice). *Hush! You mustn't say anything about it yet; but I have made a great discovery.*

MRS. STOCKMAN. *Another one?*

DR. STOCKMAN. Yes. (Gathers them around him, and says confidentially) *It is this, let me tell you—that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.*

MRS. STOCKMAN (smiling and shaking her head). *Oh, Thomas, Thomas.*

PETRA (encouragingly, as she grasps her father's hands). *Father!*

Ironic statements are not so frequent, but their possibility should be kept in mind. In such a statement the author will say playfully, or allow an unattractive character to say seriously, exactly the opposite to what the author means. This is the same sort of thing which you do when you growl on a cold, rainy afternoon. "This is a fine day!" You indicate by your tone rather than by your words what you mean. Likewise the author indicates by his tone that his statement is to be taken ironically.[1]

No one could possibly miss the ironic intent of Mark Twain in the *Connecticut Yankee* when he writes:

If you take a nation of sixty millions, where average wages are two dollars per day, three days' wages taken from each individual will provide three hundred and sixty million dollars and pay the government's expenses. In my day, in my own country, this money was collected from imports, and the citizen imagined that the foreign importer paid it, and it made him comfortable to think so, whereas, in fact, it was paid by the American people, and was so equally distributed and exactly distributed among them that the annual cost to the one-hundred-millionaire and the annual cost to the sucking child of the day laborer was precisely the same—each paid six dollars. Nothing could be equaler than that, I reckon.

Symbolic statements are those in which the meaning is communicated in figurative language. Such a statement may be a single simile or metaphor;

[1]Notice how important tone is to the right perception of meaning. It is especially so when meaning is communicated through the characters. As a reader, you can never be certain that any character is speaking directly for the author, but you may be completely certain that those characters which the author has made attractive to you are more likely to give voice to his real convictions than those which he has made unattractive. Thus Cordelia in KING LEAR is much more likely to express Shakespeare's true sentiments than are Goneril and Regan, her base and quite unattractive sisters.

sometimes it is an analogy which carries through a paragraph or a series of paragraphs; and sometimes, as in works like *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels,* the symbolism carries through an entire work. If you have read Melville's *Moby Dick* you will recall that the main character, Ahab, with his wooden leg and lightning scar, goes clumping through the novel not only as a sea captain but as an animated metaphor representing what is defiant in mankind. The following paragraphs are from the same book. To understand their meaning you must recognize that the land represents what man knows, the sea what he still does not know. Melville addresses the reader directly in this symbolic statement:

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God help thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!

Relations and conflicts

Not all meanings are so easy to discover as the ones just given since many authors, especially the modern ones, are reluctant to be so explicit. They feel that a statement of meaning often results in artless banality and gives the impression that they underrate the reader's intelligence and sensitivity. In a competent literary work, they contend, meaning should emerge clearly enough without its being stated. Now it is quite true that the meaning of a poem or a short story or a passage in a play or novel may be readily apparent; yet in many instances rereading will be required, and in the case of works like T. S. Eliot's poems and Joyce's novels many rereadings will be necessary. What are the signposts to meaning in works where there are no statements of it? The answer is the relations and conflicts of the characters—inner conflicts or outer ones involving such relations as those between a person and his environment, a person and other persons, a person and his God.

We say relations and conflicts rather than happenings, settings, or characters because a concentration on the latter tends to emphasize the unique characteristics of what is being portrayed rather than its representative characteristics. For example, the exact happenings related by Conrad in his *Nigger of the "Narcissus"* will never occur again; the setting in this particular crew's quarters will never be duplicated, and, naturally, these exact characters will never navigate the seas. Yet the *relations* among these men are of the things that, in the words of Henry James, "we cannot possibly *not* know, sooner or later, in one way or another."

Motivated by a common fear of the big, burly Negro, a quarrelsome crew is gradually bound together in a tightly cohesive unit. Is this development of a relation among people unique? Are quarreling nations ever bound together by fear of a common foe? Have you and a brother or sister ever begun pulling together when faced by an obstreperous outsider? Generalizations such as those suggested are almost inevitable for the reader of this novel.

A simple formula, then, for seeing how relations and conflicts imply meanings, might be the following:

Step One: See whether the important relations or conflicts are representative of ones which you encounter or might encounter in actual life. A Superman scrap, for example, in which that dauntless character wins because of his steel muscles and X-ray vision would be ruled out; ruled in would be the conflict in Huckleberry Finn's mind over whether he should surrender Jim, the runaway slave, to the authorities. (Note that in real life you are no more likely to meet Huckleberry Finn than Superman but that you can't miss encountering an inner conflict like Huck's between what he knows the community wants him to do and what his feelings urge him to do.)

Step Two: Convert the particular persons, places, and happenings in the relation or conflict into their respective classes or categories (e.g., substitute mankind for Huck Finn, death in general for the death of one man, nature for a woods at twilight).[1]

[1]This little formula, of course, will not work in those poems and occasional prose pieces where the author is using a private set of symbols. In such cases you will have to consult your own good sense, other works by the same author, or commentaries by or on the author.

Although at first such a process may sound rather mechanical, it is precisely the procedure you employ unconsciously in reading a work in which the meaning is readily discernible. Here, all we are suggesting is that in the tougher cases you make your unconscious process conscious. Notice how you might handle the following poem by Whitman:

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Step One: The conflict is in the mind of the poet. On the one hand he is sickened by an explanation of the stars; on the other he views the stars themselves in perfect silence. This seems representative of conflicts that we all have had. (Whether our reactions have been the same makes no difference; the point is that the conflict is a common one.)

Step Two: The poet can be generalized into man; the stars into nature; the astronomer's charts, figures, and the like into an explanation of nature.

All you need to do now is to find some congenial phrasing for the meaning as you have come to perceive it. A sentence like this might do the job: Nature itself is more satisfying to man than his own explanations of it.

Levels of meaning

In the preceding paragraphs we have been concerned with what meaning is and how you find it. You should not suppose, however, that all works are equally rich in meaning. Indeed, it might be argued that many notable works of literature possess no meaning at all as we have defined it. Works designed simply to excite us, to re-create a mood or a feeling, works centered about an emotion rather than people and ideas, these are the ones with little meaning. Yet this is not to say that such works give no pleasure. Think, for instance, of Dunsany's "A Night at an Inn" (p. 42) or Poe's story "The Pit and the Pendulum" or Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" (Part III). Meaning of a certain kind, in short, is not necessary for a literary experience.

In those cases, however, where the author is more interested in studying how people think and feel and act than he is in simply evoking a mood, you can be sure of at least one level of meaning. This is the overall level of meaning or what we shall call theme. When you ask about a work, "What's the point of all this?" you are asking in effect for its theme. Often a work will have no other meaning than its theme. This certainly is true of Aesop's fables and of Jesus' parables. It is true also of many short stories and poems (for instance, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" has only a theme).

Longer works, since they touch on more relations of men and portray more conflicts, are almost bound to have more than one level of meaning. These secondary levels can be of two kinds: (1) they can be meanings which apply to the work as a whole and thus constitute subthemes, or (2) they can be meanings which emerge from sections of the work, indeed from stanzas or paragraphs, and have sometimes only a distant relation to the theme. For a complex example of a work with theme and subthemes you might sometime turn to Whitman's "Passage to India." On the surface, he is dealing with the West and the East, suddenly brought closer because of the Suez Canal, the transatlantic cables, and the transcontinental railroads. But in doing this, he is also dealing symbolically with science and wisdom, with the rational and the mystical, with the body and the soul, with man's soul and God. It would be hard to say which is the major theme and which are the minor ones in such a poem. Almost any novel affords an example of a work with an overall meaning or meanings and incidental meanings which apply to only small passages. The great ones afford what amounts to a continuous succession of penetrating and provocative insights into your own experience.

There is still another level of meaning, one that is often neither stated nor susceptible of the method of generalizing proposed on page 114. This level deals with the kinds of assumptions which the author makes. In short, what is his philosophic position? Here are typical questions you should ask yourself: What does the author believe about the *nature of man:* is he made in the image of God? has he free will? is he a creature of blind chance? is he dominated by reason or impulse? What does the author believe about the *nature of society:* does he think the strong man should rule? the rich? the capable? the majority? the working class? What does he believe about the *nature of the universe:* is there a Divine purpose behind it? is it working according to laws? is it

accidental or capricious? What is the *nature of truth:* is it something beyond our senses which we can never prove but perceive through intuition, our reason, or the Bible? or is it something that we agree upon only after the scientific process of observation, hypothesis, verification, and conclusion? The ability to discern an author's fundamental assumptions will not come overnight, nor is it likely to come through the reading of a single work. But ultimately, if you are to be able to say that you understand thoroughly the meaning of a poem or novel or play, you must be able to push beneath its themes and subsidiary meanings to this level of basic assumptions.

For illustration, let us return once more to "Wakefield." You will recall that the theme was stated at the end in this fashion:

Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another and to a whole, that by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever.

What does this imply about the nature of man? That he becomes a free agent at his peril and, therefore, that he is substantially without freedom of the will. What is assumed about the nature of society? Nothing about the proper or desirable form of society, but the implication is that whatever the form, there is little chance of changing it. What is implied about the nature of the universe? Hawthorne apparently is suggesting here that cosmic events are but a long sequence of cause and effect. This philosophy of predestination, determinism, fatalism—call it what you will—is more strongly suggested in another passage from the same story:

Would that I had a folio to write, instead of an article of a dozen pages! Then might I exemplify how an influence beyond our control lays its strong hand on every deed which we do, and weaves its consequences into an iron tissue of necessity.

What is the nature of truth? Obviously Hawthorne is assuming that there is some superhuman and, undoubtedly, supernatural power which controls our destiny. Presumably, therefore, ultimate truth must lie beyond the range of our five senses. Whether such truth may be discerned by intuition, by reason, or through Scriptures, he does not say. There is a strong suspicion from the tone of the story that he does not believe it can be discerned at all.

It would be a mistake to build up these particular questions into a monotonous pattern, a little ritual which you go through every time you read a literary work that seems to have some meaning. These are representative, however, of the more searching type of question you should ask of any thoughtful work of art. Use them, modify them, adapt them, discard them as you see fit. Use your common sense—but don't be content until you have exhausted all the possible levels of meaning.

Even as a young man Nathaniel Hawthorne thought long and deeply about sin and its effects upon men's lives. In one fashion or another the subject gets into all of his novels and short stories. The idea for "The Minister's Black Veil," he says, came from an account of a New England clergyman by the name of Joseph Moody, who ever after accidentally killing a beloved friend hid his face from the world in the same manner as here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. The story has always been one of Hawthorne's more popular ones, and many persons have speculated about its meaning.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

The minister's black veil

THE SEXTON stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling busily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment.

All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way towards the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit.

"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person, of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of

crape, which entirely concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight, further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward, at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat, and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.

"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.

A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads towards the door; many stood upright, and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder, till Mr. Hooper had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation, except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath, as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page, as he read the Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences,

rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said, at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp, as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle aged with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath day. Strange and bewildered looks repaid him for his courtesy. None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look

back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

"Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellects," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot. Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"

"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin, to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and living, scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes, that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed, saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in his black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

"I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I, at the same moment," said the other.

That night, the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melancholy man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions, which often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe, which had gathered over him throughout the day, would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape, and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell. After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple in a strain of mild pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil.

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own waggery.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a

degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly remonstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent, after they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil had impressed all beside herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling around Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself, she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude: it was but a double fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery, too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them, at least."

"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you," she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes forever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal!"

The color rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumors that were already abroad in the village. But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

"If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough," he merely replied; "and if I cover it for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?"

And with this gentle, but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist all her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent. For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But, in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him.

"And do you feel it then, at last?" said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

"Have patience with me, Elizabeth!" cried he, passionately. "Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil—it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever!"

"Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face," said she.

"Never! It cannot be!" replied Mr. Hooper.

"Then farewell!" said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But, even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors, which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil, or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk the street with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardihood to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the gravestones, peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him, to the very depth of his kind heart, to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up their merriest sports, while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else, that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great, that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers, that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which developed the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret, and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the worldly throng as he passed by.

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem—for there was no other apparent cause—he became a man of awful power over souls that were in agony for sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathize with all dark affections. Dying sinners cried aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's administration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression, that the legislative measures of that year were characterized by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway.

In this manner, Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners, who were of mature age when he was settled, had been borne away by many a funeral: he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the churchyard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest.

Several persons were visible by the shaded candle-light, in the death chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave, though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth! And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon the death pillow, with the black

veil still swathed about his brow, and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

For some time previous, his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse, and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long, deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

"Venerable Father Hooper," said he, "the moment of your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?"

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory, that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking, the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But, exerting a sudden energy, that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bedclothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, reso-

lute to struggle, if the minister of Westbury would contend with a dying man.

"Never!" cried the veiled clergyman. "On earth, never!"

"Dark old man!" exclaimed the affrighted minister, "with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?"

Father Hooper's breath heaved; it rattled in his throat; but, with a mighty effort, grasping forward with his hands, he caught hold of life, and held it back till he should speak. He even raised himself in bed; and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him, while the black veil hung down, awful, at that last moment, in the gathered terrors of a lifetime. And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips.

"Why do you tremble at me alone?" cried he, turning his veiled face round the circle of pale spectators. "Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on every visage a Black Veil!"

While his auditors shrank from one another, in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips. Still veiled, they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave. The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the Black Veil!

The whole work

HAPPENINGS

How does Hawthorne manage the beginning to make it as dramatic as possible?

2. One of Hawthorne's favorite structural devices was a "procession" in which he would have a series of individuals come in contact with his main character and then note the results. What is the special effect of the black veil at the meeting—both during and after? at the funeral? at the wedding? on the deputation? on Elizabeth? on Mr. Hooper himself? What is the ultimate effect on the community?

3. What are the time breaks in the story? Why does plausibility depend upon the elapse of a considerable amount of time?

CHARACTERS

4. How completely are the various age, social, and occupational classes of the community represented?

5. Are the various reactions to the

black veil probable? Are there any that seem overdone?

6. Is Mr. Hooper's character delineated well enough so that his wearing of the veil seems plausible? Why does Hawthorne not tell us the nature of Mr. Hooper's secret sin? Is Mr. Hooper an attractive character or simply an eccentric? Explain each answer.

SETTING

7. Why should a small town be a more useful setting for this story than a farm or a large city?

LANGUAGE

8. What specific differences do you notice between Hawthorne's language and that of a typical modern short story? Why is Hawthorne's language more suitable for this subject than that of (a) Hemingway? (b) Lewis?

TONE

9. Does Hawthorne seem to feel that Mr. Hooper's wearing of the veil is a silly business? Explain your answer.

MEANING

10. What clues to the meaning of the minister's actions do you get from what he says and does? from what other people say and do? from what the author tells you directly? Which method of communicating meaning does Hawthorne use most frequently?

11. Which relation is stressed: the mental or moral conflict within the man? the relation between man and nature? the relation between man and other men? the relation between man and God? Are they all present? Give examples where possible.

12. What does the black veil symbolize? Whom does the Reverend Mr. Hooper symbolize? What is ironic about the fact that the veil frightens people whereas what the veil symbolizes ordinarily does not?

13. Summarize your findings in a complete statement of the meaning of the story.

☞ *"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is a longer and more complicated poem than "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" on page 114. Basically, however, the same techniques in getting at its meaning can be used. Readers generally agree that it is one of Whitman's best, both because it sustains a highly lyrical quality throughout and because its details are so loaded with meaning that it can be reread many times and still not be completely mastered.*

WALT WHITMAN

Crossing Brooklyn ferry

I

FLOOD-TIDE below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!

On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

II

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-joined scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

III

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refreshed by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refreshed,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemmed pipes of steamboats, I looked.

I too many and many a time crossed the river of old,

Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Looked at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the sunlit water,
Looked on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
Looked on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
Looked toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and glistening,
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flanked on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

IV

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
The men and women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same—others who look back on me because I looked forward to them
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night).

V

What is it then between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not,
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,
I too walked the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it,
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me.
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,
I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,
I too had received identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my body.

VI

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seemed to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meager?
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabbed, blushed, resented, lied, stole, grudged,
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting,
Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,
Was called by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as they saw me approaching or passing,
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,
Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told them a word,
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
Played the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

VII

Closer yet I approach you,
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in advance,

I considered long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?

VIII

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemmed Manhattan?
River and sunset and scallop-edged waves of flood-tide?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated lighter?
What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as I approach?

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?
What I promised without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish is accomplished, is it not?

IX

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edged waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;

Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sailed schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lowered at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at night-fall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas,
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us,
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

The whole work

HAPPENINGS AND STRUCTURE

WHAT physical action gives the poem unity? Does the attitude of the poet change?

2. In Section I Whitman tells what he is doing and suggests that people years hence will be doing the same thing. How does Section II build on this? How is Section III related to Section II? Section IV to Section III? and so on? Answer this in some detail showing how each section is related to the original action.

CHARACTERS

3. Who is the "I" of the poem: Whitman the poet? Whitman an inhabitant of Brooklyn? Whitman an American? Whitman a representative human being?

4. Who are the "others" in Section II: the "you" in Section IV? the "us" in Section V? the "you" in Sections VI and VII? the "we" in Section VIII? the "we," "you," and "us" in the last stanza of Section IX?

SETTING

5. What about the setting of the poem makes it admirably suited for the ideas which Whitman wants to bring out? Why not use a train instead of a ferry? or an ocean steamer? or a horse and buggy?

6. Approximately how much of the poem is devoted to the details of the setting? To what senses does the poet primarily appeal—sight, sound, touch, taste, smell?

LANGUAGE

7. Would you say that this is written in formal, informal, or vulgate diction? What unusual terms do you find like "Twelfth-month" and "Mannahatta"? Do they serve any purpose?

8. List the words and phrases you do not understand and try to discover their meanings. For example, do you know what is meant by "eternal float of solution," line 107?

9. What kinds of repetitions and parallelisms do you find in sentence structure, word choice, and word placement? What effect is achieved from the emphasis on repetition and parallelism?

10. What can you say about Whitman's use of alliteration? assonance? concrete words? metaphors and similes? rhyme? regular meter?

TONE

11. How can the tone of the poem best be characterized?

MEANING

12. Let these questions help you pull out the meaning of each section:

Section I: With whom is Whitman identifying himself?

Section II: How is everyone "disintegrated yet part of the scheme"? What is the scheme? How are we identified with one another within the scheme?

Section III: What realization from the details of Sections I and II does the poet have at the beginning of Section III? What kinds of experience pull people together?

Section IV: What point already suggested, does the poet think worth repeating?

Section V: How does the body separate one from the stream of things and yet at the same time make him part of that stream? What is the body's relation to the cosmic scheme?

Section VI: What realization does Whitman get from the nature of evil that is identical with the realization he gets from crossing on the ferry?

Section VII: The poet says, "Closer yet I approach you." How has "I" "approached you" in previous sections? How does the poet identify himself with the reader?

Section VIII: What does the poet now expect of the reader?

Section IX: By "appearances" in line 120 Whitman means all those things which we experience through our senses. What is their function in the scheme of things? What is their relation to the soul? How is everything related?

13. As another preliminary step, try to generalize from the details. What do all the physical details represent? the "I"? the "you" and "reader"? the crossing of Brooklyn ferry?

14. What relations are involved: man and nature? man and man? man and God? Explain your answer.

15. What is the overall meaning or theme?

16. What secondary theme could you discover if you knew that Whitman often used Brooklyn to indicate youth, and Manhattan to indicate maturity?

17. What subsidiary and incidental meanings do you find? (For example, what is suggested about the nature of immortality in line 91?)

PART TWO

Evaluations

Evaluating literature

So far, you have considered what makes literature what it is, you have examined certain aspects of its form and craftsmanship, and you have tried to become more sensitive to tone and more aware of meanings. But now consider this problem: A sad tale from a journal that we might call *True Heartaches* has everything that we have talked about so far—happenings, characters, setting, language, tone, and meanings—yet no one with any judgment at all would say that this melancholy piece of prose has the same power over the reader as, for example, a story by Hawthorne or William Faulkner. Think of some other combinations: a play by Shakespeare versus a soap opera, a poem by Robert Frost versus a jingle on a valentine, a novel by Joseph Conrad versus a Dick Merriwell thriller. In every case the elements we observed and described in the last section are present. What, then, makes the difference between the good work and the poor one? To supply a few answers for such a question is the purpose of this section.

Putting the problem in other words, we might say that in the last section we were thinking about literature in a quantitative way. We wanted to discover what the main aspects of a piece of writing are and how many of them there are. Now we are interested in looking at literature qualitatively. We want to know what makes one story better than another, one play better than another, one poem better than another.

There is, of course, no one way of measuring works of art because we all use different yardsticks. Loosely we call the yardstick "taste." More specifically, a yardstick is a compound of our likes and dislikes, our desires and needs, our preconceptions, our knowledge and wisdom and experience—everything, in short, that makes up our particular psycho-physiological being. Since we are all different we like different things, and since we like different things we are not going to agree wholly on what makes one piece of literature better than another. Let us try to clear this up with a simple example.

You and four friends visit an automobile showroom. On anything involving weight, number, or size you can agree perfectly because you all use the same methods of measurement. You all agree that the model on display, a coupé, weighs so many pounds, has a wheelbase of so many inches, has six cylinders, and is robin's-egg blue in color. There are a host of details like this on which there is not the slightest difference of opinion. But—and here is where you start arguing—you say this is just the car that you have been waiting for, whereas the others say they wouldn't have it if the dealer gave it to them. What has happened? The conversation has passed from observation and description to evaluation. And, in the process of evaluation, you are all employing different standards. You want the car because you have always wanted a coupé painted robin's-egg blue. Friend A wants an eight-cylinder car because

he values power; Friend B wants a Bantam because he is thinking of economy; Friend C wants a car with greater speed; and Friend D disagrees with you out of sheer cussedness. The Romans, not the Greeks in this case, had a word for it: *de gustibus non est disputandum,* "there is no arguing about tastes."

Something of the same situation prevails when we try to argue with a friend that one poem is better than another, or one play is better than another. Maybe the friend will agree; and then maybe he won't. So at the beginning of this discussion of evaluation we might as well face up frankly to the fact that there is no single rule or set of rules which you can use in evaluating literature. Nor are the authors of this book going to recommend any single rule or set of rules. Rather, they hope to show you a number of standards which people have used over a long period of time and have found satisfying. Literary criticism is not the completely chaotic affair that the Roman proverb might suggest. It is not a case of every man for himself. Just as a great many people *will* agree with you that a robin's-egg blue coupé is the right car, so many will agree with you that the books you like are good books and the poems you dislike are poor poems. Many people agree on standards, but not all people. It would be a dull world if they did.

You may ask, why worry about standards? Won't I reach the same conclusions whether I am conscious of my standards or not? There are several answers to this. You may come to the same conclusions, to be sure, but it is highly doubtful that you will understand them so well. An estimate of twenty inches means something to you only if you know what inches are; the statement "this is a good book" has meaning only as you know what you mean by goodness. Furthermore, it is quite possible that through a knowledge of standards you will reach a sounder and more defensible conclusion, that you will see many things in a literary work that you would otherwise miss. Knowing your criterion in literary evaluation is analogous to knowing your major premise in an argument. It is building from a known rather than an unknown. It stops silly criticisms before they begin. A friend of yours says he does not like Wolfe's *Of Time and the River* because it is too long. Does he realize that his criterion or major premise is that "all long books are bad"? A knowledge of standards, in short, makes for thoughtful evaluations which will be more satisfying to you and more acceptable to your friends.

The standards which are employed in evaluating literature can be classified in many ways. In this discussion we shall divide them roughly into (a) those which apply to a part of the work, and (b) those which apply to the whole work. The distinction needs a brief explanation. In the first instance, a reader may be interested only in the way stories turn out. His standard might be called "the yardstick of happy endings." Measured by such a yardstick, the story with a happy ending becomes good; the story without it becomes a waste of time. Other aspects of the work mean little or nothing in the judgment he makes. He does not care what the characters are like, what the setting is, or how meaningless the story may be; he does not even care whether the ending is arrived at logically or not. All he wants is that it be happy. Indeed, sometimes he sneaks a look at the last few pages

before reading a story in order to see whether it is worth reading. This, of course, is a rather idiotic example, but it demonstrates what a standard is that involves only a part. One involving the whole work might be "the yardstick of internal consistency." According to this criterion, a story to be good must have all of its parts harmoniously related and completely interdependent. The happenings must depend upon the type of people involved; the setting must reflect and add to the events and the characterization; the tone must be appropriate; and so on.

To keep before you the fact that we are considering methods of evaluation in this section, we shall constantly refer to our standards as "yardsticks." It is measurement we are interested in, not an enumeration of parts or devices or reading problems. Our main question is: What are the yardsticks which readers most commonly use in evaluating literature? In considering each we shall try to discover what it is, how it operates, and what its peculiar advantages and disadvantages are. Under *Methods involving parts or characteristics,* we shall consider the following yardsticks: (1) clarity, (2) escape, (3) special doctrine, (4) real life, and (5) pleasure in artistic details; under *Methods involving the whole work,* we shall take up these yardsticks: (1) the effect on the reader, (2) the personality of the author, (3) internal consistency, (4) insight.

Methods involving parts or characteristics

Clarity

THE yardstick of clarity is a very simple standard of measurement according to which everything that resists reasonably careful reading is considered poor writing. Behind such a standard is the assumption that all writing is meant to be communication.

The justification for such a yardstick is obvious. A writer, if he expects readers to spend time and money on his works, has an obligation to make clear what is on his mind. The writer's retort (to the charge of obscurity) that he was interested only in self-expression will not hold water, for if that were true he should not have pushed the work into print. By the act of publication he indicates that he wants readers and, hence, that communication as well as self-expression is involved. Yet there is something to be said against too rigorous an application of this standard. Possibly the writer is using terms which as yet you have not encountered and consequently do not understand. Possibly his technique is a new one to you, or, as in the case of many modern poets, possibly he has compressed his material so

tightly that extraordinary care in reading is required. In any event, in fairness to the author you should take into account your own relevant limitations, and you should be sure that you have read the work with sufficient care, before branding a literary work inadequate because of lack of clarity.

Questions

IN "The Cask of Amontillado" (p. 72), Poe fails to tell us how Fortunato had injured and insulted the "I" of the story. Is this justification for lowering one's estimate of the work on the grounds of obscurity?

2. In Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn* (p. 42), you do not know what happens to the characters at the end because they are one by one drawn from the stage by a force which they cannot resist. Is this justification for branding the play unclear?

3. Mr. I. A. Richards criticizes the last lines of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (Part III) for being "pseudo-statement" (that is, a statement that seems to make sense but is meaningless). You will recall the lines:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Do you think Mr. Richards' comment justified? If so, why? If not, what *do* the lines mean? Can the lines be justified for reasons other than meaning?

4. As you look back over your own reading, how frequently have you employed the yardstick of clarity? Can you think of any instances in which you have done so unfairly?

5. Evaluate the following poem, Emerson's "Brahma," by the yardstick of clarity. In doing so, consider the following questions: Is the poem sheer nonsense? Is it obscure but understandable if one reads carefully enough? Is it obscure but understandable if one knows something about the principles of Hindu philosophy? Is it clear on first reading?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Brahma

IF the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Escape

If you measure by the yardstick of escape, the literary work which causes you to forget yourself and the circumstances of your own life is by that fact good. You probably employ this yardstick oftener than you think, for in a world full of perplexities and frustrations it is natural for you and everyone else to want to slip away into a land where men are men and women are exquisite creatures in slinky black evening dresses. Writing that is most successful in effecting escape deals with adventure, love, and murder.

"A shot rang out in the Silver Star saloon!" There's the beginning of adventure. You can visualize the rest: the mustachioed barkeeper; the beetle-browed villain with his shoestring necktie; the strong, silent hero (inevitably called Tex); his faithful but comically stupid "pardner"; the fresh-faced girl who can ride with the best of 'em; and honest John, her father. The story, if it is excellent as escape, is exciting, fast-moving, tense, and not too complicated. The villain—curse his dirty heart!—gets his just deserts, and Tex gets the girl. A few implausibilities in the story will not bother you if events move fast enough to keep your interest. In general, you demand the same qualities of all adventure stories, whether you read them in books or magazines, see them in plays or movies. Whether it is cloak-and-dagger stuff, sports stories, or sagas of the air and sea, you want movement, suspense, thrills, and an emphasis on physical action. You want a happy ending. You want uncomplicated characters that are clearly either good or bad. Especially, you want the exotic scene and the unfamiliar adventure. The writers in the pulp magazines may satisfy you, but the great romanticists are sure to do so: Cooper, Scott, Stevenson, Dumas, Hugo.

Romances need not necessarily be set at so fast a tempo as adventure fiction. Indeed the good ones, you probably feel, are at their best when they are quiet: a hushed night with a silver moon riding overhead, a man and a girl, the soft splashing of a fountain, a whispered "I love you." The old formula is always adequate: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl. The main thing is that the story gets you away from the freckled kid next door with whom you go to the movies on Saturday nights.

In detective fiction, you expect the excitement, suspense, and physical action of the adventure story, plus, possibly, a boy-girl routine that is interesting but not so absorbing that it interferes with the solution of the crime. In romance and adventure, you know the villain from the outset; in the detective stories you are not so sure. The fun comes in finding out. And the more you are fooled—provided the author has played fair—the better you like it. In a sense, therefore, the detective story combines the appeals of the adventure and the romance and adds to them a type of mystery which tantalizes the intellect. That detective stories are considered good reading is evidenced by the fact that Sherlock Holmes, Perry Mason, Hercule Poirot, and Lord Peter Wimsey are probably the best known characters of modern fiction.

Poems which help us best to escape from the complexities of modern life have, curiously enough, almost none of the qualities which we have been considering with regard to fiction and drama. The most popular escapist poetry is quiet, soothing, melodic. It is nonintellectual, questions nothing about

life, death, or immortality. It is like a waltz played softly and dreamily. By such a standard, Longfellow is greater than Whitman, Poe than Emerson, and Tennyson than Wordsworth. You might be able to point out exceptions to these generalizations in the form of poems like Harte's "Heathen Chinee" and ballads like "Frankie and Johnny" (p. 39), but it would generally hold that readers wanting escape through poetry prefer something like Longfellow's "The Day Is Done" with its famous final stanza:

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

It has been the custom for many teachers and literary sophisticates to pooh-pooh escapist reading, and to decry the standard by which it can be measured and considered good. Their point is that other and more serious works of art bring richer pleasure and a better understanding of your own experiences. The point is well taken. The *continual* practice of identifying yourself with a hero or heroine who always comes off triumphantly, while satisfying to the ego, is quite likely to make you less capable of handling real-life situations, where choices between right and wrong are not so clear-cut and where happy endings are often the exception rather than the rule. Yet there is some defense for considering escapist reading good reading. At one time or another, all of us need relaxation; we can not always go to the movies or play golf. On such occasions, Sherlock Holmes or Longfellow may be just what the doctor ordered.

Questions

How do you account for the popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories? Would you say that more recent detective fiction like that by Dashiell Hammett and Erle Stanley Gardner is more absorbing? What elements have been added or have been dropped in these newer works?

2. Is "The Cask of Amontillado" (p. 72) good as escapist reading? Is *Babbitt*, as represented by the passage beginning on page 55? Is "The Idol's Eye" (p. 105)? In each case give your reasons for your answer.

3. Why is prose fiction more popular as escape reading than poetry?

4. Of the reading which you do that is unconnected with school work, how much of it rates high by this standard?

5. Do you find that those works which you evaluate highly by the yardstick of escape also come out well when measured by the yardstick of clarity? Account for whatever answer you make.

6. What do you think would be the effect upon society if we read nothing but good escapist literature? If we read no escapist literature?

7. Is Emerson's "Brahma" (p. 139) good by the yardstick of escape? Is the following poem by Emily Dickinson good by this yardstick?

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

Special doctrine

By the yardstick of special doctrine, a literary work is considered good if it states or implies ideas which are congenial to the reader. More simply, this means that we like what we agree with. Phrased so baldly, this hardly seems like a sound standard for evaluation; yet it is a common one, and deserves a franker attention than it normally gets.

In considering such a yardstick as this one, we could range through the whole gamut of human interests, for to one degree or another everything we have opinions about affects our listening judgments. Here we can discuss only those concerns which most radically affect these judgments: morality, religion, politics and economics, philosophy, and literary criticism.

MORALITY

To those who are preoccupied with questions of morality, that writing which exemplifies and encourages proper conduct is good writing; conversely, whatever is profane, vulgar, or obscene, whatever encourages laxness in morals is bad. Behind such evaluation is the assumption that imaginative writing, though primarily designed to be pleasurable, must inevitably lead to instruction in behavior.

This is a critical standard that has been employed for thousands of years. Plato, for example, felt that parts of Homer and Hesiod should be kept from the young because they contained erroneous representations of the nature of gods and heroes, and were therefore not conducive to proper conduct. Indeed, censorship of fiction was to be one of the first concerns of the rulers of the ideal state. In the *Republic* Plato quotes Socrates as saying:

> *Then the first thing will be to establish a censorship of the writers of fiction, and let the censors receive any tale of fiction which is good and reject the bad; and we will desire mothers and nurses to tell their children the authorized ones only. Let them fashion the mind with such tales, even more fondly than they mould the body with their hands; but most of those which are now in use must be discarded.*

In every land there have been those who, like Plato, have employed the yardstick of morality: Horace, Ben Jonson, Tolstoy, and William Dean Howells, to name only a few.

Among those who use this measure of value, however, there is no agreement as to what "morality" as applied to literature means.[1] To some it means simply that the author has been honest with himself and his material, that his is, in short, the scientific spirit. In a paradoxical sense, a literary work is moral to such critics when it is amoral—when it does not take sides on a moral question, but merely reports what the author observes. By such an interpretation of morality, the novels of Zola could be considered highly moral, though by other interpretations they might be blasted as vulgar and indecent.

Other readers, though refusing to

[1]It is worth pointing out that there is even a misapprehension as to what morality or immorality in any context means. In America the common connotation of the latter term is sexual irregularity. Actually, of course, the word denotes any deviation from the mores, and thus includes murder, stealing, lying, cheating, and a host of other activities.

favor amorality, nevertheless consider a literary work immoral only when in its overall implications it condones misconduct. These persons believe that no worthy literary treatment of life can leave the final impression that adultery, for instance, is socially acceptable, that lying is inconsequential, that murder is of no moment. They argue that the issue here is not only one of propriety or even of divine law, but of human survival. Society would disintegrate overnight, they insist, if individuals suddenly ceased to have regard for person or property. As instruction, they conclude, literature cannot be allowed to run counter to what is necessary for race preservation.

Still other readers, those at the opposite extreme from the first group mentioned, believe a literary work is immoral if it in any fashion exhibits an indecent act or employs a coarse or obscene word. They find a work especially reprehensible if it contains swearing, drinking, divorce, or any suggestion of improper sexual relations. Literature should be uplifting; it should protect its readers from immoralities, not expose its readers to them. This attitude is most dramatically represented today in an organization like Boston's Watch and Ward Society, which agitates for a police ban on the sale of any work which in the opinion of its officers is morally offensive. In recent years such works as Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* and Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* became court cases. *Tobacco Road* and *The Children's Hour* were not permitted to play in Boston theaters. Today, the general effect of such censorship is to make a work doubly popular. But it was not always so. Moral criticism kept many an author from getting a reading public. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* for many years was a volume that many respectable people did not want in their houses. Theodore Dreiser through a stipulation in the contract was able to force publication of *Sister Carrie* but then was not able to make the publisher distribute it to booksellers. Even *Huckleberry Finn* was forced off the library shelves in certain cities because influential citizens thought it crude and improper.

The problem is a thorny one. On two points practically all are agreed: (1) that literature in dealing with human experience cannot fail to become involved with what is right and wrong in human conduct; (2) that literature, like experience itself, is a teacher. But the question still remains, to what extent should it consciously teach right conduct? Those who argue that literature should not be expected to be the "handmaiden of morality" point out that an author cannot treat life intelligently unless he is permitted to show evil as well as good. Even obscene passages and vulgar words are defensible, they say, if they contribute to the air of reality, and in doing so make the literary work a more profound and effective delineation of life. Instruction is a matter of creating understanding, and understanding must be based upon a knowledge of all the facts. Those who want literature to be morally uplifting retort that nothing is to be gained by a parading of what is sordid and vulgar. Indeed, they argue, much may be lost because the attitudes and values of the young may be permanently warped. Instruction, they insist, must be a matter of indoctrination in what is right, right being determined by divine law and human convention.

The basic weakness in the position of those who believe that literature should

not be expected to be the "handmaiden of morality" is that it fails to recognize that literature in admittedly affecting men's attitudes and conduct imposes a social responsibility upon the author. To what extent fiction, plays, and movie scenarios are responsible for juvenile delinquency is an open question, but it is a question nevertheless. The basic weakness in the opposite position is that the extreme moralist too often assumes that his right and wrong are absolutes, whereas in reality they are simply a compound of his own traditions, customs, and prejudices. Frequently, too, in concentrating on a detail he loses sight of the fundamental thesis.

RELIGION

That religious affiliations and doctrines get into our literary evaluations cannot be denied. Confirmed Protestants have been less enthusiastic about Evelyn Waugh since his conversion to Catholicism, and strict Catholics have had a difficult time becoming enthusiastic about Mark Twain because of his criticism of their church. Some persons of both faiths have harbored qualms about a writer like Dreiser who questions the validity of all religion. In many cases, individual evaluations based upon religious beliefs have been fortified by official institutional positions which appear in the literary reviews of denominational publications.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Political affiliation and economic doctrine affect our literary judgments also. At its best, the resulting criticism shows some rather astonishing inequities in treatment. It seems clear that Dr. Johnson would have thought more highly of "Lycidas" had Milton been a Tory, that English Liberals would have been more enthusiastic about Southey's writings had he not deserted their party, that British Laborites would be fonder of Kipling had he not sanctioned imperialism. Contemporary Americans who tend to be liberal in their political thinking are likely to place a high estimate upon writers like Hemingway, Dos Passos, Upton Sinclair, and Lillian Hellman; more conservative readers, by the same token, prefer authors who accept the *status quo* or, at least, are not particularly critical of it—authors like Kenneth Roberts and Clarence Buddington Kelland. Most strongly partisan in this country are the Marxists who approve of nothing which does not advocate Marxist doctrines. But even they fall far short of the kind of partisanship which has occurred abroad. We shall not soon forget how Hitler banned or destroyed all books which were unsympathetic to Nazism. And now it would seem that Russia is becoming increasingly severe with authors who fail to follow the official Communist "line."

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophical beliefs often give the assumptions upon which literary conclusions are based. Platonists, believing in a world of ultimate truth beyond the realm of our senses and apprehensible only through our intuition, are likely to have especially high regard for those works which suggest that the material world is secondary, imperfect, and transitory. Thus Emerson found such writers as Milton, Goethe, and Coleridge especially exciting. Non-Platonists who believe that truth can be apprehended only by the senses look not for evidences of intuitive insight but for a detailed and faithful representation of life based on careful sensory observation. Such thinkers are likely to put a

considerably higher estimate than the Platonists would upon such writers as Zola, Hardy, Dostoevski, Dreiser, and Dos Passos.

The relation between philosophy and critical yardsticks is a vast and complicated problem, which, at first glance, may seem to have nothing to do with your own reading. Yet to the extent that you have notions about the nature of truth, goodness, and beauty, you can be said, very loosely, to be a philosopher. Obviously what you think about goodness in general will affect what you think is good in literature; what you think about truth and beauty in general will determine to a large degree what you expect of them in literature.

LITERARY CRITICISM

Special doctrines within the field of literary criticism have an obvious effect on one's evaluations. Again, this might look like a matter only for the experts but not for you. But, again, you are personally involved, for every age has its preferences, and you as well as the leading literary critics are a product of your age. What the great majority of eighteenth-century readers wanted was simplicity if not austerity in style, ease in reading, and neatness of form. Deprecating the way Shakespeare played fast and loose with time and place, they urged their dramatists to confine a play to one setting and the time span of the action to twenty-four hours. Poetry, they felt, should be written in rhymed couplets, and in relatively elegant language. They thought the conceits of John Donne tiresome, and they preferred the simpler ideas and lines of Alexander Pope.

But what happened to these notions? To a great extent they were replaced by other standards in the nineteenth century, and these in turn were superseded by new points of view in the twentieth. Today, most readers want their details vigorous and realistic; they care very little about traditional forms; they think it silly for all poems to be written in rhymed couplets or for most of them to be about nature; they like a style that is colorful, jabby, almost journalistic in flavor. Are these timeless standards of greatness?

Observe, too, that within the general taste pattern of an age there are all sorts of minor groups which overlap in doctrine but still retain distinctive emphasis. Today, there are the realists, naturalists, primitivists, Freudians, Marxists, and a host of others, each group with its special tenets and each evaluating literature according to those tenets. It is quite possible that you are a naturalist, for example, without knowing it.

The yardstick of special doctrine is a tricky and often deceptive affair. One of its characteristic weaknesses is that it too often introduces criteria which are irrelevant. Worse than that, it too often becomes a matter of evaluation by prejudice, and hence ceases to be evaluation at all. Conclusions reached by this method are frequently inconsequential, sometimes crude and vicious. Yet we cannot escape from our age or our temperament. We should be a pretty sad lot if we had no convictions at all about religion, politics and economics, philosophy, or literature. Provided a doctrine is reasonable and relevant, no one can logically argue against its use simply because it is the result of your private loyalties. You may be a partisan, but that is no reason for your becoming grossly unreasonable. This yardstick, therefore, can be manipulated to personal, unintelligent, and evil ends. Too often it is. But it need not be.

Questions

DISCOVER in each of these literary estimates the special doctrine which the critic is employing as a yardstick:

(a) Dreiser's *Sister Carrie:*

We do not recommend the book to the fastidious reader, or the one who clings to "old fashioned ideas."—New York Times, 1907.

And one feels his honesty, his determination to present life exactly as he sees it. He may not approve of the deed he describes; often he expresses his disapproval in ways that show how imperfectly he has conquered the prejudices of his boyhood; but the desire to understand triumphs over conventional morality, and the story of Carrie Drouet and Hurstwood is inexorably unfolded.—GRANVILLE HICKS, The Great Tradition, 1933.

(b) Dreiser's *The Genius:*

His readers accompany him through more than 700 pages and 330,000 words, and into personal details that even a Zola would avoid.—Boston Transcript, 1915.

Life at its best and most heroic is rebellion. All artists, big and little, are in their degree rebels. You [Dreiser] yourself are a rebel. . . . Why do you not write the American novel of rebellion?—FLOYD DELL, The Masses, August 1916.

(c) Dreiser's writing in general:

I am not quarreling with this great-hearted writer because he is not a Socialist in the narrow sense. Scientific socialism is only a part of a man's big job of understanding the blind fortunes of nature and subordinating them to his will. Read a little book by a true scientist, Ray Lankester's "The Kingdom of Man," and learn what is the matter with our world.—UPTON SINCLAIR, Money Writes, 1927.

As even Henry Adams saw and every unclouded mind knows, the terribly sore spot in American life has been and still is in the sex life of the vast majority. . . . Hence Dreiser's frank and sharp and profoundly serious dealing with sex as a primordial and pervasive and creative force was from the start and still is an epoch-making act of vicarious liberation. . . . It remains true that his eminence, his eminence above all within the framework of his country's literature and civilization, is due to his dealing with sex, to his constant assertion of the import and in truth, the sacredness of the generative process and function which is at the very core of life.—LUDWIG LEWISOHN, Expression in America, 1932.

2. What kinds of doctrines and attitudes other than the ones mentioned here frequently affect our judgment (e.g., attitudes toward racial minorities)?

3. What special doctrines are likely to affect the reviews and comments on books which appear in the following periodicals and newspapers: *Time, The New Masses, The New Yorker, Ladies' Home Journal, The Nation, The Catholic World, The Christian Advocate,* Hearst's *Journal American,* McCormick's *Chicago Tribune,* Scripps-Howard newspapers, *The Daily Worker?*

4. What are your own doctrines and attitudes that are most likely to affect your literary judgments? Be specific in your answer.

5. Discover what a materialist is, a humanist, and a logical positivist. Then imagine, in turn, that you are each of these and see what you would have to say about a work like O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (Part III).

6. Do any special doctrines or attitudes of yours affect your estimate of the following poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins? Do you think that the moral, religious, social, or philosophical doctrine which affects your judgment of this poem results in a sounder and more defensible estimate of the poem as a literary accomplishment than you otherwise might have achieved?

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Heaven-haven

A Nun Takes the Veil

I HAVE desired to go
Where springs not fail
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come.
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

Reprinted from *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* by permission of the Hopkins family and the Oxford University Press.

Real life

SINCE the rise in the latter part of the nineteenth century of what we have come to call realism, a special emphasis has been placed on the ability of the writer to report life as it is. "Life as it is," however, is an ambiguous term that can mean, among other things, truth to the facts of human life or truth to the general nature of human beings. Because these two interpretations involve slightly different criteria, we shall consider them separately.

TRUTH TO THE FACTS OF HUMAN LIFE

Consciously or unconsciously we all probably test a work occasionally by the accuracy of its facts. According to this standard, the work which reports actuality in a flawless manner is good; the one which distorts the facts as we know them is bad. Essentially what we are doing here is demanding that the man of literature be also a historian or a scientist.

Some readers prefer to get their history through imaginative literature. They know the Plantagenets through Shakespeare, the Scottish lairds through Scott, the American Indian through Cooper, and the Civil War through Margaret Mitchell. Since such persons are reading for knowledge, they demand strict adherence to the known facts, and they resent any deviations from them. Thus they demand the same accuracy of such a work as *Gone with the Wind* as another person might demand of the Beards' *Rise of American Civilization*. Other readers—all of us at one time or another—while not necessarily going to literature for history are disturbed by inaccuracies. Even Keats

pulls us up abruptly when in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" he has Cortez rather than Balboa discovering the Pacific.

Often we treat literature, too, as though it were the work of trained social scientists. We demand that *Main Street* display the same exhaustive analysis of American town life that we find in a work like the Lynds' *Middletown,* which is a detailed and thorough analysis of life in Muncie, Indiana, done by two of the country's ablest social scientists. If we are Brooklynites, we check on streets and schools and bridges in Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn;* if we are Chicagoans, we read Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* to make sure that the streets are properly named and that Washington Park is described with precision. Often a work is called inaccurate because the reader does not agree with the selection of facts or with the interpretation that the author has given them. Thus Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* has been savagely denounced in both Oklahoma and California for what the editorial writers called inaccuracy and distortion. And Sinclair Lewis was roundly criticized by businessmen for *Babbitt,* by physicians for *Arrowsmith,* and by the clergy for *Elmer Gantry.*

In recent years, we have been demanding more attention to the facts of psychology. As the theories of men like Freud, Adler, Jung, and Watson have become better known, the terms of the psychiatrists and psychoanalysts have gradually crept into our vocabularies. To most intelligent readers nowadays "schizophrenia" is no longer baffling; neither is "paranoiac," "manic depressive," or "psychotic." Even high-school students speak learnedly of a "sense of insecurity." The result of this increasing awareness of the terms and problems of maladjustment is that many readers have come to treat literary works as case histories. They want to analyze the main characters in order to diagnose their mental diseases and to suggest what the proper cure might be. The Freudians have been particularly active in this respect with the result that every character from Sophocles' Oedipus to Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths has been psychoanalyzed over and over. Hamlet has been an especial favorite. For such readers the handling of a psychological abnormality must be accurate. They insist, for example, that the paranoiac follow a plausible pattern of behavior for the type and that he not suddenly, because of the demands of the plot or the whimsy of the author, become a well-adjusted citizen.[1]

Whether you approve or disapprove of this standard of factual accuracy, you cannot deny that you—and all other readers—employ it from time to time, and that sometimes it may be the most important single element leading to a literary judgment. The unfairness of employing this standard too rigorously is obvious. Since the dramatist, poet, or fiction writer has not tried to write history as such or a scientific treatise as such, it is unjust to demand of him the factual precision of history or science. Yet we do expect that the competent writer face his material seriously and squarely. Surely this would imply a regard for the important facts, and hence

[1]This preoccupation of many readers has led to a relatively new type of fiction which copies after the psychiatrist's case history as closely as possible. Two of the most popular works of this nature in recent years have been Charles R. Jackson's LOST WEEKEND and Mary Jane Ward's THE SNAKEPIT.

some obligation to see them clearly and communicate them accurately. You can make out a fairly good case, consequently, for the employment within reasonable limits of the standard of factual accuracy.

TRUTH TO HUMAN NATURE

More than simple factual accuracy, the standard of truth to human nature requires that the work create a believable place and characters. If factual accuracy will help, well and good; on the other hand, if representative details imaginatively conceived establish the effect, that, too, is well and good.

In many respects this yardstick involves a work of art as a whole, since happenings, characters, setting, and dialogue must all contribute if the desired effect is to be achieved. Most readers who employ the criterion, however, do so without regard to the artistic and intellectual effects which also may be present. Nor do they pay much attention to the necessary function of a character. What they want to know is whether the Tom Jones in the story is, acts, and thinks like the people they know. If he does, the story is well written; if he does not, the story is a waste of time—whatever the other effects. When used in this fashion, the yardstick of real life measures an effect just as partial as that measured for morality or factual accuracy.

Probably the best way to see what this method of evaluation requires is to see what it excludes. It excludes, clearly, what Hawthorne in his preface to the *The House of the Seven Gables* calls the "marvelous." Strange and supernatural incidents are ruled out. The misty outlines of the *Flying Dutchman* cannot be seen on the horizon every time the moon is full; no ghost may appear upon a battlement—indeed there should be no battlement in the first place, for the locale of Gothic terror novels is suspect. Coincidence, as well, comes under the heading of what is marvelous. In this sense, fiction must be less strange than life. On many occasions, probably, you have had the experience of thinking about a person just before meeting him, or even of prophesying an event before it came true. Yet little or none of this sort of thing can get into a literary work if the effect of real life is to be achieved. Events must operate causally. The story should proceed like a string of dominoes upended in a row. All the author does is knock the first into the second, and the rest of the operation is inevitable. So critical of forced happy endings are many readers who employ this yardstick that they lean over backwards and resent anything that turns out happily—however logical it may be shown to be.

This suggests another characteristic ruled out by the yardstick of real life: undue emphasis. William Dean Howells had this in mind, for example, when he wrote that the delineation of sex should be kept in proper proportion. The French novelists, he charged, wrote as though sex is man's only interest, whereas in actuality it is only one of many interests. The effect of real life, many believe, is gained not only by excluding "marvelous" details but also by putting believable details together in the proper proportion.

A third element to be excluded is what we loosely call the type character. This term requires explanation. Those who divide all characters into two neat little groups—types and individuals—have oversimplified the problem to the

point where they are essentially falsifying. All characters who are at all believable are type characters—in the sense that they are representative of living people. One could, if he wished, develop a personality who had one eye, two noses, talked through his feet, became angry when someone flattered him, and was delighted when someone punched him in the nose. The result would be an individual, certainly, but he would just as certainly be a monster. To the degree that a character operates and reacts the way normal people do, he is a type. Or more narrowly, to the extent that he reacts the way a small group of people do—paranoiacs, for example—he is a type. What, then, is the basis for the antipathy to types in realistic writing? Briefly, it is an antipathy to *a fictional character who is like other fictional characters:* the *stock* hero, heroine, villain, Englishman, Congressman, industrial tycoon, Kentucky colonel, and international spy.

If you had to, you could take up each of these and tell what the conventional trait is. The international spy is suavely mysterious, the Kentucky colonel is hospitable, the Congressman is windy, the industrial tycoon is domineering, and so it goes. In effect, each is an animated quality. You know what he is like the moment he appears in the story, and he is still the same when the story ends. His choices are simple, and he always decides what to do on the basis of his special characteristic. Real people are far more complicated than this. Take yourself, for instance. You may be patient with your neighbor's children and altogether impatient with your own brother; you may be respectful to your college instructor, disrespectful to your parents, or—what is more likely—respectful to your instructor when he is present, alternately respectful and disrespectful behind his back, and, depending upon the occasion, respectful and disrespectful to your parents. The point is that you are never *always* one or *always* the other. Your decisions, moreover, are not easy ones to make.

The choice of the typical Western hero between shooting it out and taking a bribe is too simple a moral problem to be representative of the sort of thing we encounter in real life. One alternative is clearly good, the other clearly evil. But what should one do when both alternatives are part good, part evil? If you will recall Huckleberry Finn, you will remember that he must make a choice between doing what other people think is right (and turn Jim over to the authorities as a runaway slave) and doing what he feels is right (help Jim escape into a free state). This is no easy choice for a boy to make. On the one side are the minister, the Sunday-school teacher, the judge, and all the best people of the town; on the other side is only Jim. Picture the bewilderment of a Western hero in a situation like this!

The illusion of actual life will disappear, also, if a character changes his nature too quickly. What we expect of a character is consistency: either he must remain the same or he must change in a thoroughly credible manner. As a reader, you simply cannot swallow sudden "conversions." You say that people do not change that way, and you are right. The yardstick of realism will not admit any change as good unless at least three elements have been attended to: a temperament that makes the change possible, circumstances that mo-

tivate the change, and sufficient time for such a change to take place.

The temperament, or basic nature, of the character is important. In *Sister Carrie* Dreiser has Hurstwood disintegrate from a well-to-do, polished, tavern "front-man" to a Bowery bum. The germ for this collapse is in Hurstwood's general tendency to let things drift. When we first meet him, we observe that he has let his home life drift to the point where his family is emotionally independent of him and that he has let his business life drift to where he is an elegant decoration and nothing else. We are not surprised, therefore, when events begin turning against him, that he still lets things slide. It would have been astonishing had he done anything else. But temperament is not enough; people don't change unless something happens to them. Thus circumstances must develop which believably propel a character toward what his final nature is to be. King Lear changes from a haughty monarch to a pitiably weak old man only after his daughters Goneril and Regan have subjected him to one indignity after another. To be sure, the germ of this collapse is in Lear, but the collapse itself is made believable by the constant banging he takes from circumstance. Finally, enough time must elapse or the shift in character will seem too sudden to be real. Henry James in speaking of one of his first novels, *Roderick Hudson,* felt that he had lost some of the air of reality because he had had his main character, an American, go to pieces too quickly when placed in the older and richer culture of Italy.

What we have just been implying is that the thoughts and actions of characters, to be acceptable according to a real-life standard, must be well motivated. The characters must not be puppets dangling at the end of a string which the author is wiggling; their thoughts must be the result of events and other thoughts, and their actions must be the result of thoughts and other actions. Hamlet's motive for revenge is clear enough for a six-year-old: his uncle has murdered his father. But how about the cross-motives behind his indecision? It is in making Hamlet's indecision believable that Shakespeare shows his genius, for a less able writer might easily have made the character hesitate without making the reasons for the hesitation clear and believable.

Finally, this standard requires that the characters must talk like real people. Actually, no well-drawn character ever does, for real conversation is too dull and too incoherent. But we expect characters to give the *effect* of actual speech. American humorists caught the dialect of particular localities long before the more serious writers did, and their stepchildren, the radio comedians, still rely on dialect for many of their laughs. Dialect, though, is not enough for more serious treatment. To be realistic, book speech must represent the actual in rhythm, sentence length and emphasis, diction, imagery, idioms, and grammar. Farrell, Hemingway, and Sinclair Lewis have all been praised for catching the flavor of real talk; Henry James has been criticized for having all his characters talk like Henry James.

For a literary work to measure up well against a strict real-life standard, then, its events must be commonplace rather than "marvelous," its details must be proportioned according to their importance in actuality, the characters must be relatively complicated, the

choices they make must not be too easy, change in character must be understandable, every action must be motivated, and dialogue must give the effect of real conversation. There are plenty of drawbacks in the practice of employing so strict a standard. In the first place, you rule out any number of delightful works like Shakespeare's *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," and Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*—all of which make use of the "marvelous." Then, in demanding that the characters be complicated, you forget that many characters are simply functional. They are in the play or story simply to do something—to get the main characters together, to give them a chance to talk, to provide excuses for them to come and go. Furthermore, if the characters, even the minor ones, do not have dominant traits, we cannot see the basis for anything they do or say. Observe King Lear again. Certainly he is complex in the sense that he has many characteristics and that his characteristics change; but dominant, particularly at the beginning, is his love for flattery and adulation. Unless we see that trait clearly, we shall have great trouble in making sense of what happens. Then, again, in demanding that characters be real according to the standards of the real world, we are likely to forget that they can be equally acceptable if they are plausible according to the standards of the world of the book or play. To put it another way, the yardstick of real life measures the people and occurrences of a book or play against something which takes place outside that book or play; the criterion of plausibility measures them against what can believably take place within. About the latter, we shall have more to say later. Lastly, literature obviously cannot be so lengthy, so formless, so dull and unpointed as the events of actuality. (Imagine the reaction of an audience if your last dinner-table conversation were repeated verbatim on the stage!)

When all the weaknesses of this yardstick are listed, however, the fact still remains that the illusion of reality gives us literature that the twentieth-century mind is most likely to read with thoughtful attention. Judgments made by this standard, therefore, are likely to stand up well under scrutiny, probably better than the judgments made according to any other standard so far mentioned.

Questions

WHAT standard for judging literature are these critics employing?

Melville attacked his problems in Moby Dick *so courageously and resourcefully that one marvels at the failure of the book to impress and influence the generation after the war. But the explanation is simple: after the war men were wrestling with the problem of evil as it presented itself in concrete economic phenomena. Melville's problem was evil enough, but the terms in which he stated it were irrelevant.*—GRANVILLE HICKS.

One half of the man's [Dreiser's] *brain, so to speak, wars with the other half. He is intelligent, he is thoughtful, he is a sound artist—but there come moments when a dead hand falls upon him, and he is once more the Indiana peasant, snuffling absurdly over imbecile sentimentalities, giving a grave ear to quackeries, snorting and eye-rolling with the best of them.*—H. L. MENCKEN.

2. There seems good reason to believe that the historical character on which Hawthorne modeled his Mr. Hooper in "The Minister's Black Veil" (p. 117) actually wore a black handkerchief instead of a veil, and did it in memory of his dead wife. Do you find that this lack of historical accuracy on Hawthorne's part robs the story of effectiveness? Why or why not?

3. Is the change in the Reverend Mr. Hooper made believable through the handling of temperament, circumstance, time lapse, and motivation? If so, would you call it "true to human nature"? Answer this in some detail.

4. Do the characters in Chekhov's *The Swan Song* (p. 63) talk as they would in real life? Can you tell whether they talk like real persons if you have never met people from their part of the world? Does this last question suggest a possible weakness in the yardstick of real life that must be watched for? Is the fact that this is a translation of any importance?

5. Would the book *Huckleberry Finn* have been more real had certain of the characters (Pap, for instance) been profane? If so, would the book have been a better work according to this yardstick?

6. Of the various storm descriptions in the section on Language (pp. 86-92), which is the most like a real storm? Is it also the most moving? Is there any necessary connection between what is realistic and what is moving?

7. Evaluate the following sketch according to the criteria of reality. Give all the reasons you can think of for your evaluation.

WESSEL SMITTER On the assembly line

IT WAS like I told Russ the next morning while we were waiting for the timekeep to give us our badges and make out our cards:

"A fellow ain't really worked in an automobile factory until he's been on the line—knows what it's like to hold up his end on production."

"Looks to me," he said, "like any man could hold up his end along with these fellows. They're not the same breed we had in the drop forge department. Kids, mostly, and those that ain't kids are pot-bellied. What would a man do with a bunch like this in the woods? Pick up chips—that's all he could use 'em for."

"That's all right," I said. "You'll have more respect for them after you've watched their duet for awhile. You'll find out that they can get out the work. They's fellows here, that when they step out for relief, four men like you couldn't hold down their jobs on the line."

It was good to get back where things were humming; where I knew the fellows and where I didn't have to worry about somebody dropping a piece

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of steel the size of a house on my head. The graveyard shift had punched out and the day shift was on and the noise made you feel as though you wanted to get going at something. In one end of the building were the automatics, machining cylinder blocks—boring and drilling, cutting and honing and milling. In the other end, a quarter of a mile long, was the assembly line—a moving conveyor system—hundreds of little four-wheeled buggies, moving slowly along, pulled by an endless chain driven by electric motors over a track eighteen inches above the floor. Starting out, each buggy carried a cylinder block—a single piece of cast iron; and as it moved along each man did his work, adding this part and that, until at the end it was a complete motor—ready to run. At right angles to the assembly line were the over-head conveyors, bringing in materials and parts where and when needed. These were monorail conveyors, mostly, attached to the ceiling—little streams of pistons, little streams of valves, starters, transmissions, cylinder heads and gaskets—streams that came into the main assembly line—the big river.

The line got into its swing. The fellows stopped joking and talking. There was no whistling or singing or horseplay—no time for nothing but work. It was good to be back in the noise and the racket; it was like getting back to city streets after being in the country for a long time. It made you feel good; it made you feel like you were a part of the factory. On the line there was the rat-a-tat-tat-tat of pneumatic hammers, the sharp pft-pft-pft and snarl of air hoses, the whine of electric drills and the hum of power wrenches and screwdrivers. But above it all rose the beat and the peculiar vibrating hum of the high-speed automatics. The vibrations from these filled the whole place and got into your blood and your nerves. It made you breathe faster, work faster; if you wanted to go slow you couldn't, and if your work didn't keep you busy you jiggled around on one foot, or made some extra motions with your hands or your arms just to keep in tune with the noise. Just to be there—to be making your share of the noise—it made you feel good. It made you feel as though you were a part of something pretty darn big and important.

Russ wasn't satisfied with trying to get four or five nuts on each motor. He'd made up his mind he was going to get all of them right off the bat. He stood there with his feet wide apart, jaws set, and went at his work as though he personally had to lick the tar out of every motor that came towards him down the long line—as though he wanted to hold them back—keep them from coming at him—tear them apart with his hands. Not being used to the work, his fingers were clumsy. He'd drop a nut, start picking it up, get mad at himself, and then drop another. By that time the motor he was on would be in Jeff's station—another one coming—no nuts for Jeff

to run down, and I'd have to jump in and work to beat the band to catch up.

After lunch things went the same. I didn't tell him anything. Sometimes when a fellow has ideas of his own it's better to let him find out for himself they're no good. Tomorrow, I figured, he'd be in the right mood to listen. He'd be ready to take some advice and I'd get him straightened out. When the bell rang, and we were standing in line to punch out, I said: "How do you like it—so far?"

He let out a snort.

"That's no job I got there," he said. "It's a pain in the neck."

"Tonight," I said, "you'll be putting on nuts in your sleep."

"Tomorrow," he said, "I'll have that job learnt. I'll either get all those nuts—or I'll eat my shirt."

"Well," I said, "you'd better wear a shirt that goes down easy."

He didn't have the right attitude, yet.

Pleasure in artistic details

By the standard of pleasure in artistic details a work is good if it provides enough pleasurable moments through effectively handled details to compensate for the time spent on it. For many readers, a single moment of intense pleasure is enough to justify an otherwise rather tedious book or poem.

This is the yardstick of the hedonist, the type of person who believes that one should like or dislike things for themselves, that values lie in feelings of pleasure and pain. As Walter Pater points out, it is not the fruit of experience that is important, but the experience itself. In using such a yardstick, therefore, you read not to learn facts or to weigh moral concepts or to discover what real life is like, but to find as much delight in the present as you can. Your basic assumption is that all pleasure is good, and all pain bad.

Many Americans find this a difficult yardstick to employ. Most of us are so trained in the concepts of "usefulness," of making every minute count toward something else, that we find it hard to value experience for its own sake. Automobile riding is pleasant because it gets us some place; swimming is valuable because it develops our muscles; going to school is valuable because it prepares us for intelligent citizenship and our vocations; reading is useful because through it we learn something that some day we may be able to use. Rarely do we enjoy automobile riding just because it is automobile riding, swimming just because it is swimming, and so on. Ahead of almost everything we do is some future and often rather indefinite goal. Experience is usually a means, seldom an end. Someone has said that the only times that we ever really live in the present are when we take an ocean voyage or when we fall in love. Then, we surrender ourselves to the moment and enjoy it thoroughly. This is the attitude that must be taken toward reading if we are to employ the standard of pleasure in artistic details.

What can provide this pleasure? This is a hard question to answer, for it can be almost anything. Furthermore, it will

not be the same thing in quite the same way for any two persons. Probably the best way to answer the question is to take a poem (for the sake of space only; a short story, play, or novel would do just as well) and discover what some of the elements are which might give pleasure. Here is Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening":

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

You may find your pleasure here primarily in the language, in the sort of things discussed in the section on Language (pp. 81-86). After the generalizations of international arguments and the high-flown exaggerations of movie advertisements, you may find delightful relief in the simple, concrete terms of this poem. Or the sound patterns may be especially appealing. Here are simple four-beat lines which proceed quietly—just as they should to suggest a woods on a snowy evening. You may enjoy reading the lines aloud and listening to the play on *o*'s and *r*'s and *s*'s. The rhymes are clear and obvious, yet not forced. Notice how the last word in the third line of each stanza except the last establishes the rhyme for the next stanza. You may find it especially satisfying that the ending of the third line of the last stanza does *not* introduce a new rhyme, thus indicating that the poem is being closed off. You may find the semi-refrain in the last stanza a quietly melodic device which is appropriate to the feeling and meaning.

The poem may give you special pleasure in what it calls to mind. Possibly you have had a similar experience which is suggested by these lines. Or possibly the poem suggests what you nostalgically look back upon as a simpler and more delightful age when men did have time to relax before hurrying on because there are "promises to keep." Or possibly phrases or single words call to mind associations which you treasure. "Harness bells" may suggest your grandfather's farm with the barn smelling sweetly of hay and the cherry tree in the front yard afoam with blossoms.

You may find enjoyment in the pattern of the work, the four stanzas of four lines each. There may be a neatness and compression here that you like. Or you may be pleased by the ease of comprehension made possible by the fact that the elements of the poem fit so comfortably within the structure. Or you may like a pattern like this because it is brief, because you can give a maximum amount of your attention to it and yet not tire before you reach its end. Or you may enjoy the pattern of the contrast established between the horse and the man. The horse, a being with a material sense of values, is indignant at the stop because it serves no useful purpose. In the first stanza, the man with his sensory

delight in an experience for its own sake is the master—he stops the horse. In the second stanza, the horse shows a mental reaction—he is puzzled. In the third stanza, he exhibits physical impatience—he gives his harness bells a shake. In the fourth stanza, he is successful—he has reminded the man of his promises in the world of affairs, and the man, surrendering, does what the horse has been urging him to do—drives on. (Note that the theme here is precisely the problem of this section, the use of the yardstick of pleasurable moments.) Or, finally, you may find delight in the pattern because of the interplay of variety and repetition. The meter is the same throughout; so are the line lengths, the stanza form, and, with one exception, the rhyme pattern. But within this relatively unvaried structure are infinite variations in sound values. Notice, moreover, that even though the structure remains the same, the lines perceptibly change in tempo. The speed accelerates through the second line of the third stanza, when a reversal takes place. By the time the last two lines are reached, you are reading the poem very slowly indeed.

These are only a few of the details in this poem that may give you pleasurable moments. In the case of a play or a piece of fiction, it might be a single character, one or two especially well-written descriptions, a particularly moving scene or speech, an unexpected but yet plausible twist in plot. Many critics deride the use of this yardstick and say that it results only in simple-minded impressionism. Admittedly, evaluation according to this method can be subjective and undisciplined. Indeed, the person using this yardstick may talk about himself as much as he talks about the work. And if he talks well, he may hypnotize himself and others into thinking the work more effective than it really is. All this must be recognized and guarded against. But, as you must have discovered from the example given above, pleasurable moments can be the result of detailed and analytical reading. The method, therefore, need not simply be a subjective operation which results in a Zane Grey novel seeming to be as good as one written by Thomas Hardy. There are different kinds of pleasure, varying from a superficial emotional titillation to the deeply compelling satisfaction coming from an awareness of the greatest artistic achievement. The quantitative criteria are the number and duration of the pleasurable moments; the qualitative criteria are the intensity and nature of the pleasure itself. When these are all taken into consideration, the yardstick of pleasure in artistic details affords a standard for mature and defensible judgments. Even if it did not, it would still be valuable in that it brings to our attention the fact that reading can be delightful for its own sake.

Questions

THINK back over the works which you have read which on the whole did not interest you but which had details in them that you enjoyed and that you still remember. What kinds of details were these: happenings, bits of characterization, description, dialogue, or what?

2. What kinds of details are likely to give most pleasure to the person who has read very little? (Refer to the kinds mentioned in the analysis of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.") An appreciation of which details is likely

to come only after one becomes more sophisticated in literary matters? Reread the Frost poem. Which details give you most pleasure?

3. Rate "The Open Window" according to all the standards that we have discussed so far. Be prepared to defend your ratings.

Rating chart

Make checks in the boxes, or on a separate sheet of paper, according to the following ratings—first box: *excellent;* second box: *good;* third box: *average;* fourth box: *poor;* fifth box: *total failure.*

THE YARDSTICK	THE RATING
Clarity	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Escape	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Special doctrine (name it):_____	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Real life	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Pleasure in artistic details	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

SAKI The open window

"MY AUNT will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

From H. H. Munro's *The Short Stories of Saki.* Copyright, 1930 by the Viking Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing, 'Bertie, why do you bound?' as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window—"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly;

"my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn't it?"

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention—but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illness, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make any one lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

Methods involving the whole work

We have given rather detailed attention to methods of evaluation which involve only parts or aspects of a literary work because these are probably the methods which are used most commonly. As a general rule, however, they leave much to be desired. Often they have little to do with the nature and intent of literature, being standards which are more properly identified with ethical, historical, and scientific discourses. Often, too, they indicate literary naïveté and intellectual inadequacy. At worst, they may not be standards at all but simply personal prejudices. Such criticisms cannot be so forcefully leveled at methods of evaluation which involve the work as a whole. As you will see, these require more careful analysis and a more highly developed taste.

Evaluation of a literary work as a whole can be based upon four different kinds of relations: (1) the relation between the work and the reader, (2) the relation between the work and the author, (3) the relations of the various elements within the work itself, to one another and to the whole, and (4) the relation between the work and human thought and understanding. Evaluation based on each of these relations proceeds from special assumptions and results in its own set of conclusions. At its best, each type represents the application of a sound philosophy to a work of art.

The work and the reader

The basic premise in the first method of evaluation is that the most important aspect of a literary work is its effect upon the reader. Its concerns, therefore, are chiefly psychological, and they deal with the type of effect, its intensity, its components, its duration, and its universality.

Observe that we are speaking here of the overall or unified effect of a literary work, not of the partial effects which were previously discussed in the section on pleasure through artistic details. This yardstick bears upon the overall pleas-

ure which rises out of the merging of many momentary pleasures: it is the quality which results through the accumulation of many minor qualities; it is the tonal unity which develops out of complexity. Although *Macbeth,* for example, through its plot, characters, settings, and language may incite horror, humor, grudging admiration, repulsion, and a sense of weirdness, the great unified sweep is through pity and fear to a final catharsis in which one's dammed-up emotions seem suddenly purged of all that is nasty and evil. The intensity of this emotional reaction would by this yardstick of effect make *Macbeth* a great play.

The type or quality of effect can be only roughly designated in words like fear, pity, horror, joy, rapture, quiet resignation—all words which name emotions. In every case the name falls far short of communicating the sensation itself. You have had the frustrating experience of trying to tell the family how horrible an accident was and of finding words completely inadequate. The same is true here. The peculiar quality of the effect of a piece of literature upon you is largely a private quality—it is yours and yours only. For example, you see a competent production of Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn,* at which you are almost frightened out of your wits. But when you tell your best friend about it, he laughs and says it sounds silly to him. Unless you are almost as competent as the author, your only recourse is to have him see the play, too. We must do the best we can in naming the effect a work has on us. But the best will be none too good.

If you find that you have difficulty communicating the exact nature of the effect of a work, however, you can still be relatively articulate about certain of its aspects. For instance, you can point out what creates the work's special degree of intensity. The plot may be novel or hackneyed, the details general or specific, the dialogue stilted or sparkling, the words trite or vivid, the meaning provocative or platitudinous. You can point out, in addition, the components in the effect. In a short poem or novel, there is ordinarily a single component—everything contributes to one effect. Poe, you may recall, insisted that there was no such thing as a long poem, for a poem by his definition was a metrical composition that created one effect. For him, therefore, a long poem was simply a series of short poems. Likewise he insisted that the major requirement of the short story is that it create a unified effect. His own stories were written with this in mind. "The Fall of the House of Usher," for example, was composed with the intention that every detail, every word even, should contribute to an overall effect of fear. All of this often holds equally well for the one-act play. But longer plays, novels, and long poems must gain their unity of effect through a blending of components, of many minor effects. As a critical reader, it is your duty, if you are using this method of evaluation, to indicate what various minor effects compose the parts of which the major effect is the whole. You would indicate the function and the relative importance of each of the minor effects, and suggest at what point in the work you first begin to become conscious of the major effect.

The duration of effect is another aspect about which you can be fairly articulate. How long did the mood of the work stay with you? How long and how well do you remember the charac-

ters, the setting, the happenings? How long did you continue to mull over the author's ideas? Of these, the mood is most likely to wear off first. You can *remember* being terrorized by Poe's "Pit and the Pendulum," but you do not remain terrorized very long. On the other hand, Mr. Pickwick may stay with you almost indefinitely; so may Hardy's heath in *The Return of the Native* or Whitman's ideas about comradeship in *Leaves of Grass.* How long do you remember the hero of the latest movie as compared with Hamlet, supposing that you have seen a good production of the play? To be sure, if you talk about these details as ends in themselves you are not concerned with the work as a whole; but if you discuss them as a means of arriving at and of estimating the effect of the work upon you, then your primary concern is with its totality.

One of the most important elements in this method of criticism concerns the recurrence of the effect. Does the book hold up on rereading? Did you find it more effective or less effective? This probably is the hardest test any literary work must pass, and it immediately separates the so-called "thriller" from the more profound performance. The good work may be even more exciting and provocative the second time, since you will discover in it all sorts of details and ideas which you missed before; the second-rate work will be insufferably dull on second reading, since ideas are lacking, the characters are types, and you already know how the plot turns out. Many people read *Huckleberry Finn* and the *Scarlet Letter* almost every year; yet these same people never reread *Tom Sawyer Abroad* or *The Blithedale Romance.* Twain and Hawthorne are the authors in both cases. Would it be fair to say, on the basis of this evidence, that the first two books are greater literary works than the second two?

The final major aspect of this method concerns the spread of the work's effectiveness. How many people over how long a period have found the work enjoyable? With older books, this can be determined without much difficulty, for the inferior works with the passage of time drop out of sight and are forgotten. Melville and Whitman remain but not T. S. Arthur or Lydia Sigourney, who were their contemporaries. With current works, one must look to the testimony of his friends and of the professional critics. The fact that no one else whom you know likes a book is not proof *per se* that it is an inferior work. But it is certainly a fact you should take into account in making a final judgment. The mood which you take to the book may be a more powerful influence than the mood created by the book itself. A man or woman in love is likely to overrate a romance that under other circumstances would provoke ridicule.

The chief disadvantages of evaluating a work by its effect on the reader have already been suggested. The method requires that you be articulate about emotional experiences, phenomena that are difficult to name with precision and next to impossible to communicate. Furthermore, in making it necessary for you to be analytical about your reactions, it may actually inhibit those reactions. For when pushed to an extreme the method focuses your attention upon your own mind and emotions and away from the work. You feel about feeling and think about thinking. This is no way to enjoy a story or poem or play. On the other hand, the method makes you concen-

trate on certain valuable and relatively reliable criteria like intensity, duration, and universality of effect. It keeps uppermost the fact that literature involves not only the mind but the emotions, that its peculiar function is to re-create human experience, and that its special power lies in its ability to make its point with vividness and force. Intelligently employed, this method of evaluation should make you a more sensitive reader and a more discerning critic.

Questions

How would you characterize the effect of (a) *A Night at an Inn* (p. 42) and (b) Chekhov's *The Swan Song* (p. 63)? Be as specific as you can. Do you think you are successful in communicating the effect? Do your words seem to change the effect for you? Do you find that you have talked more about yourself than the works?

2. In the text above, we said that it is difficult, unless one is a competent writer himself, to communicate the effect of a literary work. At the bottom of this page is James Russell Lowell's attempt to show us how he felt after reading Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Can you catch something of the effect of Dante's work upon Lowell? What, precisely, does Lowell do in his attempt to communicate it? Comment upon the nature of his diction, sentences, imagery, and the like.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL Dante's *Divina Commedia*

There are no doubt in the *Divina Commedia* (regarded merely as poetry) sandy spaces enough both of physics and metaphysics, but with every deduction Dante remains the first of descriptive as well as moral poets. His verse is as various as the feeling it conveys; now it has the terseness and edge of steel, and now palpitates with iridescent softness like the breast of a dove. In vividness he is without a rival. He drags back by its tangled locks the unwilling head of some petty traitor of an Italian provincial town, lets the fire glare on the sullen face for a moment, and it sears itself into the memory forever. He shows us an angel glowing with that love of God which makes him a star even amid the glory of heaven, and the holy shape keeps lifelong watch in our fantasy, constant as a sentinel. He has the skill of conveying impressions indirectly. In the gloom of hell his bodily presence is revealed by his stirring something, on the mount of expiation by casting a shadow. Would he have us feel the brightness of an angel? He makes him whiten afar through the smoke like a dawn, or, walking straight toward the setting sun, he finds his eyes suddenly unable to withstand a greater splendor against which his hand is unavailing to shield him. Even its reflected light, then, is brighter than the direct ray of the sun. And how much more keenly do we feel the parched lips of Master Adam for those rivulets of the Casentino which run down into the Arno, "making their

channels cool and soft!" His comparisons are as fresh, as simple, and as directly from nature as those of Homer. Sometimes they show a more subtle observation, as where he compares the stooping of Antaeus over him to the leaning tower of Carisenda, to which the clouds, flying in an opposite direction to its inclination, give away their motion. His suggestions of individuality, too, from attitude or speech, as in Farinata, Sordello, or Pia, give in a hint what is worth acres of so-called character-painting. In straightforward pathos, the single and sufficient thrust of phrase, he has no competitor. He is too sternly touched to be effusive and tearful:

"Io non piangeva, si dentro impietrai."[1]

His is always the true coin of speech, and never the highly ornamented promise to pay token of insolvency.

[1]"I did not weep; so stony grew I within."

3. Which of the following poems produces a more intense effect upon you? Try to account for the difference in every way possible.

DEATH to most is a fearsome thought
Of dark, of silence, and of night.
Ere life's hands their work hath wrought
Their spirit soars in flight.

Yet death need not be total loss
If one dies for love of truth;
Then what disappears is dross
And good lives on in youth.

—*Anonymous*

I DIED for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed.
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,—the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

—*Emily Dickinson*

The work and the author

THE basic premise of those who use the yardstick of personality is that the most significant aspect of the literary product is the unique personal quality given the material as it passes through the mind and personality of the author. When that quality emerges as something distinct, something that is provocative, attractive, and enriching, then, according to this method of evaluation, the literary work is a great one. The problem of such criticism, therefore, is to discover the author in the work. It is a matter of discovering such elements as his dominant traits, his characteristic moods and ways of thought, his attitudes and values, the ways in which he suggests his period, and his unique abilities in expression.

To make this clearer, let us examine what happens to similar material when handled, on the one hand, by an anonymous writer and, on the other, by Mark Twain.

In the middle of the prairie, miles from nowhere, we stopped briefly to look about us and observe the wild life. Of a truth there was little to see except for the sage-brush which stretched away in every direction. Suddenly one of our party descried a "jackass rabbit," a large brownish creature with long ears. It was sitting on its haunches under a clump of sage-brush, its color harmonizing so well with the background that if it had not been pointed out to us, many of us would have missed it altogether. We were told that it could run very rapidly because of the size and great strength of its legs. Like other rabbits, it is herbivorous and eats what leaves and roots are available on the prairie. Like other rabbits, too, it multiplies rapidly, and only the paucity of food keeps its numbers from swelling into the tens of millions. Even so, the species is so common throughout this part of the country that it is the bane of the few farmers who here and there try to wrest a meager living from the dry soil.—ANONYMOUS

As the sun was going down, we saw the first specimen of an animal known familiarly over two thousand miles of mountain and desert—from Kansas clear to the Pacific Ocean—as the "jackass rabbit." He is well named. He is just like any other rabbit, except that he is from one-third to twice as large, has longer legs in proportion to his size, and has the most preposterous ears that ever were mounted on any creature but a jackass. When he is sitting quiet, thinking about his sins, or is absent-minded or unapprehensive of danger, his majestic ears project above him conspicuously; but the breaking of a twig will scare him nearly to death, and then he tilts his ears back gently and starts for home. All you can see, then, for the next minute, is his long gray form stretched out straight and "streaking it" through the low sage-brush, head erect, eyes right, and ears just canted a little to the rear, but showing you where the animal is, all the time, the same as if he carried a jib. Now and then he makes a marvelous spring with his long legs, high over the stunted sage-brush, and scores a leap that would make a horse envious. Presently, he comes down to a long, graceful "lope," and shortly he mysteriously disappears. He has crouched behind a sage-brush, and will sit there and listen and tremble until you get within six feet of

him, when he will get under way again. But one must shoot at this creature once, if he wishes to see him throw his heart into his heels, and do the best he knows how. He is frightened clear through, now, and he lays his long ears down on his back, straightens himself out like a yard-stick every spring he makes, and scatters miles behind him with an easy indifference that is enchanting.

One party made this specimen "hump himself," as the conductor said. The Secretary started him with a shot from the Colt; I commenced spitting at him with my weapon; and all in the same instant the old "Allen's" whole broadside let go with a rattling crash, and it is not putting it too strong to say that the rabbit was frantic! He dropped his ears, set up his tail, and left for San Francisco at a speed which can only be described as a flash and vanish! Long after he was out of sight we could hear him whiz.—MARK TWAIN, Roughing It

Observe how relatively little you get to know about the author of the first selection. Aside from the fact that factual details seem to interest him, you know almost nothing about his traits of personality. Nor do you know what his characteristic moods or ways of thinking are. It is difficult, too, to discern anything about his attitudes. Does he like the rabbit? think it beautiful? think it a pest? Almost nothing of the author's background creeps through. Could you hazard a guess, for instance, about the region he comes from or the temper of his age? And finally, there is little to say about his artistic accomplishments. The prose is correct and pedestrian, with almost no special quality that gives it life. In short, by the yardstick of personality this is pretty unsatisfying writing.

The contrast with the Twain passage is, of course, obvious. You see Twain as observant and alive. He can admire the speed and the rough beauty of the rabbit without becoming mawkishly sentimental. Beyond that, he has a clear admiration for any creature that can throw its heart into things and do the best it knows how. He has a keen sense of humor. He has the idiom and the sense for detail which mark him as a late nineteenth-century American and Westerner. (If you doubt this, imagine Dickens or Cooper or Hemingway writing in this manner.) He has a stylistic flair for the climactic, the figurative, and the colloquial. Even in so brief a passage, Twain has emerged as a distinct and colorful personality. But an excerpt alone cannot do the job properly. It can show only a facet of the author. Most importantly, it cannot indicate what inferences the reader may make about the author from the structural, stylistic, and thematic handling of a literary work as a whole.

There are several disadvantages to this kind of criticism. Consciously or unconsciously the author may keep himself so well hidden that he is little more than an enigma. The classic example of this is William Shakespeare. His basic moral attitudes are evident enough, and of course his stylistic flair. But no one has been able to pin down his specific attitudes with any degree of success. As a result, he is accused of being both pious and agnostic, Catholic and anti-Catholic, democratic and aristocratic. What happens is that most readers, foiled in the search in the plays for evidence about the nature of the author,

attribute characteristics to him that they *want* him to have. Or they attribute characteristics which he manufactured for some of his characters and which may or may not have relevance for Shakespeare himself. Such procedure amounts to wishful thinking or sheer guessing. A sounder procedure, and also a harder one, is to study all the available external evidence. Thus a reader who wants to evaluate *Othello* by this method might read all of the other Shakespearean plays and the Shakespearean sonnets; he might read what Shakespeare's contemporaries like Ben Jonson had to say about him; and he might study what the scholars have discovered about his life. Then he might return to *Othello* and see how much of what he knows about Shakespeare becomes clear in the play and evaluate it accordingly. What all this means is that to employ this mode of criticism successfully a person sometimes has to be a historical scholar first and a critic second.

Care must be taken, too, in making inferences from units which are too small. A single story or poem can provide a glimpse of only one aspect of a writer's mind or character. In this respect a novel is much more adequate since you are with the author longer and have a chance to see him in many moods and to watch him reflect upon many issues. In any event, no part of a literary work can be expected to give reliable evidence unless you know that it checks with what is revealed by the work as a whole.

This way of evaluating is limited also in that it fails to deal directly with matters of meaning, structure, and overall effect. These become pertinent considerations only as they throw light upon the nature of the author. Thus the literary work at best may be considered as a clean pane of glass which we are anxious to look through in order to see the glassmaker.

What is appealing about the method is that it enlarges our circle of acquaintances. Through their works we come to know the great of the world, men like Dante, Milton, Turgenev, Whitman, and O'Neill. Since most of us have little opportunity to meet such wise and talented persons in everyday life, this provides us with that opportunity. Reading becomes an intimate and revealing conversation—a one-way conversation, to be sure, but potentially richer than real conversation since the author is likely to be a wiser man than you would ordinarily meet and since you always have the chance to go back over what he has written in order to exhaust its possibilities. According to this method of evaluation, one might well consider the greatest literature as nothing more than the conversation of the greatest men.

At least four other values should grow out of this intimate study of the author behind the work. You should be better prepared to understand and appreciate other works by the same author. This is open to objection, of course, in that you may develop prejudgments which slant your outlook. (You came to dislike Melville through *Pierre,* we'll say, so you are prepared to dislike him in *Moby Dick.)* But, in general, knowing an author through one work will make you a more intelligent reader of his other works. Second, you should understand other people better. In searching through literature for the traits and attitudes of authors, you develop a technique of pushing through what your friends do

and say to their motives and fundamental characteristics. Third, you should gain insight into the creative process. Seeing an author through his works must inevitably help you see how a work grows out of an author. That this is true is evidenced by the fact that so many of our writers employ this method of criticism. Interested in developing sharper techniques themselves, they constantly study the relation between other authors and their works, and evaluate the works in the light of their success in making clear their ideas and emotions. Finally, you should gain insight into the country and age of the author. If a writer is to a very large degree the child of his age, and if you know the writer intimately, then it must follow that to a large degree you know his age. Through Chaucer we have come to know the fourteenth century, through Milton the seventeenth, and undoubtedly future readers will get to know us partly through men like Hemingway and Steinbeck. Sometimes this is a matter of learning the facts of the age. More often and more importantly, it is a matter of learning the peculiar temper of the age, its attitudes, beliefs, hopes, likes and dislikes, its especial values. History can report these as data; literature through the personality of the author can make us feel them as realities in the lives of our ancestors.

Questions

WHAT inferences can you make about Browning from "My Last Duchess" (p. 60)? about Whitman from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (p. 128)? Is there any clue that one is English, the other American?

2. What inferences can you make about Dorothy Parker from "Nocturne" (p. 102)? about S. J. Perelman from "The Idol's Eye" (p. 105)? From what you have inferred about them, how would you say that they differ from Mark Twain? What characteristics of their writing stamp them as twentieth-century authors?

3. Compare Poe and Saki from what you can infer of their personalities and backgrounds as revealed in "The Cask of Amontillado" (p. 72) and "The Open Window" (p. 158). In the case of Poe, would the inferences about background be generally correct? What clues indicate that "The Open Window" was written considerably later than "The Cask of Amontillado"?

4. The following selections were written, respectively, in the 1720's, 1820's, and 1920's. What inferences can you make from them about the change in American life, both physical and spiritual? From what you know about American history would you say that your inferences are largely correct?

JONATHAN EDWARDS Sarah Pierrepont

THEY SAY THERE is a young lady in [New Haven] who is beloved of that Great Being, who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly

cares for any thing, except to meditate on him—that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight for ever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this Great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER *from* The Pioneers

IF THERE be anything wanting to your comfort, name it, Leather-stocking; if it be attainable it is yours."

"You mean all for the best, lad; I know it; and so does Madam, too: but your ways isn't my ways. 'Tis like the dead there, who thought, when the breath was in them, that one went east, and one went west, to find their heavens; but they'll meet at last; and so shall we, children. Yes, ind as you've begun, and we shall meet in the land of the just at last."

"This is so new! so unexpected!" said Elizabeth, in almost breathless excitement; "I had thought you meant to live with us and die with us, Natty."

"Words are of no avail," exclaimed her husband; "the habits of forty years are not to be dispossessed by the ties of a day. I know you too well to urge you further, Natty; unless you will let me build you a hut on one of the distant hills, where we can sometimes see you, and know that you are comfortable."

"Don't fear for the Leather-stocking, children; God will see that his days be provided for, and his ind happy. I know you mean all for the best, but our ways doesn't agree. I love the woods, and ye relish the face of man; I eat when hungry, and drink when a-dry; and ye keep stated hours and rules: nay, nay, you even over-feed the dogs, lad, from pure kindness; and

hounds should be gaunty to run well. The meanest of God's creaters be made for some use, and I'm formed for the wilderness; if ye love me, let me go where my soul craves to be ag'in!"

The appeal was decisive; and not another word of entreaty for him to remain was then uttered; but Elizabeth bent her head to her bosom and wept, while her husband dashed away the tears from his eyes; and, with hands that almost refused to perform their office, he produced his pocket-book, and extended a parcel of bank-notes to the hunter.

"Take these," he said, "at least take these; secure them about your person, and in the hour of need, they will do you good service."

The old man took the notes, and examined them with a curious eye.

"This, then, is some of the new-fashioned money that they've been making at Albany, out of paper! It can't be worth much to they that hasn't larning! No, no, lad—take back the stuff; it will do me no sarvice. I took kear to get all the Frenchman's powder afore he broke up, and they say lead grows where I'm going. It isn't even fit for wads, seeing that I use none but leather!—Madam Effingham, let an old man kiss your hand, and wish God's choicest blessings on you and your'n."

"Once more let me beseech you, stay!" cried Elizabeth. "Do not, Leather-stocking, leave me to grieve for the man who has twice rescued me from death, and who has served those I love so faithfully. For my sake, if not for your own, stay. I shall see you in those frightful dreams that still haunt my nights, dying in poverty and age, by the side of those terrific beasts you slew. There will be no evil, that sickness, want, and solitude can inflict, that my fancy will not conjure as your fate. Stay with us, old man, if not for your own sake, at least for ours."

"Such thoughts and bitter dreams, Madam Effingham," returned the hunter, solemnly, "will never haunt an innocent parson long. They'll pass away with God's pleasure. And if the cat-a-mounts be yet brought to your eyes in sleep, 'tis not for my sake, but to show you the power of Him that led me there to save you. Trust in God, Madam, and your honorable husband, and the thoughts for an old man like me can never be long nor bitter. I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind—the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness—and bless you, and all that belong to you, from this time till the great day when the whites shall meet the red-skins in judgment, and justice shall be the law, and not power."

Elizabeth raised her head, and offered her colorless cheek to his salute, when he lifted his cap and touched it respectfully. His hand was grasped with convulsive fervor by the youth, who continued silent. The hunter prepared himself for his journey, drawing his belt tighter, and wasting his moments in the little reluctant movements of a sorrowful departure.

Once or twice he essayed to speak, but a rising in his throat prevented it. At length he shouldered his rifle, and cried with a clear huntsman's call that echoed through the woods—

"He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, pups—away, dogs, away;—ye'll be footsore afore ye see the ind of the journey!"

The hounds leaped from the earth at this cry, and scenting around the graves and the silent pair, as if conscious of their own destination, they followed humbly at the heels of their master. A short pause succeeded, during which even the youth concealed his face on his grandfather's tomb. When the pride of manhood, however, had suppressed the feelings of nature, he turned to renew his entreaties, but saw that the cemetery was occupied only by himself and his wife.

"He is gone!" cried Effingham.

Elizabeth raised her face, and saw the old hunter standing, looking back for a moment, on the verge of the wood. As he caught their glances, he drew his hard hand hastily across his eyes again, waved it on high for an adieu, and uttering a forced cry to his dogs, who were crouching at his feet, he entered the forest.

This was the last that they ever saw of the Leather-stocking, whose rapid movements preceded the pursuit which Judge Temple both ordered and conducted. He had gone far toward the setting sun,—the foremost in that band of pioneers who are opening the way for the march of the nation across the continent.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD *from* The Great Gatsby

THERE WAS DANCING now on the canvas in the garden; old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably, and keeping in the corners—and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz, and between the numbers people were doing "stunts" all over the garden, while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A pair of stage twins, who turned out

From *The Great Gatsby*. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

to be the girls in yellow, did a baby act in costume, and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger-bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjoes on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl, who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger-bowls of champagne, and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental, and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

"Your face is familiar," he said, politely. "Weren't you in the First Division during the war?"

"Why, yes. I was in the Twenty-eighth Infantry."

"I was in the Sixteenth until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I'd seen you somewhere before."

We talked for a moment about some wet, gray little villages in France. Evidently he lived in this vicinity, for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane, and was going to try it out in the morning.

"Want to go with me, old sport? Just near the shore along the Sound."

"What time?"

"Any time that suits you best."

It was on the tip of my tongue to ask his name when Jordan looked around and smiled.

"Having a gay time now?" she inquired.

"Much better." I turned again to my new acquaintance. "This is an unusual party for me. I haven't even seen the host. I live over there—" I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, "and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation."

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

"I'm Gatsby," he said suddenly.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Oh, I beg your pardon."

"I thought you knew, old sport. I'm afraid I'm not a very good host."

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole eternal world for an instant, and then concentrated on *you* with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over

thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.

Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself, a butler hurried toward him with the information that Chicago was calling him on the wire. He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.

"If you want anything just ask for it, old sport," he urged me. "Excuse me. I will rejoin you later."

When he was gone I turned immediately to Jordan—constrained to assure her of my surprise. I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.

"Who is he?" I demanded. "Do you know?"

"He's just a man named Gatsby."

"Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?"

"Now *you're* started on the subject," she answered with a wan smile. "Well, he told me once he was an Oxford man."

A dim background started to take shape behind him, but at her next remark it faded away.

"However, I don't believe it."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," she insisted, "I just don't think he went there."

Something in her tone reminded me of the other girl's "I think he killed a man," and had the effect of stimulating my curiosity. I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn't—at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn't—drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound.

"Anyhow, he gives large parties," said Jordan, changing the subject with an urban distaste for the concrete. "And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy."

There was the boom of a bass drum, and the voice of the orchestra leader rang out suddenly above the echolalia of the garden.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried. "At the request of Mr. Gatsby we are going to play for you Mr. Vladimir Tostoff's latest work, which attracted so much attention at Carnegie Hall last May. If you read the papers, you know there was a big sensation." He smiled with jovial condescension, and added: "Some sensation!" Whereupon everybody laughed.

"The piece is known," he concluded lustily, "as Vladimir Tostoff's *Jazz History of the World.*"

The nature of Mr. Tostoff's composition eluded me, because just as it began my eyes fell on Gatsby, standing alone on the marble steps and looking from one group to another with approving eyes. His tanned skin was drawn attractively tight on his face and his short hair looked as though it were trimmed every day. I could see nothing sinister about him. I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guests, for it seemed to me that he grew more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased. When the *Jazz History of the World* was over, girls were putting their heads on men's shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way, girls were swooning backward playfully into men's arms, even into groups, knowing that some one would arrest their falls—but no one swooned backward on Gatsby, and no French bob touched Gatsby's shoulder, and no singing quartets were formed for Gatsby's head for one link.

"I beg your pardon."

Gatsby's butler was suddenly standing beside us.

"Miss Baker?" he inquired. "I beg your pardon, but Mr. Gatsby would like to speak to you alone."

"With me?" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, madame."

She got up slowly, raising her eyebrows at me in astonishment, and followed the butler toward the house. I noticed that she wore her evening-dress, all her dresses, like sports clothes—there was a jauntiness about her movements as if she had first learned to walk upon golf courses on clean, crisp mornings.

I was alone and it was almost two. For some time confused and intriguing sounds had issued from a long, many-windowed room which overhung the terrace. Eluding Jordan's undergraduate, who was now engaged in an obstetrical conversation with two chorus girls, and who implored me to join him, I went inside.

The large room was full of people. One of the girls in yellow was playing the piano, and beside her stood a tall, red-haired young lady from a famous chorus, engaged in song. She had drunk a quantity of champagne, and during the course of her song she had decided, ineptly, that everything was very, very sad—she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping, broken sobs, and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano. The tears coursed down her cheeks—not freely, however, for when they came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes they assumed an inky color, and pursued the rest of their way in slow black rivulets. A humorous suggestion was made that she sing the notes on her face, whereupon she threw up her hands, sank into a chair, and went off into a deep vinous sleep.

"She had a fight with a man who says he's her husband," explained a girl at my elbow.

I looked around. Most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands. Even Jordan's party, the quartet from East Egg, were rent asunder by dissension. One of the men was talking with curious intensity to a young actress, and his wife, after attempting to laugh at the situation in a dignified and indifferent way, broke down entirely and resorted to flank attacks—at intervals she appeared suddenly at his side like an angry diamond, and hissed: "You promised!" into his ear.

The work itself

Critics who apply the yardstick of internal consistency to a piece of work take as their basic premise that the work of art is a unique product of the human genius and should be judged by criteria which are applicable to it and to it alone. Who the writer is or what the individual effect of the work on the reader is, are matters which are irrelevant. The problem here is to discover what the relation of the parts is to the whole and to one another. The competent work, presumably, is the one in which the parts are so consistent and harmonious that the work as a totality is an organism in which no part could be changed without detriment to the whole work.

Although the nature of the internal consistence varies with each work, in its largest terms it is always a matter of congruity between form and content. In the case of the lyric poem, to take one example, it is a matter of seeing whether the words, lines, stanzas, and overall form harmonize with the material and ideas. Let us examine briefly a very simple lyric, Masefield's "Cargoes."

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant
Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-tree shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with salt-caked smoke-stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rail, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

In the first stanza here, the material is exotic and romantically delightful. Notice how all matters of form correspond: the words are melodic, the connotations appealing, the lines smoothly flowing. As we come closer to the present, as we do in the second stanza, the material, though attractive, is somewhat less exotic. Notice that the sounds are somewhat less melodic, the connotations less enchanting, and the lines slightly

less liquid. Then, when the material becomes contemporary, as it does in the third stanza, a marked change takes place. The words are stubby and monosyllabic; the connotations are distasteful; and the lines are jerky. Note, too, that the color images, brilliant and sparkling at the start, are replaced by dull, drab ones at the end.

The stanzas give the material both unity and coherence. Unity is achieved through a repetition of stanza form. Since the poet is merely listing three details, and not even presenting them in complete sentences, he must find a way to hold them together. He does this through a precise paralleling of material. In each stanza the first line is devoted to the ship, the second to the motion and length of the ship, and the next three are devoted to the cargo. The number of stanzas indicates the number of concepts; the arrangement indicates movement from past to present, from the romantic to the workaday. For these reasons and others, we may say that in "Cargoes" Masefield has achieved harmony between form and content, and that according to the standard of internal consistence this poem ranks high.

There is too little space here to make a similar analysis of a longer work, but we can suggest some of the elements which might have to be considered. In the novel, play, short story, epic, or narrative poem, the reader ordinarily focuses his attention upon people. The primary question is what happens to them: do they remain the same? make a simple change? change and then reverse themselves? or make a series of changes? Only as you know what happens to them can you determine whether they have been consistent.

In discovering this, the first step is to determine what state of affairs prevails at the opening of the work: Who are the people? What are their essential characteristics? What are the conflicts within their minds? What are the conflicts which face them with outside forces? What is the nature of the world they live in—whimsical? romantic? realistic but responsive to human effort? realistic and unresponsive to human effort? Once you know the answers to questions like these, you are in a position to determine whether what the characters do and say is plausible or probable.

Note that internal consistency is not dependent upon lifelike action unless the air of reality has been established at the beginning. For example, what Ulysses does in the *Odyssey* is quite plausible in the world which Homer creates. The accomplishments of Swift's Gulliver, of Barrie's Peter Pan, and of Melville's Ahab are plausible and probable, too, in the worlds of the books in which they appear. But imagine Gulliver or Peter Pan on the main street of Sinclair Lewis' Gopher Prairie, and you have inconsistency carried to an absurdity. Let us repeat. Consistency is not dependent upon accuracy; it is a matter of the characters thinking, speaking, and acting in a manner which seems harmonious with their natures and setting.

Where there is no change in the characters of the short story, narrative poem, or one-act play, an analysis of internal consistency is a matter of seeing that what occurs is in accord with the basic motives of the people and the nature of the circumstances. Even in very short works, however, changes may take place. Three familiar lyrical patterns, for example, are as follows:

One, the poet repeats explicitly or in figures the same emotion: I'm sad; I'm sad; how sad I am. Two, the poet explores various aspects of his thought-emotion: I'm sad for a number of reasons; how sad I am; my sadness will end only when I win my love. Three, the poet's feeling changes: I'm sad; as I sit and think about it, a new thought comes to me; now my sadness is gone. For internal consistency, the potential change in the second case and the actual change in the third must be plausible in the light of the poet's nature and his original disturbance.

In the novel and longer play changes inevitably take place. In Hawthorne's short story about Wakefield, the main character remains the same throughout: canny, egotistic, and cruel. His consistency lies in the fact that he does remain the same. In the *Scarlet Letter,* however, all of the main characters because of sin and a resulting sense of isolation change rather markedly. The consistency here comes in the fact that the change grows logically out of the circumstances and the temperaments of the characters. The attitudes and actions of Hester Prynne at the end of the book are not at all what they were at the beginning, but the shift is both plausible and probable. There are other concerns of the novel and play many of which were suggested in our analysis of "Cargoes." Just as in the lyrical poem, the words, sentences, and larger structural units of the novel should be suited to the sense, and should fit into the main artistic pattern. A nice problem in an analysis of *Moby Dick,* for instance, is whether the scientific and historical material on whales is intellectually or artistically justifiable in the light of the form and content of the whole.

The advantages of this "formal" or "organic" yardstick are numerous. It brings attention to bear upon the work itself and in doing so eliminates a great many irrelevancies that sometimes occupy our attention and get us no place. As the formalistic critic points out, what difference does it make in reading Byron's *Don Juan* that Byron had a club foot or swam the Hellespont? Or of what importance is it to the intrinsic worth of the poem that it reminds you of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" or of the man your great-aunt Tillie married? In making you concentrate upon the work itself, this method of evaluation is likely to make you conscious of many aspects of a literary work which you never noticed before. Furthermore, this mode of criticism is likely to result in a more disciplined and a more precise kind of statement. There is no excuse for vague impressions, for well-meaning but often weak-minded "appreciation." In many ways this method takes over the spirit and the method of scientific inquiry and adapts them to literary evaluation.

The system also has fairly serious drawbacks. It is doubtful, for example, that it provides any criterion for making comparative judgments. When you use it, you are concerned only with the unique work itself. Indeed, when pushed to its logical extreme, the method involves only description and not evaluation at all. Evaluation gets in only when the description of the work conforms to what you think is excellent. But your notion of excellence must come from other sources. To put it another way, the function of this method is to show that the parts of a work are related harmoniously to the whole and to one another. One might well ask, then, what

if they are? By this method there would be no answer except that they are. By introducing the yardstick of effect, however, one might go on to say, This work is good because anything which is harmonious and consistent gives me æsthetic pleasure. I like a forward pass cleanly executed, an orchestral composition without dissonance, a novel without inconsistencies.

Another drawback is that the method tends to result in such an emphasis upon structure that matters like mood, color, connotation, and melody are almost ignored. Inattention to such elements is not enforced by the method; it is simply a habit which many of its practitioners fall into—with the result that their handling of literary works becomes a series of problems in mental acrobatics and these persons themselves become desensitized to the emotional effects which give literature its distinctive quality.

Questions

On pages 156-157 we itemized a number of aspects of Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" which might give a reader pleasure. Take these elements, now, and see whether they fit together harmoniously and whether the poem as a whole is internally consistent. In short, do for the Frost poem what has been done for you with Masefield's "Cargoes."

2. Make an analysis of (a) *A Night at an Inn,* page 42; (b) "My Last Duchess," page 60; (c) "The Cask of Amontillado," page 72; (d) "To Autumn," page 79; (e) "On the Grasshopper and Cricket," page 109; (f) "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," page 128. Cite enough specific details to prove that the work is or is not internally consistent.

The work and human thought and understanding

The basic premise of those who use the yardstick of insight in making literary judgments is that literature should be the repository of all the best that has been thought and said. In the highest sense it should be a "criticism of life," for in making us conscious of the best it provides us with a standard against which we can measure our own thoughts and actions. A work, then, is great to the extent that it provides us with insight into what is best—what is true, good, beautiful.

Rather obviously the emphasis in this kind of evaluation is upon the element of meaning, and in that sense its criterion for excellence is closely akin to the yardstick of special doctrine (pp. 142-145). Under special doctrine, however, we considered those convictions which the reader carried to the work, retained throughout, and used almost exclusively in the process of evaluation. Here we are concerned with the reader who brings to the work only a desire for insight, not a mind made up. He is a seeker, not a dogmatist. Such a reader will ask such questions as: How effectively does this work re-create experience for me? How accurately does it mirror the personality of the author and the temper of his age? How consistently does it handle the necessary elements? Each of these questions brings up a key concern of one of the three evaluative methods we have just discussed. Here, however, these questions and their answers are employed as steps in arriving at the answer to another question: Considering every aspect of the work, what is the totality of its insight into life? The core of the answer is likely to fall in one

of three fields—the ethical, the psychological, or the sociological.

ETHICAL INSIGHT

According to Matthew Arnold, the great English critic, the desire of great writers is to "educe and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves." This is not to be construed, however, as a selfish objective. "They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling." With Arnold and this method of criticism, therefore, we come back to the conviction that literature has a dual rôle: it must be pleasurable and it must be instructive (i.e., ennobling). The most effective blending of these two elements results in the profoundest literature.

Traditionally, the finest blending of the two has been associated with the ancients, particularly the Greek poets. In their works, many readers have felt, man's best thoughts appear in their simplest and most moving form: simplest because they deal only with basic truths and primary emotions; most moving because the human actions they depict are elemental, the personages noble, and the situations intense. For the Greeks, meaning and structure were far more important than phrasing. We can learn from them, Arnold points out, "how unspeakably superior is the effect of one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image."

The chief weaknesses of this approach are that it too often results in a narrowing of one's interests, in dogmatism, and in intellectual absolutism. What happens is that one gets so preoccupied with the ancients that he finds to his own loss that he is no longer interested in any writers but them. Even Milton seems a little too modern, and no American seems really worthy. This narrowing of interest leads, in turn, to a dogmatism about what literature should be: it should be like the works of the ancients. It should be highly religious and philosophical in tone, should be concerned with human thought and action as the Greeks conceived of them, should be simple and austere in structure. Worst of all, this approach leads to an absolutism in which the critic assumes that he, having studied the ancients (often in translation), knows The Truth, knows pompously what is needful for The Truly Great Interpretation of Life. What happens, in short, is that *in practice* this mode of evaluation too easily slips off into the method which we called Special Doctrine: the search for truth gives way to the application of dogma. But this need not happen. When properly employed in the field of ethics, the yardstick of insight is a demanding one which finds adequate only those works which give pleasure of a serious and lasting nature. Better than any other criterion, possibly, it discloses those works which thoughtful readers will agree are great.

SOCIOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Frank Norris, the American naturalistic novelist, once wrote that the greatest novel is the one with a purpose. A gripping narrative is not enough; neither is insight into the motives of the main characters. What still is needed is an intent on the part of the author to

show how men under given conditions operate. Norris himself tried to do this in a trilogy (which he did not live to finish) about the raising, trading, and consumption of wheat. Simplified, his point was that this great nourisher of mankind, instead of being a blessing to everyone it touched, is almost invariably a curse, because of the way men fight for the riches it brings.

That literature can be a criticism of life in a sociological sense is a relatively new idea. It became strongly apparent in England when Dickens' novels brought home to thousands the wretched condition in London slums and prisons. In this country, as early a writer as Cooper touched upon economic matters, but it was not until Twain, Howells, Norris, and Dreiser wrote that social problems began getting widespread treatment in imaginative literature. Today, it would be no exaggeration to say that such problems are the prime concern of our major writers. As readers, we have come to expect that our literature will go beyond the personal problems of a few men to the more general problems of man. What is the effect on man of his environment? of his economic system? of his political system? of his institutions, folkways, and mores? These are a few of the major questions we have come to expect our writers to treat. And we rate them according to their insight.

Like the ethical approach, the sociological can easily slip off into a demand for special doctrines. The conservative wants no suggestion in his literature that private enterprise is ineffective; the socialist wants no intimation that socialism is impractical. Writers interested in the sociological can easily become propagandists, and readers accessories after the fact. But this, again, is perversion of a method in practice; it is not an indictment of the method itself. The yardstick of insight in the field of social problems is a demanding one which discriminates wise selection and interpretation from hit-and-miss reporting, thoughtful analysis from flippancy, and sympathetic understanding from cheap sensationalism.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHT

In a chapter on a method of criticism he calls "Formism," Stephen C. Pepper in his provocative *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* identifies human value with what is normal in human behavior. The greatest literature is that which deals with norms, which penetrates to actions and traits that count, dwelling seriously on what is serious and laughing at what is silly. It is human experience seen through the eyes of a well-adjusted individual. By such a standard, the classic writers would still rank high but not exclusively so. Other works showing a balanced view of values would rank equally well: *The Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare's plays, *Pride and Prejudice*. On the other hand, detective stories with their complete disregard for the human suffering caused by murder would ordinarily rank very low.

It would be misleading to suggest in any fashion that the three approaches we have mentioned in discussing the yardstick of insight are mutually exclusive. Insight into what is right or wrong ethically will of necessity bring an awareness of men's social relations and of the values which are prized by those who are well adjusted. Insight into social problems must bring a recognition of what results in justice on the one hand and injustice on the other. And

insight into what is normal and abnormal in human behavior must surely suggest what is ethically right and socially desirable. Any insight, in short, has implications for all approaches.

That this is a standard that applies to the work as a whole is a fact that bears repeating. Insight is primarily a matter of meaning, which in turn is a matter of happenings, characters, setting, language, and tone. Partial perception may come through a twist of phrase or a single act. But the aggregate, the full insight will be the result of the total impact of the work: the completed action, the rounded characterization, the final, compelling mood.

Using the yardsticks

In this discussion we have not attempted to consider all the yardsticks which readers use in making judgments about literature. To do so, we should have to introduce even such elements as the sex of the author, the size and color of the book, and the quaintness of the illustrations. Rather, we have tried to report on those yardsticks which are often employed and to suggest the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Where do you go from here? You can, of course, ignore all this and go on judging literature as you always have judged it. However, we have one recommendation to make. In estimating the value of a poem, play, or piece of fiction *use as many of these yardsticks as you find applicable.* Only by so doing will you be able to find the fullest enjoyment and understanding which are in the power of the work of art to give.

The three following selections are all excerpts from critical articles or books on John Keats. They illustrate how professional critics use the standards for evaluation which we have just been discussing. Sometimes, you will notice, a single standard is employed: at other times two or more are combined and the final evaluation is reached on the basis of the combination. Read each selection carefully and answer the questions which follow it.

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY 'Beauty is truth . . .'

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Men's reactions to this assertion of Keats are strangely various. Take two of the most distinguished literary critics of the older generation. First, Dr. Robert Bridges. His judgment on *The Ode on a Grecian Urn* is individual, and needs to be quoted entire.

From *Studies in Keats New and Old.* Used by permission of Oxford University Press.

The thought as enounced in the first stanza is the supremacy of ideal art over Nature, because of its unchanging expression of perfection; and this is true and beautiful; but its amplification in the poem is unprogressive, monotonous, and scattered, the attention being called to fresh details without result (see especially ll. 21-24, anticipated in ll. 15-16), which gives an effect of poverty in spite of the beauty. The last stanza enters stumbling upon a pun, but its concluding lines are very fine, and make a sort of recovery with their forcible directness.

Thus, in the judgment of Dr. Bridges, it is these concluding lines which redeem a poorish poem. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, on the contrary, finds them worse than mediocre. He quotes the two final lines and says:

But, of course, to put it solidly, that is a vague observation—to any one whom life has taught to face facts and define his terms, actually an uneducated conclusion, albeit pardonable in one so young . . .

Parallel to these critics of an older generation we may set two of the most distinguished of a younger: Mr. I. A. Richards and Mr. T. S. Eliot. Mr. Richards chooses precisely these two lines as a perfect example of what he calls 'pseudo-statement': while Mr. Eliot, commenting upon this view, writes as follows:

I am at first inclined to agree with him, because this statement of equivalence means nothing to me. But on re-reading the whole Ode, this line strikes me as a serious blemish on a beautiful poem; and the reason must be either that I fail to understand it, or that it is a statement which is untrue. And I suppose that Keats meant something by it, however remote his truth and his beauty may have been from these words in ordinary use. And I am sure that he would have repudiated any explanation of the lines which called it a pseudo-statement. On the other hand the line I have often quoted of Shakespeare,

'Ripeness is all'

or the line I have quoted of Dante,

'la sua voluntade e nostra pace'[1]

strikes very differently on my ear. I observe that the propositions in these words are very different in kind, not only from that of Keats but from each other. The statement of Keats seems to me meaningless: or perhaps the fact that it is grammatically meaningless conceals another meaning from me. The statement of Shakespeare seems to me to have profound emotional meaning, with, at least, no literal fallacy. And the statement of Dante seems to me *literally true.* And I confess that it has more beauty for me now, when my own experience has deepened its meaning, than it did when first I read it.

Diversity of opinion could hardly be more extreme than in these judgments. For Dr. Bridges the final lines redeemed a poor poem; for Mr. Eliot

[1]His [God's] will is our peace.

they spoil a good one; for Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, they are ignorant and uneducated; for Mr. Richards that still ambiguous entity which he calls a 'pseudo-statement.'

I have no hope, and no desire, to convert any one of these eminent critics. I call them in evidence simply to show the astonishing variety of opinion which exists at this day concerning the culmination of a poem whose beauty at least has been tacitly acknowledged for many, many years. Whether such another cause, and such another example, of critical diversity exists, I cannot say; if it does exist, it is unknown to me.

My own opinion concerning the value of those two lines *in the context of the poem itself* is not very different from Mr. Eliot's. At any rate, I disagree with Dr. Bridges' opinion that by their 'forcible directness' the Ode is enabled to make 'a sort of recovery.' To my sense the lines disturb the subtle harmony of the poem. Their very directness is disruptive, for the Ode as a whole is not, in this sense, direct at all. And therein, I think, lies the cause of Dr. Bridges' surprising condemnation of the Ode, which he places 'last, or disputing place with the last' among them all. He has looked in it, necessarily in vain, for direct statement of the kind which is in the last lines; and he condemns it for not possessing a quality which, if it did possess it, would inevitably exclude the subtler richness which it has abundantly.

The direct and enigmatic proposition disturbs the poem, because it does not belong to the same kind of utterance. The poem, as a whole, advances on strong and delicate waves of the pure sensuous imagination. It ends dissonantly with a stark enunciation which, to that part of the human mind which is aroused by stark enunciation, must be a baffling paradox.

Such is my judgment of the poem, even though the paradox with which it ends is full of meaning for me. And I would support it by quoting Keats against himself:

> We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle or amaze with itself, but with its subject.

This essential condition of the greatest poetry, which *The Ode on a Grecian Urn* for the most part so marvelously satisfies, the last two lines, to my sense, fail to fulfil.

Questions

WHAT standard is each of the following men using: Robert Bridges? Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch? I. A. Richards? T. S. Eliot? Keats himself? John Middleton Murry?

2. Do you find that when two of the men here use the same standard they reach the same conclusion?

3. What is Murry's point in assembling these other criticisms? What is his criterion in selecting these other criticisms?

4. Read the complete poem on page 716 and decide which man you believe comes closest to stating your judgment of the poem. What standard or standards do you use in making your decision?

FROM A DISCUSSION OF

Keats' *Ode on Melancholy*

DESPITE INDIVIDUAL passages of fineness, one must still ask the question: why cannot we put it beside the greatest poems? . . . One might give a general explanation as follows: Keats has for his theme a variation of the old theme used so often by Shakespeare, for instance: the passing of beauty, or beauty destroyed by time. There are in general two approaches: (1) a rather straightforward, direct approach, or (2) an ironical approach. Keats' poem falls somewhere between the two. He is really using an indirect ironical approach: Don't look there for melancholy; if you want something really to be sad about find the most beautiful thing that you can, for the loveliest things must perish. His poem requires irony, therefore. But the poem does not have enough irony. It depends too much on the embroidery work of the decorative imagery. The most successful passages which we have found are ironical or tend to irony. But the poem does not have enough to be entirely successful.

From Brooks, Purser, and Warren, *An Approach to Literature* (Rev. ed., New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1939).

Questions

WHAT standard is being employed when the writers here reach the conclusion that "the poem does not have enough [ironical passages] to be entirely successful"? What other standard is suggested by the opening phrase?

2. Presumably, by the standard suggested in the opening phrase, the poem is good, by the one employed in subsequent sentences it is inadequate. On the basis of what you have here, which standard in the eyes of these critics seems to lead to the more important judgment? Would you say that this would be generally true (i.e., that the judgment reached by the one standard is more important than the judgment reached by the other)?

ALEXANDER W. CRAWFORD

from The Genius of Keats

THE NOTE OF SADNESS and melancholy that we have seen to pervade all of Keats's later work reaches its culmination in the two odes *On Melancholy* and *To a Nightingale.* It is in these that we find the best expression of this mood, and here more than elsewhere the poet endeavours to reach a solution of the problem of sorrow.

A grave spiritual crisis now confronted Keats, in which he had come to realize that the purpose of life is not joy (happiness), but rather discipline, and he was trying to make the most both of his fortunes and his misfortunes. He had discovered that there are many painful experiences in life, in which it was difficult to see any beauty, though they were quite manifestly true. This observation he had communicated to Reynolds in his poetic *Epistle,* March, 1818, telling of his "mysterious tale," which he had got from a visit to the seashore. He thought he should be happy with such a view of the sea and shore.

> but I saw
> Too far into the sea, where every maw
> The greater on the less feeds evermore—
> But I saw too distinct into the core
> Of an eternal fierce destruction,
> And so from happiness I far was gone. (ll. 93-98.)

How seriously this problem took hold of him may be seen from his letter of a year later (March, 1819) which shows him still troubled about the pains witnessed in nature, this time among birds and beasts. Here he observed that without this pain "in wild nature the Hawk would lose his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms—the Lion must starve as well as the Swallow."

Keats thus anticipates the problem of those hard and distressing facts of cruelty and suffering in nature that were emphasized a few decades later by Darwin and the evolutionary writers, and that seemed to Tennyson one of the most puzzling of the sad mysteries of nature. Though much older than Keats at the time he dealt with these matters, it may be said that Tennyson's thoughts are scarcely as profound as those of the young and earlier poet.

From *The Genius of Keats,* by Alexander W. Crawford. Published by Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Alexander W. Crawford.

Keats's solution of this mystery of suffering is suggested in the same letter to his brother and sister-in-law, as he continued on 15th April, 1819, where he develops his concept of the world as "The Vale of Soul-Making." . . . This passage has been cited earlier (pp. 42-43), and now only the leading thoughts need be referred to. After refusing with "the misguided and superstitious" to call the world "a vale of tears," he says, "Call the world if you Please 'The Vale of Soul-making.' Then you will find the use of the world . . . I say *'Soul-making'*—Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence." Then, finding difficulty in putting his thoughts into words, he says, "I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible. I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* read in that School—and I will call the *Child able to read, the Soul,* made from that *School* and its *hornbook.* Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways."

This problem was not new to Keats, but it was at this time that he treated it most fully and most successfully. He had long realized that it was very difficult to reconcile beauty, which to him had always been a joy and a delight, with many of the obvious truths that are so very painful. His mind had dwelt long and courageously on this difficulty, and as early as 28th December, 1817, in a letter to his two brothers he had pointed out the line of reconciliation suggested in great poetry. An earnest study of *King Lear* had revealed to him a possible reconciliation of the pleasant and the painful, or of the apparent conflict between beauty and truth.

When Keats said of *King Lear* that "The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth" he was saying that in great works of art the pleasant and the painful are brought into a greater harmony in which Beauty and Truth are reconciled. This same idea had been working in his mind when he wrote in *Endymion* in 1818:

> Yes, in spite of all,
> Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
> From our dark spirits. (I, 11, 10-12.)

With this thought in mind he was able now to see beauty in Melancholy, and he was to find that even death may fit into the universal harmony, in which he might speak of it as "easeful death."

It was in this mood, then, that he came to the writing of the two odes on Melancholy and the Nightingale. In the first of these he reminds himself

of the evanescent character of joy, and of all sensuous beauty and pleasure. These are not as lasting as Truth. Here, manifestly, he is thinking of sensuous beauty that must die, for it is this that is transitory, and not the principle of beauty which is permanent. This should be made clear by noticing that he links together Beauty, Joy, Pleasure, and Delight—all of them transitory. And Melancholy, or Sorrow, dwells with these, and is therefore herself transitory.

Questions

WHAT standards are applied here? Cite the lines which lead you to your answer.

2. Which standard is the predominant one?

3. What reason is there for looking into Keats' letters and other poems in order to reach conclusions about the two odes under discussion?

4. In looking back over all the critical excerpts given here, what standards for evaluation do you find have *not* been used? Do you suppose some have been neglected in part, at least, because of the nature of Keats' poems? Do you suppose, further, that some have been neglected in part because these critics are all thoughtful literary analysts who believe in the importance of literature and therefore believe that it should not be confused with other kinds of writing?

Read the following two stories and rate each one according to all the yardsticks which we have discussed. A chart is provided at the end of each story.

NORBERT DAVIS

Build me a bungalow small

WILLIAM MARTIN stepped out on the three worn planks that served the cabin as a front porch and looked all around and saw nothing but trees. That was just fine with him. It was not that he was fond of trees as such. He wasn't. He considered them nonfunctional and a waste of lumber, but at the moment he vastly preferred them to people.

He was tall and dark, a little gaunt in the face and stooped in the shoulders, and his black hair was clipped in a crew cut. He was wearing a red flannel shirt and brand-new khaki pants and shoe pacs. Standing there on the porch, he drew in a long, luxurious breath of mountain air—thin and dry with a sharp, cold tingle in it.

The air tasted very good. Martin tried some more of it and then pounded his chest, Tarzan style. He jumped down off the porch and did a compli-

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cated series of crouched, whirling shifts and then caught an imaginary football and kicked it. He was right at the apex of his punt when he saw the man watching him, and he very nearly went over backward.

"Oops!" he said, waving his arms violently to catch his balance. "I didn't see—I didn't think there was anyone— Hello."

The man was leaning against the fender of a dust-colored sedan that blended perfectly into the dried brown of the brush along the twisted, narrow road. He was dressed in brown, too, and he was smoking a brown, hand-rolled cigarette. He was squat and blocky and bowlegged, and he was scowling. He looked as if he had been born with a great many suspicions and had lived to see every single one of them confirmed.

"Your name Martin?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You leased this cabin from the owner for three weeks?"

"Yes."

"You understand that he don't own the land the cabin sits on. Just the cabin itself. The land is part of this state park and can't be sold."

"I understand that."

"Keep it in mind. You're a tenant here by sufferance. In case you don't savvy that, it means you can stay here as long as you behave yourself. My name's Bradwell. I'm the state ranger in charge."

"Well," said Martin uncertainly. "Hello."

"How drunk are you now?"

"I'm not drunk at all!" Martin denied indignantly. "I was just feeling good, that's all—just taking a little morning workout to—to—"

"If I catch you plastered and passed out around here, you're going to wake up with a shovel in your hand on the road gang. And don't sling garbage around in the brush. Bury it. All of it. Deep. And don't build fires except in the fireplace in the cabin, and don't smoke away from this clearing. And don't drive over twenty on these park roads. And leave the animals alone. They got more right to be here than you have."

"Okay," said Martin. "Okay, okay, okay."

Bradwell got back in his car. The sound of its motor was a muted, smooth murmur.

"I'll be seeing you," he said. "Often. Keep that in mind, too."

The sedan slid silently away.

"Huh," said Martin.

He breathed in deeply again, trying to retrieve his exuberant mood. It eluded him, and he looked around exploratively. He spotted a path that angled crookedly away from the cabin, and he started following it.

The trees closed in instantly on him, and the silence and the solitude were

soothing balm. He began to whistle softly and jauntily to himself. He kept on whistling until he walked around a curve and came face to face with a deer.

This was not a small deer, and it was in no way fragile or dainty. It was equipped with antlers, and it was tall enough so that when it held its head up it could look Martin right in the eye, and that was just what it was doing.

"Shoo," said Martin. "Scram. Get out of here."

The deer came a step closer.

"Boo!" Martin shouted. "Beat it!"

The deer lowered its head and pawed the ground. The hoof was sharp enough to leave a clean, deep groove in the dirt. It snorted.

"Well," said Martin. "Okay. If that's the way you feel."

He backed around the curve and started toward the cabin. The deer snorted again—right behind him. Martin walked a lot faster. He was perspiring. He sneaked a glance over his shoulder. The antlers were about a yard from his back, and they were approaching a lot faster than he was receding.

"*Yikes!*" Martin gasped.

He ran. He ran like a rabbit. And behind him he could hear those sharply sinister snorts getting closer and closer.

Crashing out into the clearing, he sailed around the cabin, leaning hard on the turns. He reached the porch in one last ten-foot leap. There was a camp chair leaning against the wall beside the door, and he swung it up over his shoulder and whirled around—at bay.

It was then that he heard the high-pitched, uproarious shriek of laughter. The deer had stopped a dozen feet from the porch. It was regarding Martin with an offended expression, and now it turned its head to look toward the laughter. Martin dropped the chair as though it had suddenly become red-hot. He picked it up and dropped it again and then kicked it furiously.

The laughter died in a series of gurgling gasps. "I'm sorry!" the girl said. "I really shouldn't have—" She started up again, bending over and holding her sides. She had shiny black hair with a thin red ribbon tied in it. She was tall, and she was wearing dungarees and moccasins and a man's white shirt. She was very tanned, and she had startlingly blue eyes and a short, straight nose with a little tilt to it.

She straightened up painfully. "You should have seen your face when you came around the cabin. It was really—Oh, Dagwood! You big fool, you!"

The deer stalked up to her and lowered its antlers and snorted.

The girl slapped at it. "Oh, get away. I haven't anything for you to eat." She smiled up at Martin. "They call him Dagwood because he's always

hungry, and he'll eat absolutely anything. Dagwood, you pest. Go away."

She seized him expertly by an antler, turned him around, and slapped him on the haunch. Dagwood sailed over a bush and disappeared in three more graceful bounces.

The girl walked up to the porch. "Hello. My name is Carol Carter. I'm staying at the Bracken cabin. It's over that way a half mile. You're William Martin, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"The Greys told me they were renting their cabin to you. They said you were an architect."

"Did they?"

"Yes. They said you wanted to come up here to be alone while you finished some important work."

"But you didn't believe them, did you?"

"What?" said Carol.

"You didn't believe them when they told you I wanted to be alone."

Carol lost her smile. "Oh. Well—are you mad at me? I apologize for laughing. I shouldn't have. I know you were scared to death."

"Is there anything else you know about me besides my name and my business and my state of mind?"

"I know you've got a nasty temper."

"There's something you can do to avoid that."

"What?" Carol asked.

"Leave."

"Oh. Well—well, I mean . . ."

"Goodby, now."

"Goodby," said Carol soberly.

She turned around and walked on along the road. She walked well—erect and graceful, very quick and light on her feet.

"Faugh!" Martin snarled. "The next time I'll pick the city zoo or the Union Station."

Martin had set himself up in business in the sunlight at the side of the cabin. He and his paraphernalia were spread all over the camp chair and two collapsible bridge tables. He had red ink and black ink and white ink and six different kinds of pens: squares, triangles, compasses, dividers, rulers, erasers and slide rules, and dozens of sectional plans and blue, checked master sheets—all placed precisely where he wanted them. He was a happy man.

He consulted one of the slide rules and found the answer he needed and began to print it in slanted, neat figures.

"Hello," said Carol.

Martin's pen jerked.

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Carol.

Martin blotted carefully and began to erase.

"Let me help—" said the girl.

Martin stopped erasing and looked at her.

"I said I was sorry," Carol said defensively. "And I'm sorry I laughed at you a while ago. What else can I say?"

"Plenty, I'm afraid."

"Now, look," said Carol. "I'm just trying to be neighborly. I came over here this morning with the best intentions in the world. I was going to show you how the Greys' stove worked. They asked me to. They were worried about how you'd make out, because they knew you weren't married, and they didn't know whether or not you could cook for yourself. I was even going to ask you over to dinner tonight. Of course, we call it supper."

"How odd!"

"Look," said Carol. "Relax. I'm not that repulsive. We got off to a bad start, but can't you sort of skip it? You'll find it's lonesome up here. No one comes up in the fall, because they don't realize how swell the weather is."

"What are you doing up here?"

Carol smiled. "That's better. I had pneumonia last winter, and I came up here in the spring to rest for three months, and I just sort of lingered. I like it. What are you working on?"

"A plan for a small home."

"You've got a lot of plans just for that?"

Martin explained reluctantly: "These are master plans to be used on a lot of small homes to be built all at once in a big subdivision. Each house has to have the same over-all requirements, but they have to be incidentally variable, so that each one can be made to look different."

"Sounds complicated."

"It is. It's a Kreiger-Croft Construction Company project. If I can satisfy them, there's plenty in it for me. I've done some work for them before, but nothing as big as this will be."

"You're up here to concentrate, eh?"

"That was the idea, at least. I got tired of trying to think while contractors and frustrated homeowners and building inspectors pound on my desk."

"I see. Can I look at the master sheet?"

"You can't visualize from a blueprint."

"I can so. I took two years of architecture in art school.... Say, this is cute! Now if you put a—"

Martin threw his slide rule on the ground.

"All right," Carol said quickly. "All right."

"Artists," Martin muttered. "Now it's artists. That's all I needed."

"Architecture is an art."

"It is not! It's a science! Do I look like some boob who hangs out in a garret?"

"No, and artists don't, either. Just remember that I happen to be one."

"Ha."

"I am, and I'm pretty good, too."

"Ha."

"Are you always this way?" Carol asked. "You pack around just about the nastiest disposition I've run across."

"It's a device," Martin explained carefully. "It's a device I employ so people will leave me alone long enough for me to get a little work done. But sometimes it doesn't work. There are people who are so dumb they don't get the idea."

"Meaning me?" Carol said thoughtfully. "You don't like me?"

"Now you're smartening up."

"You want me to go away?"

"You're right on the beam."

Carol swallowed. "All right. But I think you could have been a little more polite about it all."

"Oh, go drown yourself somewhere."

Carol walked away. She walked slowly this time; all her bounce had gone.

Martin picked up the slide rule and looked at it in an antagonistic manner. "Ummm," he said uneasily, using it to scratch his head. "Well."

He went back to work, but most of the flavor seemed to have simmered out of his house plans. He stalled around for a while and then got up and went in the back door of the cabin. He came out a moment later, carrying a long-handled spade in one hand and a dripping paper sack of garbage in the other.

Holding the sack well away from him, he paced up the slope back of the cabin. Finding a site that suited him, he put the sack down and started digging.

He dug steadily for about a half hour. He had made a trench, then, about two feet deep and a foot and a half wide. He figured this would be large enough to hold a week's deposit of garbage, and he stopped and leaned on the spade handle, contemplating his handiwork.

Somebody pushed him—hard. The spade tangled his feet up, and he went headlong over it and fell flat on his face in the ditch. He scrambled frantically, rolled over and sat up.

Dagwood snorted at him.

"You get out of here!" Martin yelled furiously.

He scrambled up and swung awkwardly with the spade. It didn't miss Dagwood by more than fifteen feet. Dagwood bounced this way and that way on his spring-steel legs, shook his antlers coyly, and then paused, ready for more fun and games.

Martin ran at him. "Get out of here! You get off this property!"

Dagwood glided over a bush and flicked his white tail tauntingly. That did it. Martin lost what remained of his perspective. He took off after Dagwood like a bat from the belfry.

Dagwood danced happily all around the clearing twice and then took off up the path with Martin thundering grimly behind. Dagwood teased him along for a couple of hundred yards and then casually melted away into the brush.

Martin stumbled over to a fallen tree trunk and collapsed. He had a bad case of the gulps—an affliction which often seizes lowlanders who exert themselves unduly at high altitudes—and he sat and gasped for ten minutes before his heart stopped booming in his ears.

Finally he got up and went drearily down the path again, helping himself along with the spade. He came out into the clearing and stopped short, frozen numb with horror.

Here was Dagwood again. He had tipped over both card tables, and he was chewing meditatively on a large number of sheets of blue, checked paper.

"Oh, no," Martin groaned. "No!"

Dagwood stopped chewing and glanced at him inquiringly.

"Drop those plans!" Martin shrieked.

Dagwood started chewing again.

Martin howled. He threw the spade and ran after it. He picked it up en route and cut a vicious swath in the air with it. Dagwood bounced jauntily away, carrying the blue sheets like a banner.

"I'll kill you!" Martin promised fervently, fighting his way through brush. "I'll spatter your brains—"

They went up hill and down dale. They went around in two circles. They went through a bramble patch, some poison oak, and a small growth of cockleburs. Martin fell down three times, and when he got up the third time Dagwood was gone again.

Martin went right on, anyway, staggering. "Where are you?" he roared. "I'll tear you limb from limb! I'll murder you in cold blood!"

He stumbled down a rock-strewn slope, burst through a waist-high barrier of brush, and very nearly fell down the fourth time. He caught

his balance and stood there, swaying and strangling, staring unbelievingly at a painter's easel. It was sitting all by itself in the clearing.

"Oh," said Martin, fighting for breath. "You! Carol Carter! Where are you?"

His voiced dropped into the silence. There was no answer, not even an echo.

"Hey!" said Martin.

He listened, and then he heard the faint, infinitely alluring chuckle of running water. Realizing suddenly that he had a mouth like a blast furnace, he dragged his feet across the clearing and fought through some more brush.

He didn't even see the stream until his feet went out from under him, and he sat down with a dull thud on the bank. His feet were hanging over a deep, dark pool where the water circled hungrily like a slow-motion whirlpool, and abruptly it didn't seem inviting at all.

Martin stared at the bank opposite him. It was steep and studded with sharp rocks, and someone had slipped on it. Someone had left fresh, frantically clawed gouges in the dirt.

"Hey!" said Martin, scared now. "Hey, Carol! Where are you? Where—"

The water chuckled gruesomely beneath him.

Martin's voice went up a queasy notch. "Carol! Carol! Are you all right?"

He slid down the bank and stared into the water. He couldn't see anything but his own reflection.

"Hey?" he said, putting everything into a last appeal. There was no answer save the ghoulish gurgle of the water.

Martin scrambled back up the bank. He ran first to his left and then to his right and then hightailed it over the hill. It was very heavy going now. His feet didn't track, and he seemed to have an irrepressible urge to fall down every twenty yards. He lost the spade and his sense of direction, and it was approximately a century before he came out on a narrow, rutted road. He whirled around groggily twice, picked a direction, and started running all over again.

He was still going when Bradwell's dusty sedan pulled up silently alongside of him.

"Oh!" said Martin. "Listen—listen—"

Bradwell said: "I warned you what would happen to you if I caught you plastered."

Martin clutched the car door. "Listen. Carol Carter. Drowned."

"What?" Bradwell barked.

"Drowned. Pool. Back there."

"You mean that little pool where she paints?"

Martin nodded numbly. "Dangerous. Steep bank."

"You're crazy."

"No. Slipped on bank. Hit her head on rock. Drowned."

"Get in here," said Bradwell.

Martin fell into the front seat and held his head in his hands, completely blown out. Bradwell put the sedan into reverse, slammed it backward into the brush, and cramped the wheels expertly.

"No!" Martin protested. "Other way."

"Shut up. I know the way."

The sedan popped out of the brush, jittered sideways on the ruts, and picked up speed in a breathless spurt.

"Should never have said that," Martin muttered. "Never, never."

"Said what?" Bradwell asked absently.

"What I said to her. Oh, no. No."

"Pipe down. I'm busy."

The roadside brush swished past them in a brown, splattered blur. Suddenly it fell eerily away on one side, and Bradwell stood on the brakes.

"Huh?" said Martin. "This isn't—"

"I know. That's your cabin there, you dope. Someone is in it. I saw something move in the window."

"Never mind," Martin said. "It's just that damned Dagwood again."

"It ain't Dagwood," said Bradwell. "He don't break into cabins—not since I caught him tryin' it once and fanned his rear end good with a lath. Come on. We'll take a look."

"No! I'm not going—"

Bradwell reached over the back of the seat and came up with an efficient-looking .30-30 saddle carbine. "Yes, you are. You're going to march right up that path ahead of me. Get."

Martin marched up the path, and opened the front door of the cabin cautiously.

"Hello," Carol called. "I'm in the kitchen."

Martin tore across the room and hung limply in the kitchen doorway, staring with bulged, incredulous eyes. Carol had just started washing his dirty dishes.

"Here I am again," she said. "I'm really a pig for punishment."

Martin tiptoed across the floor and touched her arm gingerly. She wasn't a phantom. "Whew!" he said.

"What's the matter?" Carol asked casually. "Is your conscience bothering you?"

Martin rallied a little. "Weren't you up at that pool a while ago? Why didn't you answer me when I called?"

"Yes, I was up at the pool, and I didn't answer you for two good reasons. Reason number one: I didn't have any clothes on."

"What?" said Martin blankly.

"I had taken a sun bath, and I was just about to dunk myself in the pool to cool off when you came howling around. I had to scramble for cover. Reason number two: You scared me with all those threats about murder and tearing me limb from limb. I thought you'd gone clear off your trolley. I finally figured out what you thought from your actions, but by that time you were gone with the wind. So I came over here."

Martin said, "I wasn't threatening you. I was just going to murder Dagwood because he chewed up my plans."

"What was that, again?" Bradwell demanded. "I told you to leave the animals around here alone."

"Relax. I didn't catch him."

"How do I know you didn't?"

"You know he didn't," Carol said, "because Dagwood is outside the back door right now, waiting to be fed." She nodded at Martin. "I came back before, mad as I was, to warn you that you mustn't leave any important paper lying around outside, because Dagwood likes the taste of it. He chews it like tobacco. But when I came back, you were gone."

"I was digging a garbage ditch."

"I know. I gathered up your plans then and put them in the cabin. Dagwood ran off with some scratch sheets. I put your plans in on the table."

"Yeah," said Bradwell. "I'm lookin' at 'em. . . . Say, this is going to be a neat layout. Who's going to build bungalows like this, Martin? How much do they want for a down payment on one?"

"Later," Martin said absently. "Later. Anyway, I'm going to buy the first one."

"You don't need a house," Bradwell informed him. "You ain't married."

"Well, I can get married, can't I?" Martin asked. He hesitated, watching Carol. "Can't I?"

Carol glanced sideways at him.

"Well," said Martin shamefacedly, "a person can say things—I mean, he can sort of fly off the handle and say things and then—and then he can suddenly sort of see the light and change his—"

Carol smiled slightly. "Take this lettuce leaf out to Dagwood."

"A leaf?" Martin said exuberantly. "One little leaf? No! We'll give him the whole head! We wouldn't want to turn him away hungry. Dagwood is a very fine deer and a credit to the community. Here, Dagwood. Here you are, old boy, old pal."

Rating charts

Make checks in the boxes, or on a separate sheet of paper, according to the following ratings—first box: *excellent;* second box: *good;* third box: *average;* fourth box: *poor;* fifth box: *total failure.*

YARDSTICKS INVOLVING PARTS	RATING
Clarity	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Escape	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Special doctrine (name it):_____	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Real life	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Pleasure in artistic details	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
YARDSTICKS INVOLVING THE STORY AS A WHOLE	
Effect on the reader	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Personality of the author	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Internal consistency	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Insight	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MAXIM GORKY Boless

AN ACQUAINTANCE of mine once told me the following story:

"While still a student at Moscow I happened to be living alongside one of those—well, she was a Polish woman, Teresa by name. A tall, powerfully built brunet with heavy, bushy eyebrows, and a large coarse, vulgar face, as if carved out with an ax—the animal gleam of her eyes, the deep bass voice, the gait and manners of a cabman, and her immense strength like that of a market-woman, inspired me with an inexpressible horror. I lived in the garret of the house, and her room was opposite mine. I never opened my door when I knew that she was in. But this, of course, happened very rarely. Sometimes I chanced to meet her on the landing, staircase, or in the yard, and she would look at me with a smile which seemed to me cynical and rapacious. Occasionally I saw her in her cups, with bleary eyes, her hair and clothes in disorder and with a particularly loathsome smile. On such occasions she would meet my eye with an impudent stare and say:

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" 'How are you, Pan Student?'[1]

"And her stupid laugh would increase my dislike for her still more. I would have liked nothing better than to change my quarters in order to get rid of her proximity, but my room was so nice, and the view from my window was so fine, the street below so quiet and peaceful, that I concluded to endure it.

"One morning after I had dressed and was sprawling on the cot, trying to invent some sort of an excuse for not attending my classes, the door of my room suddenly opened, and the disgusting bass voice of the Polish woman sounded from the threshold:

" 'Good morning, Pan Student!'

" 'What is it you wish?' I asked her. I saw she looked confused and had in her face a kind of pleading expression, something unusual with her.

" 'You see, Pan Student, I came to beg you to do me a great favor. Don't refuse me, please!'

"Lying there on my cot I thought that it was just some pretext or other to make my further acquaintance. Take care, my boy!

" 'You see, I have to send a letter to my native country,' she continued in a supplicating, low, tremulous voice.

" 'Well,' I thought, 'the devil take you. If you wish I will write it for you.' And springing to my feet I sat down to the table, took some paper and said: 'Well, come nearer; sit down and dictate.'

"She came over; sat down cautiously on the edge of the chair and looked at me in rather a guilty way.

" 'To whom shall I write?'

" 'To Boleslav Kapshat, in the town Sventsiani, on the Warsaw railroad.'

" 'Well, what shall I write? Speak.'

" 'My dearest Boless, my heart's delight, my beloved. May the Mother of God protect you! My golden heart, why have you not written for so long a time to your sorrowing dove, Teresa—'

"I could hardly keep from laughing. A sorrowing dove, indeed! Almost six feet tall, with the fists of a prize-fighter, and a face so black that it seemed as if the 'dove' had been sweeping chimneys all her life and had never thoroughly washed herself. But I somehow kept my face straight and asked:

" 'Who is this Bolesst?'

" 'Boless, Pan Student,' she replied, seemingly offended because of my mispronouncing the name. 'He is my affianced.'

" 'Affianced!'

" 'And why are you so astonished? Can not I, a girl, have an affianced?'

[1]Pan is Polish for Mister.

"She—a girl! well, this beats everything I ever heard. Oh, well, who can tell about such matters! Everything is possible in this world.

" 'And have you been long engaged?'

" 'The sixth year.'

" 'Oh, oh!' I thought and then said aloud: 'Well, go ahead with your letter.'

"And I must confess—so tender and loving was this message—that I would have willingly exchanged places with this Boless had the fair correspondent been any one else but Teresa.

" 'I thank you from my inmost soul for your favor, Pan Student,' Teresa said, bowing low. 'Can I in any way be of service to you?'

"No, thank you.'

" 'But maybe the Pan's shirts or trousers need mending?'

"This made me quite angry. I felt that this mastodon in petticoats was making the blood mount to my cheeks, and I told her quite sharply that her services were not required; and she departed.

"Two weeks or so passed. One evening I was sitting at my window, softly whistling and thinking hard how to get away from myself. I felt very bored. The weather was as nasty as it could be. To go out that evening was out of the question, and having nothing better to do I began from sheer ennui a course of self-analysis. This proved dull enough work, but there was nothing else to do. Suddenly the door opened, thank God! Some one was coming to see me.

" 'Are you very busy just now, Pan Student?'

" 'Teresa! H'm—' I thought I would have preferred any one at all to her. Then I said aloud:

" 'No, what is it you want now?'

" 'I wish to ask the Pan Student to write me another letter.'

" 'Very well. Is it again to Boless you wish me to write?'

" 'No, this time I want you to write a letter from Boless to me.'

" 'Wha-at?'

" 'I beg your pardon, Pan Student. How stupid of me! It is not for me, this letter, but for a friend of mine, a man acquaintance; he has a fiancée. Her name is like mine, Teresa. He does not know how to write, so I want the Pan Student to write for him a letter to that Teresa—'

"I looked at her. She seemed very confused and frightened, and her fingers trembled. And tho I failed at first to understand what was the matter with her I at last understood.

" 'Look here, my lady,' I said to her. 'You have been telling me a pack of lies. There are no Bolesses nor Teresas among your acquaintances. It is only a pretext for coming in here. I tell you outright that there is no use of com-

ing sneaking around me, as I do not wish to have anything to do with you. Do you understand?'

"She grew very red in the face and I saw that she was strangely frightened and confused, and moved her lips so oddly, wishing to say something, without being able to say it. And somehow I began to think that I had misjudged her a little. There was something behind all this. But what?

" 'Pan Student,' she suddenly began, but broke off, and turning toward the door, walked out of the room.

"I remained with a very unpleasant feeling in my heart. I heard her shut her own door with a bang; evidently the poor girl was very angry—I thought the matter over and decided to go in to her and induce her to return; I would write her the letter she wished.

"I entered her room. She was sitting at the table with her head pressed in her hands.

" 'Teresa,' I said, 'will you listen to me a moment?'

"Whenever I come to this turn of the story I always feel very awkward and embarrassed. But let us return to my narrative. Seeing that she did not reply I repeated:

" 'Listen to me, my girl—'

"She sprang to her feet, came close up to me, with eyes flashing, and placing her two hands on my shoulders she began to whisper, or rather to hum in her deep bass voice:

" 'Look you here, Pan Student. What of it, what of it if there is no Boless? And what if there is no Teresa? What difference does it make to you? Is it so hard for you to draw a few lines on the paper! Oh, you! And I thought you such a good fellow, such a nice fair-haired little boy. Yes, it is true—there is no Boless, and there is no Teresa, there is only me! Well, what of it?'

" 'Allow me,' I said, greatly disconcerted by this reception. 'What is it you are saying? Is there no Boless?'

" 'Yes, there is none. But what of it?'

" 'And no Teresa either?'

" 'No, no Teresa either; that is, yes, I am her.'

"I could not understand a word. I stared straight into her eyes, trying to determine which of us two had lost our reason. And she returned once more to the table, rummaged for some time in the drawer, and coming back to me said in an offended tone:

" 'Here is the letter you wrote for me, take it back. You do not wish to write me a second one anyway. Others will probably be kinder than you and would do so.'

"I recognized the letter she held out to me as the one I wrote for her to Boless. Humph!

" 'Look here, Teresa,' I said to her. 'Will you please explain to me what it all means? Why do you ask people to write letters for you when you do not find it necessary even to post them?'

" 'Post them? Where to?'

" 'Why, to this Boless, of course.'

" 'But he does not exist!'

"I really could not understand a word. There was nothing left for me to do but to spit and walk out of the room. But she explained herself.

" 'Well, what of it?' she began in an offended voice. 'He does not exist. He does not, so,' and she extended her hands as if she could not herself clearly understand why he did not exist in reality. 'But I want him to. Am I not as much of a human being as the others? Of course I—I know— But it does no harm to any one, that I am writing to him—'

" 'Allow me—to whom?'

" 'To Boless, of course.'

" 'But he does not exist.'

" 'Oh, Mother of God! What if he does not exist? He does not; still to me he does. And Teresa—this is myself, and he replies to my letters, and I write to him again.'

"I understood. I felt so sick at heart, so ashamed of myself to know that alongside of me, only three paces removed, lived a human being who had no one in the whole world to love and sympathize with her, and that this being had to invent a friend for herself.

" 'Here you have written a letter from me to Boless, and I gave it to another to read, and when I hear it read it really begins to seem to me as if there is a Boless. And then I ask that a letter be written from Boless to Teresa—that is to me. And when such a letter is written and is read to me then I am almost entirely convinced that there is a Boless, and that makes my life easier.'

"Yes, the devil take it all," continued my acquaintance. "To make a long story short I began from that time on to write with the greatest punctuality twice a week letters to Boless and vice versa. I wrote splendid replies to her. She used to listen to my reading of those epistles and to weep in her bass voice. In return for this she used to mend my clothes and darn my socks.

"Three months later she was thrown into prison for some reason or other and by now she must surely be dead."

My acquaintance blew the ashes from his cigaret, looked thoughtfully at the sky, and concluded:

"Y-e-s, the more a human being has drunk of the cup of bitterness the more ardently he longs for sweetness. And we, enveloped in our worn-out virtues and gazing at each other through the haze of self-sufficiency and

convinced of our righteousness, fail to understand it.

"And the whole affair turns out very stupid, and very cruel. Fallen people we say—but who and what are those fallen ones? First of all they are human beings of the very same bone and blood, of the very same flesh and nerves as ourselves. We have been told the very same thing for whole ages, day in and day out. And we listen and—and the devil alone knows how stupid it all is! In reality we, too, are but fallen people and more deeply fallen too, probably—into the abyss of self-sufficiency, convinced of our own sinlessness and superiority, the superiority of our own nerves and brains over the nerves and brains of those who are only less crafty than we are, and who can not, as we can, feign a goodness they do not possess—but enough of this. It is all so old and stale—so old and stale indeed that one is ashamed to speak of it—"

Rating charts

Make checks in the boxes, or on a separate sheet of paper, according to the following ratings—first box: *excellent;* second box: *good;* third box: *average;* fourth box: *poor;* fifth box: *total failure.*

YARDSTICKS INVOLVING PARTS	RATING
Clarity	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Escape	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Special doctrine (name it):_____	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Real life	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Pleasure in artistic details	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
YARDSTICKS INVOLVING THE STORY AS A WHOLE	
Effect on the reader	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Personality of the author	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Internal consistency	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Insight	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Questions

According to which criteria did the previous story rank higher?

2. According to which criteria does this story rank higher?

3. How do you account for these deviations?

4. Which criteria seemed irrelevant in rating these stories? Why?

5. Which criteria seemed to distinguish best between the stories? Why?

PART THREE

Literary types

The short story

ALTHOUGH all imaginative literature interprets human qualities, emotions, motives, and values, different forms interpret them in different ways. Fictional works, dramas, and poems all have their peculiar limitations and possibilities. Therefore, in order to see clearly and judge wisely what each particular work offers, the reader should know something about the nature of each of these forms. Hereafter, works in this book will be introduced and grouped according to type. This arrangement will help you consider, in turn, the *special qualities* of short stories, dramas, and poems as types in addition to the more *general literary qualities* of the works here printed.

We start, then, with a form of prose fiction, ordinarily the easiest of all forms to understand and to enjoy. Primitive men by campfires, children in nurseries, and traveling men in smoking cars obviously appreciate some kinds of imaginative narratives in prose without paying much attention to their structure. But most readers and listeners will find that even such narratives—and others as well—can be most thoroughly appreciated by understanding not only the materials but also the methods involved. And they will find that some works—often the best ones—demand careful attention to manner as well as matter to be understood or appreciated at all.

Students often have tried to classify fiction, and several categories have been suggested—for example, the novel, the novella, the novelette, the long short story, the short story, the short short story, and the anecdote. Rigid distinctions between these are unsatisfactory because most of them break down. Many scholars, as a result, have stopped worrying about them, and we may well follow their example. For us, two points about the type here represented —the short story—are important: (1) It is short, usually a good deal less than ten thousand words and seldom more than thirty-five thousand or so. (2) It is, nevertheless, a story rather than a part of a story—a complete work with a discoverable unity comparable to that found in other forms. The problem of the short story writer, then, is to combine rigid economy with unity, and a problem for the reader is to see this combination.

Economy

CONTRASTED with the novel, the short story is less complex in its picturing of life, more swift in the accomplishment of its task. Economy constrains the author to confine his pattern of happenings by giving a detailed account of one episode or even of part of what would be a complete action in a novel—the beginning, the middle, *or* the end—rather than all three. (Other parts of the action, of course, may be implied or briefly summarized.) The author ordinarily limits the number of characters introduced: often he portrays only one character or a small group of characters. And even leading

characters are not likely to be endowed with a large number of traits. Settings, too, in contrast to those in the novel, are limited in number: a short story with a panoramic view comparable to that in Tolstoy's wide-ranging *War and Peace* is inconceivable.

As a rule, the brevity of the short story brings a similar limitation upon its tone and its meanings. Whereas the novelist may range from pathos to scorn and from scorn to ridicule in various parts of his book, in a given story, the short story writer is likely to voice only one emotional attitude. And whereas the novelist may give his work complex multiple meanings, the short story writer is likely to develop rather simpler and fewer meanings. In such ways as these, the short story shows the result of economy, and the reader should notice how simplifications and cuts keep it within bounds.

Unity

A SHORT story, nevertheless, should be a complete whole, fused according to some principle or principles. In reading a work of this sort, you are obliged, therefore, to see what the nature of the whole work is and how each element contributes to its final achievement. You will find it useful to consider these questions: Is it unified? If not, why not? If so, what is the precise nature of its unity? And how is the unity achieved? You need not, of course, consider these questions in this order, but you do well to attend to all of them.

Critics, you will find, have suggested a variety of ways of getting at the heart of a short story. Some urge you to consider the single effect it has upon the reader, some to discover the single intention upon the part of the author, some to study the story itself as a concrete object which is a fusion of several parts. Your study of "Evaluations" will suggest to you that these ways are not contradictory, but that they represent varied approaches. Since any of them or all of them may help you discern the nature of the unity of a story, you may find it useful to consider each in turn.

(1) What is the effect of the story upon you? As far back as 1842, Edgar Allan Poe, who wrote the first careful discussion of the prose tale, saw the short story as a stimulus to a response on the part of the reader. With "a certain unique or single effect" in mind, the author, said Poe, "then invents such incidents—he then combines such events, and discusses them in such tone as may best serve . . . in establishing the preconceived effect." In using this approach, you read the story and note what is memorable about it—precisely what it gave you, an idea, perhaps, an attitude, an insight into life or character, or an emotion. You then consider how, exactly, that particular story and the manner of its telling established such an effect.

(2) What is the apparent intention of the author, and how does that intention influence his handling of elements and details? (The word "apparent" is appropriate here, since readers who do not happen to be mind readers can never be certain about the intention of the author.) Carl Grabo, among other critics, finds it useful to start with "the inception of the story"—so far as it can be discovered through hints in the narrative—and then to go on to "the method of story development by which the author realizes his intent." In using this approach, you look for whatever signs there are of the germinal

interest which apparently led the author to write the story, and then see how everything in the narrative contributed. Mr. Grabo (perhaps a bit too neatly) divides stories into five classes—"stories of action, character, setting, idea, and emotional effect." If you find this classification (or some similar one) satisfactory, you classify the story, formulate an accurate statement about the exact nature of the dominant element (if you can find one), and then note how all other elements are made to help develop it.

(3) What is the unique content of the story itself, and how does its form contribute to the setting forth of this unique content? In using this approach, you aim at the definition of the whole story, and then at the discovery of the interrelations through which the parts function to create that story. Here your reading makes possible answers to questions such as: What happens? To whom? Where? Why? How? Perhaps your conclusions make possible the formulation of the unique features of the work in a sentence beginning, "This is the story of how . . ." and going on to answer the questions listed above. Having formulated such a sentence, you may notice in detail how the handling of characters, happenings, settings, language, tone, and symbols of meaning are related to the unfolding of such a narrative.

Emphasis and subordination

Any serious study of a story will take into account, then, not only the nature of its unity but also the methods whereby such unity is achieved. In other words, you attempt to discover what is emphasized and what is subordinated for the achievement of the effect, the realization of the author's intention, and the creation of an artistic entity. Some elements and details will be stressed, some will be played down, in ways which have been discussed as we talked of happenings, characters, settings, style, tone, and meanings (pp. 36-134). Also important, as we shall see, is the point of view from which the story is unfolded.

Emphasis in a story may be achieved by length of treatment, by repetition, by memorable phrasing, and by particularization. The very fact that more space is devoted to one matter than to another in a short story (as in fact in any literary work) emphasizes that matter. Other things being equal, a character or scene introduced with a curt sentence or phrase will receive less stress than one introduced by several long paragraphs. Again, repetition of any item makes for prominence. If an author says, on page one of his story, "John was dishonest"; on page three, "that lying John"; on page seven, "Since John instinctively avoided the truth," the idea that John was something other than veracious is pretty well underlined. And, of course, a phrase which is particularly vivid or poetic or unusual can make a detail or series of details stand out.

Very valuable for emphasis, of course, is particularization—the use of detail, of concrete words. A happening which is portrayed in all its particulars, or a series of happenings in which each event is explicitly presented, will thereby be emphasized. That which is generalized, by contrast, is subordinated. Edgar Allan Poe, for instance, in "The Pit and the Pendulum," as Bliss Perry has noticed, "paints with extraordinary vividness the sensations and thoughts"

of the chief character, but he gives this character "absolutely no individuality, save possibly in the ingenuity by means of which he finally escapes." In this tale, therefore, the emotions, because they are particularized, become a main element, while the characterization, because it is generalized, is subordinated. A character, on the other hand, stands out when he is given a number of vivid physical qualities or a number of unusual traits. Setting, too, will loom large or small in a story in accordance with the number of concrete details about it given to the reader. Even the theme of a story, abstract idea though it is, will be emphasized largely by particularization of certain sorts. We quickly discover that a story is an allegory when we note that the personified virtues and vices have concrete qualities which stand for ideas. Similarly, the vivid details in a symbolical story stress the relationship between the story and the meaning it is developing.

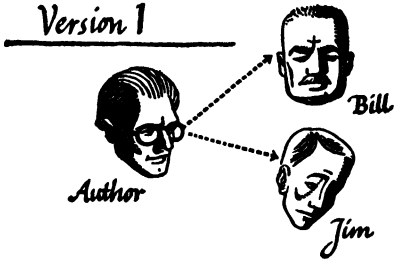
Thus some elements may be emphasized, some "de-emphasized" or subordinated, in well-wrought short stories—all in the interest of unity. By noticing the lengthy developments, the repetition, the striking language, the use of concrete details, we as readers may learn a great deal about the way the narrative has been unified—fused into a single composition.

Point of view

Of great importance in achieving unity and in determining emphasis and subordination is a device which we have not so far considered—the point of view from which the story is told. By point of view, in the critical sense in which we use the term, we do not mean the mental slant of the author, nor do we mean the physical point from which some scene is observed. We mean, instead, the "angle of narration" from which the story is told. To define the point of view of any narrative work, you simply ask: Who tells this story, and to what extent is he empowered to peer into the minds and the hearts of the characters? Let us compare four ways of recounting a happening, each from a different point of view:

(1) *Bill saw Jim die.*

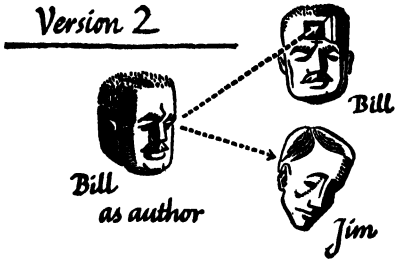
This illustrates *the objective point of view,* so called because the author's relationship to his characters is objective rather than subjective: he cannot see into their minds. If the narrator maintains this point of view throughout, he tells us what his characters did, what they said, but not what they thought.



This angle of narration is also called the *dramatic* point of view, because dramatists use it. Like the playwright, the storyteller using this point of view can show us what his characters are only by setting down their deeds and their dialogue. Compare the following version with the first version:

(2) *I saw Jim die—stood or sat by his bed all night, and watched the poor devil suffering there. It wasn't a pleasant experience.*

Here the happening is unfolded in the first person by one of the characters involved. It is *the personal point of view of a participant.* Bill has become the narrator, "I," who can tell us his own thoughts and feelings ("poor devil . . . wasn't a pleasant experience"). He cannot, of course, peer into Jim's mind, cannot possibly tell us what Jim thinks and feels. Presumably Bill is an important participant. Of course, a variation might be to have a bystander, or a



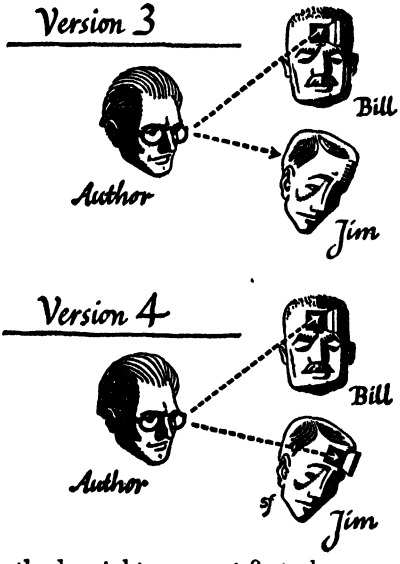
minor participant, tell the story. In such a case, the "I" telling the story would have only exterior knowledge about the two main characters, Bill and Jim. Now look at two more accounts of the same event:

(3) Bill sat in the darkened room and pity clutched at his heart as he looked down on the wasted figure on the bed. He thought, "How horrible it is to watch the poor devil suffer this way! Will it never end—this suffering?" As the dawn came, Jim died.

(4) Jim, peering up at Bill's blurred face, wondered if he was dying. He hoped he was. "It would be good," he thought, "to end all this suffering, this endless pain." Bill sat in the darkened room and pity clutched at his heart as he looked down on the wasted figure on the bed. He thought, "How horrible it is to watch the poor devil suffer this way! Will it never end—this suffering?" As the dawn came, Jim died.

Version 3 is comparable to version 2, in that this way of telling about the happening makes it possible for the author to peer into Bill's mind and tell us what goes on there. It is different from version 2, however, in that it is told in the third person. By means of a convention —an understanding between writer and reader—we take for granted that the author is privy to the workings of Bill's mind and can record not only what happens but what Bill thinks and feels at any time. The point of view then is that of *a third person who is omniscient* so far as the mind of one of the characters is concerned. The author of version 4 is also omniscient, but he is able to look not only into Bill's mind but also into Jim's mind: he knows and can set down what both characters think and feel as the happening unfolds.

Such differences between narrative



methods might seem, at first glance, unimportant. Actually, however, one of

the discoveries of critics in comparatively recent times is that they are tremendously important and that therefore the reader can learn much about a story by noticing the point of view from which it is told and what happens as a result of the author's choice of this particular "post of observation." Henry James, great both as a critic and as a writer, thought of the handling of the point of view as one of the great problems of the fictionist. Percy Lubbock, whose *The Craft of Fiction* is an outstanding contribution, wrote: "The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of the point of view—the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story." Many other critics have found that this matter of noticing the "post of observation" is a vital one for the reading of fiction.

Think of an author's point of view as a "camera-eye" which determines the "focus" of his narrative and you will see a good reason for so much critical concern with this matter. The point is that a photograph may center observation upon some elements in a scene, may show some dimly, and may cut still others out entirely. And just as the intelligent and artistic photographer may so adjust his lens and point his camera to bring about such emphases, such subordinations, and such omissions, as he desires, the storyteller may so select his point of view as to justify stress upon some elements, the playing down of others, and the omission of still others.

Suppose, for instance, that the author of our account of Jim's death wanted to write an action story—wanted to center attention upon the physical happenings rather than upon the mental processes of the characters. He would justify his leaving out all the thoughts of the characters, would he not, by using the objective point of view? Suppose, however, that he wanted to concentrate attention upon the working of Bill's mind—upon Bill's reaction to death? He might do this by using personal narrative or by writing in the third person and peering into Bill's mind but not Jim's. Writing in the third person—according to his interests—he might record Bill's thoughts in one of two ways: (1) He might organize and clarify those thoughts, or (2) he might present them in the rather chaotic order and form that thoughts take in life, using, in other words, what is called a "stream-of-consciousness" method. If the thoughts of both characters were important, insight into both minds would be necessary. In every instance, the point of view would determine the nature of the unity of the story, and in every instance, the reader trying to discern what is important, what not important, in the story would find that a study of the point of view gave decisive clues.

The choice of point of view determines not only what is revealed, what is emphasized, but also what the order of the unfolding of events is to be. For instance, "The Red-Headed League," a fairly typical detective story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is recounted by Dr. Watson, the not overbright friend of the detective. Watson is better than Sherlock Holmes, the detective, would be as a teller of this story, since he cannot tell about Holmes' deductive processes as they occur by peering into the detective's mind. As Doyle wishes, he has to postpone until the end of the story the revelation of the solution and the account of the deductions leading to that solution. "The Cask of Amontillado" (p. 72) is also told in the first

person, but its narrator is a leading figure rather than a subordinate one. At the very start, therefore, he can tell us about his plans for revenge (as his victim, if he told the story, could not). Thus he underlines for us the sinister irony of his conversations with Fortunato, and stresses the cold-blooded joy he takes in seeing his victim suffer. "So They Move You Along" (p. 12) is told dramatically, and the thoughts of the characters are not set forth at the time they think them. Instead, we learn of them only through the speeches of the characters—speeches which take a form likely to have an impact upon our feelings about the Okies.

By studying the author's choice of a point of view for a short story, therefore, we as readers can see what it enables the author to tell and to omit, to emphasize and to play down; we can also see what effect the choice has upon the author's ordering of happenings. Thus, like other devices which determine emphasis and subordination, it offers useful clues concerning the achievement of the effect of the story, the author's intention, and the unique content and form of the story itself.

The book of Ruth

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people."

And Naomi said, "Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me."

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law." And Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, "Is this Naomi?" And she said unto them, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest. And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, "Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace." And she said unto her, "Go, my daughter." And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, "The Lord be with you." And they answered him, "The Lord bless thee." Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?" And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house."

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

And Boaz answered and said unto her, "It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Then she said, "Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou

hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

And Boaz said unto her, "At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar." And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not."

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee."

And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, "The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz." And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead." And Naomi said unto her, "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen."

And Ruth the Moabitess said, "He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest."

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field." So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do."

And she said unto her, "All that thou sayest unto me I will do."

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a

woman lay at his feet. And he said, "Who art thou?" And she answered, "I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman."

And he said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou are a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning."

And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, "Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor." Also he said, "Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Who art thou, my daughter?" And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, "These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law." Then said she, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here." And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit ye down here." And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, "Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee."

And he said, "I will redeem it."

Then said Boaz, "What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."

And the kinsman said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, "Buy it for thee." So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, "Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day."

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem: and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him." And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi"; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. (c. 450 B.C.)

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO The falcon

You must know, then, that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was of our days and maybe is yet a man of great worship and authority in our city and illustrious and worthy of eternal renown, much more for his fashions and his merit than for the nobility of his blood, being grown full of years, delighted oftentimes to discourse with his neighbours and others of things past, the which he knew how to do better and more orderly and with more memory and elegance of speech than any other man. Amongst

other fine things of his, he was used to tell that there was once in Florence a young man called Federigo, son of Messer Filippo Alberighi, and renowned for deeds of arms and courtesy over every other bachelor in Tuscany, who, as betideth most gentlemen, became enamoured of a gentlewoman named Madam Giovanna, in her day held one of the fairest and sprightliest ladies that were in Florence; and to win her love, he held jousts and tourneyings and made entertainments and gave gifts and spent his substance without any stint; but she, being no less virtuous than fair, recked nought of these things done for her nor of him who did them. Federigo spending thus far beyond his means and gaining nought, his wealth, as lightly happeneth, in course of time came to an end and he abode poor, nor was aught left him but a poor little farm, on whose returns he lived very meagrely, and to boot a falcon he had, one of the best in the world. Wherefore, being more in love than ever and him seeming he might no longer make such a figure in the city as he would fain do, he took up his abode at Campi, where his farm was, and there bore his poverty with patience, hawking whenas he might and asking of no one.

Federigo being thus come to extremity, it befell one day that Madam Giovanna's husband fell sick and seeing himself nigh upon death, made his will, wherein, being very rich, he left a son of his, now well grown, his heir, after which, having much loved Madam Giovanna, he substituted her to his heir, in case his son should die without lawful issue, and died. Madam Giovanna, being thus left a widow, betook herself that summer, as is the usance of our ladies, into the country with her son to an estate of hers very near that of Federigo; wherefore it befell that the lad made acquaintance with the latter and began to take delight in hawks and hounds, and having many a time seen his falcon flown and being strangely taken therewith, longed sore to have it, but dared not ask it of him, seeing it so dear to him. The thing standing thus, it came to pass that the lad fell sick, whereat his mother was sore concerned, as one who had none but him and loved him with all her might, and abode about him all day, comforting him without cease; and many a time she asked him if there were aught he desired, beseeching him tell it her, for that, and it might be gotten, she would contrive that he should have it. The lad, having heard these offers many times repeated, said, "Mother mine, an you could procure me to have Federigo's falcon, methinketh I should soon be whole."

The lady, hearing this, bethought herself awhile and began to consider how she should do. She knew that Federigo had long loved her and had never gotten of her so much as a glance of the eye; wherefore quoth she in herself, "How shall I send or go to him to seek of him this falcon, which

is, by all I hear, the best that ever flew and which, to boot, maintaineth him in the world? And how can I be so graceless as to offer to take this from a gentleman who hath none other pleasure left?" Perplexed with this thought and knowing not what to say, for all she was very certain of getting the bird, if she asked for it, she made no reply to her son, but abode silent. However, at last, the love of her son so got the better of her that she resolved in herself to satisfy him, come what might, and not to send, but to go herself for the falcon and fetch it to him. Accordingly she said to him, "My son, take comfort and bethink thyself to grow well again, for I promise thee that the first thing I do to-morrow morning I will go for it and fetch it to thee." The boy was rejoiced at this and showed some amendment that same day.

Next morning, the lady, taking another lady to bear her company, repaired, by way of diversion, to Federigo's little house and enquired for the latter, who, for that it was no weather for hawking nor had been for some days past, was then in a garden he had, overlooking the doing of certain little matters of his, and hearing that Madam Giovanna asked for him at the door, ran thither, rejoicing and marvelling exceedingly. She, seeing him come, rose and going with womanly graciousness to meet him, answered his respectful salutation with "Give you good day, Federigo!" then went on to say, "I am come to make thee amends for that which thou hast suffered through me, in loving me more than should have behooved thee; and the amends in question is this that I purpose to dine with thee this morning familiarly, I and this lady my companion." "Madam," answered Federigo humbly, "I remember me not to have ever received any ill at your hands, but on the contrary so much good that, if ever I was worth aught, it came about through your worth and the love I bore you; and assuredly, albeit you have come to a poor host, this your gracious visit is far more precious to me than it would be an it were given me to spend over again as much as that which I have spent aforetime." So saying, he shamefastly received her into his house and thence brought her into his garden, where, having none else to bear her company, he said to her, "Madam, since there is none else here, this good woman, wife of yonder husbandman, will bear you company, whilst I go see the table laid."

Never till that moment, extreme as was his poverty, had he been so dolorously sensible of the straits to which he had brought himself for the lack of those riches he had spent on such disorderly wise. But that morning, finding he had nothing wherewithal he might honourably entertain the lady for love of whom he had aforetime entertained folk without number, he was made perforce aware of his default and ran hither and thither, perplexed

beyond measure, like a man beside himself, inwardly cursing his ill fortune, but found neither money nor aught he might pawn. It was now growing late and he having a great desire to entertain the gentle lady with somewhat, yet choosing not to have recourse to his own labourer, much less anyone else, his eye fell on his good falcon, which he saw on his perch in his little saloon; whereupon, having no other resource, he took the bird and finding him fat, deemed him a dish worthy of such a lady. Accordingly, without more ado, he wrung the hawk's neck and hastily caused a little maid of his pluck it and truss it and after put it on the spit and roast it diligently. Then, the table laid and covered with very white cloths, whereof he had yet some store, he returned with a blithe countenance to the lady in the garden and told her that dinner was ready, such as it was in his power to provide. Accordingly, the lady and her friend, arising, betook themselves to table and in company with Federigo, who served them with the utmost diligence, ate the good falcon, unknowing what they did.

Presently, after they had risen from table and had abidden with him awhile in cheerful discourse, the lady, thinking it time to tell that wherefore she was come, turned to Federigo and courteously bespoke him, saying, "Federigo, I doubt not a jot but that, when thou hearest that which is the especial occasion of my coming hither, thou wilt marvel at my presumption, remembering thee of thy past life and of my virtue, which latter belike thou reputedst cruelty and hardness of heart; but, if thou hadst or hadst had children, by whom thou mightest know how potent is the love one beareth them, meseemeth certain that thou wouldst in part hold me excused. But, although thou hast none, I, who have one child, cannot therefore escape the common laws to which other mothers are subject and whose enforcements it behooveth me ensue, need must I, against my will and contrary to all right and seemliness, ask of thee a boon, which I know is supremely dear to thee (and that with good reason, for that thy sorry fortune hath left thee none other delight, none other diversion, none other solace), to wit, thy falcon, whereof my boy is so sore enamoured that, an I carry it not to him, I fear me his present disorder will be so aggravated that there may presently ensue thereof somewhat whereby I shall lose him. Wherefore I conjure thee—not by the love thou bearest me and whereto thou art nowise beholden, but by thine own nobility, which in doing courtesy hath approved itself greater than in any other—that it please thee give it to me, so by the gift I may say I have kept my son alive and thus made him forever thy debtor."

Federigo, hearing what the lady asked and knowing that he could not oblige her, for that he had given her the falcon to eat, fell a-weeping in her presence, ere he could answer a word. The lady at first believed that his

tears arose from grief at having to part from his good falcon and was like to say that she would not have it. However, she contained herself and awaited what Federigo should reply, who, after weeping awhile, made answer thus: "Madam, since it pleased God that I should set my love on you, I have in many things reputed fortune contrary to me and have complained of her; but all the ill turns she hath done me have been a light matter in comparison with that which she doth me at this present and for which I can never more be reconciled to her, considering that you are come hither to my poor house, whereas you deigned not to come while I was rich, and seek of me a little boon, the which she hath so wrought that I cannot grant you; and why this cannot be I will tell you briefly. When I heard that you, of your favour, were minded to dine with me, I deemed it a right thing and a seemly, having regard to your worth and the nobility of your station, to honour you, as far as in me lay, with some choicer victual than that which is commonly set before other folk; wherefore, remembering me of the falcon which you ask of me and of his excellence, I judged him a dish worthy of you. This very morning, then, you have had him roasted upon the trencher, and indeed I had accounted him excellently well bestowed; but now, seeing that you would fain have had him on the other wise, it is so great a grief to me that I cannot oblige you therein that methinketh I shall never forgive my self therefor." So saying, in witness of this, he let cast before her the falcon's feathers and feet and beak.

The lady, seeing and hearing this, first blamed him for having, to give a woman to eat, slain such a falcon, and after inwardly much commended the greatness of his soul, which poverty had not availed nor might anywise avail to abate. Then, being put out of all hope of having the falcon and fallen therefore in doubt of her son's recovery, she took her leave and returned, all disconsolate, to the latter, who, before many days had passed, whether for chagrin that he could not have the bird or for that his disorder was e'en fated to bring him to that pass, departed this life, to the inexpressible grief of his mother. After she had abidden awhile full of tears and affliction, being left very rich and yet young, she was more than once urged by her brothers to marry again, and albeit she would fain not have done so, yet, finding herself importuned and calling to mind Federigo's worth and his last magnificence, to wit, the having slain such a falcon for her entertainment, she said to them, "I would gladly, an it liked you, abide as I am; but, since it is your pleasure that I take a second husband, certes I will never take any other, an I have not Federigo degli Alberighi." Whereupon her brothers, making mock of her, said, "Silly woman that thou art, what is this thou sayest? How canst thou choose him, seeing he hath nothing in the world?" "Brothers mine," answered she, "I know very well that it is as

you say; but I would liefer have a man that lacketh of riches than riches that lack of a man." Her brethren, hearing her mind and knowing Federigo for a man of great merit, poor though he was, gave her, with all her wealth, to him, even as she would; and he, seeing himself married to a lady of such worth and one who he had loved so dear and exceedingly rich, to boot, became a better husband of his substance and ended his days with her in joy and solace. (1353)

VOLTAIRE Memnon the philosopher

MEMNON ONE DAY took it into his head to become a great philosopher. There are few men who have not, at some time or other, conceived the same wild project. Says Memnon to himself, To be a perfect philosopher, and of course to be perfectly happy, I have nothing to do but to divest myself entirely of passions; and nothing is more easy, as everybody knows. In the first place, I will never be in love; for, when I see a beautiful woman, I will say to myself, These cheeks will one day grow wrinkled, these eyes be encircled with vermilion, that bosom become flabby and pendant, that head bald and palsied. Now I have only to consider her at present in imagination, as she will afterwards appear; and certainly a fair face will never turn my head.

In the second place, I will be always temperate. It will be in vain to tempt me with good cheer, with delicious wines, or the charms of society. I will have only to figure to myself the consequences of excess, an aching head, a loathing stomach, the loss of reason, of health, and of time: I will then only eat to supply the waste of nature; my health will be always equal, my ideas pure and luminous. All this is so easy that there is no merit in accomplishing it.

But, says Memnon, I must think a little of how I am to regulate my fortune: why, my desires are moderate, my wealth is securely placed with the Receiver General of the finances of Nineveh: I have wherewithal to live independent; and that is the greatest of blessings. I shall never be under the cruel necessity of dancing attendance at court; I will never envy anyone, and nobody will envy me; still all this is easy. I have friends, continued he, and I will preserve them, for we shall never have any difference; I will never take amiss anything they may say or do; and they will behave in the same way to me.—There is no difficulty in all this.

Having thus laid his little plan of philosophy in his closet, Memnon put

his head out of the window. He saw two women walking under the plane-trees near his house. The one was old and appeared quite at her ease. The other was young, handsome, and seemingly much agitated: she sighed, she wept, and seemed on that account still more beautiful. Our philosopher was touched, not, to be sure, with the beauty of the lady (he was too much determined not to feel any uneasiness of that kind), but with the distress which he saw her in. He came down stairs and accosted the young Ninevite in the design of consoling her with philosophy. That lovely person related to him, with an air of the greatest simplicity, and in the most affecting manner, the injuries she sustained from an imaginary uncle; with what art he had deprived her of some imaginary property, and of the violence which she pretended to dread from him. "You appear to me," said she, "a man of such wisdom, that if you will condescend to come to my house and examine into my affairs, I am persuaded you will be able to draw me from the cruel embarrassment I am at present involved in." Memnon did not hesitate to follow her, to examine her affairs philosophically, and to give her sound counsel.

The afflicted lady led him into a perfumed chamber, and politely made him sit down with her on a large sofa, where they both placed themselves opposite to each other, in the attitude of conversation, their legs crossed; the one eager in telling her story, the other listening with devout attention. The lady spoke with downcast eyes, whence there sometimes fell a tear, and which, as she now and then ventured to raise them, always met those of the sage Memnon. Their discourse was full of tenderness, which redoubled as often as their eyes met. Memnon took her affairs exceedingly to heart, and felt himself every instant more and more inclined to oblige a person so virtuous and so unhappy.—By degrees, in the warmth of conversation, they ceased to sit opposite; they drew nearer; their legs were no longer crossed. Memnon counselled her so closely, and gave her such tender advices, that neither of them could talk any longer of business, nor well knew what they were about.

At this interesting moment, as may easily be imagined, who should come in but the uncle; he was armed from head to foot, and the first thing he said was, that he would immediately sacrifice, as was just, the sage Memnon and his niece; the latter, who made her escape, knew that he was well enough disposed to pardon, provided a good round sum were offered to him. Memnon was obliged to purchase his safety with all he had about him. In those days people were happy in getting so easily quit. America was not then discovered, and distressed ladies were not nearly so dangerous as they are now.

Memnon, covered with shame and confusion, got home to his own house;

there he found a card inviting him to dinner with some of his intimate friends. If I remain at home alone, said he, I shall have my mind so occupied with this vexatious adventure, that I shall not be able to eat a bit, and I shall bring upon myself some disease. It will therefore be prudent in me to go to my intimate friends, and partake with them of a frugal repast. I shall forget, in the sweets of their society, the folly I have this morning been guilty of. Accordingly he attends the meeting; he is discovered to be uneasy at something, and he is urged to drink and banish care. A little wine, drunk in moderation, comforts the heart of god and man: so reasons Memnon the philosopher, and he becomes intoxicated. After the repast, play is proposed. A little play, with one's intimate friends, is a harmless pastime:—he plays and loses all that is in his purse, and four times as much on his word. A dispute arises on some circumstance in the game, and the disputants grow warm: one of his intimate friends throws a dicebox at his head and strikes out one of his eyes. The philosopher Memnon is carried home to his house, drunk and penniless, with the loss of an eye.

He sleeps out his debauch, and when his head has got a little clear, he sends his servant to the Receiver General of the finances of Nineveh to draw a little money to pay his debt of honour to his intimate friends. The servant returns and informs him, that the Receiver General had that morning been declared a fraudulent bankrupt, and that by this means an hundred families are reduced to poverty and despair. Memnon, almost beside himself, puts a plaster on his eye and a petition in his pocket, and goes to court to solicit justice from the king against the bankrupt. In the saloon he meets a number of ladies, all in the highest spirits, and sailing along with hoops four and twenty feet in circumference. One of them, who knew him a little, eyed him askance, and cried aloud, "Ah! what a horrid monster!" Another, who was better acquainted with him, thus accosts him, "Good-morrow, Mr. Memnon, I hope you are very well, Mr. Memnon: La! Mr. Memnon, how did you lose your eye?" and turning upon her heel, she tripped away without waiting an answer.

Memnon hid himself in a corner, and waited for the moment when he could throw himself at the feet of the monarch. That moment at last arrived. Three times he kissed the earth, and presented his petition. His gracious majesty received him very favourably, and referred the paper to one of his satraps, that he might give him an account of it. The satrap takes Memnon aside, and says to him with a haughty air and satyrical grin, "Hark ye, you fellow with the one eye, you must be a comical dog indeed, to address yourself to the king rather than to me; and still more so, to dare to demand justice against an honest bankrupt, whom I honour with my protection, and who is nephew to the waiting-maid of my mistress. Proceed no further in

this business, my good friend, if you wish to preserve the eye you have left."

Memnon having thus, in his closet, resolved to renounce women, the excesses of the table, play and quarreling, but especially having determined never to go to court, had been in the short space of four and twenty hours duped and robbed by a gentle dame, had got drunk, had gamed, had been engaged in a quarrel, had got his eye knocked out, and had been at court, where he was sneered at and insulted.

Petrified with astonishment, and his heart broken with grief, Memnon returns homeward in despair. As he was about to enter his house, he is repulsed by a number of officers who are carrying out his furniture for the benefit of his creditors; he falls down almost lifeless under a plane tree. There he finds the fair dame of the morning, who was walking with her dear uncle; and both set up a loud laugh on seeing Memnon with his plaster. The night approached, and Memnon made his bed on some straw near the walls of his house. Here the ague seized him, and he fell asleep in one of the fits, when a celestial spirit appeared to him in a dream.

It was all resplendent with light; it had six beautiful wings, but neither feet nor head, nor tail, and could be likened to nothing. "What art thou?" said Memnon.

"Thy good genius," replied the spirit.

"Restore to me then my eye, my health, my fortune, my reason," said Memnon; and he related how he had lost them all in one day.

"These are adventures which never happen to us in the world we inhabit," said the spirit.

"And what world do you inhabit?" said the man of affliction.

"My native country," replied the other, "is five hundred millions of leagues distant from the sun, in a little star near Sirius, which you see from hence."

"Charming country!" said Memnon. "And are there indeed with you no jades to dupe a poor devil, no intimate friends that win his money and knock out an eye to him, no fraudulent bankrupts, no satraps, that make a jest of you while they refuse you justice?"

"No," said the inhabitant of the star, "we have nothing of what you talk of; we are never duped by women, because we have none among us; we never commit excesses at table, because we neither eat nor drink; we have no bankrupts, because with us there is neither silver nor gold; our eyes cannot be knocked out because we have not bodies in the form of yours; and satraps never do us injustice, because in our world we are all equal."

"Pray, my Lord," then said Memnon, "without women and without eating how do you spend your time?"

"In watching," said the genius, "over the other worlds that are entrusted to us; and I am now come to give you consolation."

"Alas!" replied Memnon, "why did you not come yesterday to hinder me from committing so many indiscretions?"

"I was with your elder brother Hassan," said the celestial being. "He is still more to be pitied than you are. His most gracious Majesty, the Sultan of the Indies, in whose court he has the honour to serve, has caused both his eyes to be put out for some small indiscretion; and he is now in a dungeon, his hands and feet loaded with chains."

" 'Tis a happy thing truly," said Memnon, "to have a good genius in one's family, when out of two brothers one is blind of an eye, the other blind of both; one stretched upon straw, the other in a dungeon."

"Your fate will soon change," said the animal of the star. "It is true, you will never recover your eye but, except that, you may be sufficiently happy if you never again take it into your head to be a perfect philosopher."

"Is it then impossible?" said Memnon.

"As impossible as to be perfectly wise, perfectly strong, perfectly powerful, perfectly happy. We ourselves are very far from it. There is a world indeed where all this takes place; but, in a hundred thousand millions of worlds dispersed over the regions of space, everything goes on by degrees. There is less philosophy and less enjoyment in the second than in the first, less in the third than in the second, and so forth till the last in the scale, where all are completely fools."

"I am afraid," said Memnon, "that our little terraqueous globe here is the madhouse of those hundred thousand millions of worlds, of which your Lordship does me the honour to speak."

"Not quite," said the spirit, "but very nearly: everything must be in its proper place."

"But are those poets and philosophers wrong, then, who tell us that everything is for the best?"

"No, they are right, when we consider things in relation to the gradation of the whole universe."

"Oh! I shall never believe it till I recover my eye again," said the poor Memnon. (1750)

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

Mateo Falcone

COMING out of Porto-Vecchio, and turning northwest toward the interior of the island, the ground rises somewhat rapidly, and, after a three hours' walk along winding paths, blocked by huge rocky boulders, and sometimes cut by ravines, you come to the edge of a wide *mâquis*. The *mâquis*, or high plateau, is the home of the Corsican shepherds and of all those who wish to escape the police. I would have you understand that the Corsican peasant sets fire to a stretch of woodland to save himself the trouble of manuring his fields. If the flames spread further than they should, so much the worse. In any case, he is sure of a good crop if he sows on this ground, which has been fertilised by the ashes of the trees which grew on it. When the corn has been harvested, they leave the straw, because it takes too much time to gather it up. The roots of the burned trees, which have been left in the ground undamaged, put forth very thick shoots in the following spring, and these shoots, before many years, attain a height of seven or eight feet. It is this sort of undergrowth which is called a *mâquis*. It is composed of all sorts of trees and shrubs mingled and tangled every whichway. A man has to hew his way through with an axe, and there are *mâquis* so thick and tangled that even wild rams cannot penetrate them.

If you have killed a man, go into the *mâquis* of Porto-Vecchio with a good gun and powder and shot. You will live there quite safely, but don't forget to bring along a brown cloak and hood for your blanket and mattress. The shepherds will give you milk, cheese, and chestnuts, and you need not trouble your head about the law or the dead man's relatives, except when you are compelled to go down into the town to renew your ammunition.

When I was in Corsica in 18—, Mateo Falcone's house stood half a league away from the *mâquis*. He was a fairly rich man for that country. He lived like a lord, that is to say, without toil, on the produce of his flocks, which the nomadic shepherds pastured here and there on the mountains. When I saw him, two years later than the incident which I am about to relate, he did not seem to be more than fifty years of age.

Picture a small, sturdy man, with jet-black curly hair, a Roman nose, thin lips, large piercing eyes, and a weather-beaten complexion. His skill as a marksman was extraordinary, even in this country, where everyone is a good shot. For instance, Mateo would never fire on a wild ram with small shot, but at a hundred and twenty paces he would bring it down with a bullet in its head or its shoulder, just as he fancied. He used his rifle at night as easily as in the daytime, and I was given the following illustration of his

skill, which may seem incredible, perhaps, to those who have never travelled in Corsica. He placed a lighted candle behind a piece of transparent paper as big as a plate, and aimed at it from eighty paces away. He extinguished the candle, and a moment later, in utter darkness, fired and pierced the paper three times out of four.

With this extraordinary skill Mateo Falcone had gained a great reputation. He was said to be a good friend and a dangerous enemy. Obliging and charitable, he lived at peace with all his neighbors around Porto-Vecchio. But they said of him that once, at Corte, whence he had brought home his wife, he had quickly freed himself of a rival reputed to be as fearful in war as in love. At any rate, people gave Mateo the credit for a certain shot which had surprised his rival shaving in front of a small mirror hung up in his window. The matter was hushed up and Mateo married the girl. His wife Giuseppa presented him at first, to his fury, with three daughters, but at last came a son whom he christened Fortunato, the hope of the family and the heir to its name. The girls were married off satisfactorily. At a pinch their father could count on the daggers and rifles of his sons-in-law. The son was only ten years old, but already gave promise for the future.

One autumn day, Mateo and his wife set forth to visit one of his flocks in a clearing on the *mâquis*. Little Fortunato wanted to come along, but the clearing was too far off, and moreover, someone had to stay to look after the house. His father refused to take him. We shall see that he was sorry for this afterwards.

He had been gone several hours, and little Fortunato lay stretched out quietly in the sunshine, gazing at the blue mountains, and thinking that next Sunday he would be going to town to have dinner with his uncle, the magistrate, when he was suddenly startled by a rifle shot. He rose and turned toward the side of the plain whence the sound had come. Other shots followed, fired at irregular intervals, and they sounded nearer and nearer, till finally, he saw a man on the path which led from the plain up to Mateo's house. He wore a mountaineer's peaked cap, had a beard, and was clad in rags. He dragged himself along with difficulty, leaning on his gun. He had just been shot in the thigh. The man was an outlaw from justice, who, having set out at nightfall to buy ammunition in the town, had fallen on the way into an ambuscade of Corsican gendarmes. After a vigorous defense, he had succeeded in making his escape, but the gendarmes had pursued him closely and fired at him from rock to rock. He had been just ahead of the soldiers, and his wound made it impossible for him to reach the *mâquis* without being captured.

He came up to Fortunato and asked:

"Are you Mateo Falcone's son?"

"Yes, I am."

"I'm Gianetto Sanpiero. The yellow necks are after me. Hide me, for I can go no farther."

"But what will my father say, if I hide you without his permission?"

"He will say that you did the right thing."

"How can I be sure of that?"

"Quick! Hide me! Here they come!"

"Wait till my father comes back."

"How the devil can I wait? They'll be here in five minutes. Come now, hide me, or I shall kill you."

Fortunato replied as cool as a cucumber:

"Your rifle is not loaded, and there are no cartridges in your pouch."

"I have my stiletto."

"But can you run as fast as I can?"

He bounded out of the man's reach.

"You are no son of Mateo Falcone. Will you let me be captured in front of his house?"

The child seemed touched.

"What will you give me if I hide you?" he said, coming nearer to him.

The fugitive felt in a leather wallet that hung from his belt, and took out a five-franc piece which he had been saving, no doubt, to buy powder. Fortunato smiled when he saw the piece of silver. He snatched it and said to Gianetto:

"Have no fear."

He made a large hole at once in a haystack beside the house. Gianetto huddled down in it, and the boy covered him up so as to leave a little breathing space, and yet so that no one could possibly suspect that a man was hidden there. He showed his ingenious wild cunning by another trick. He fetched a cat and her kittens and put them on top of the haystack, so that anyone who passed would think that it had not been disturbed for a long time. Then he noticed some bloodstains on the path in front of the house and covered them over carefully with dust. When he had finished, he lay down again in the sun looking as calm as ever.

A few minutes later, six men in brown uniforms with yellow collars, led by an adjutant, stopped in front of Mateo's door. The adjutant was a distant cousin of Falcone. (You know that degrees of kindred are traced farther in Corsica than anywhere else.) His name was Tiodoro Gamba. He was an energetic man, much feared by the outlaws, many of whom he had already hunted down.

"Good morning, little cousin," he said, accosting Fortunato. "How you have grown! Did you see a man go by just now?"

"Oh, I'm not as tall as you are yet, cousin," replied the child with an innocent smile.

"It won't take long. But, tell me, didn't you see a man go by?"

"Did I see a man go by?"

"Yes, a man with a black velvet peaked cap and a waistcoat embroidered in red and yellow?"

"A man with a black velvet peaked cap, and a waistcoat embroidered in red and yellow?"

"Yes. Hurry up and answer me, and don't keep repeating my questions."

"Monsieur the Curé went by this morning on his horse Pierrot. He enquired after papa's health, and I said to him that——"

"You are making a fool of me, you limb of the devil! Tell me at once which way Gianetto went. He's the man we're looking for, and I'm sure he went this way."

"How do you know?"

"How do I know? I know you've seen him."

"Can I see people pass by in my sleep?"

"You weren't asleep, you rascal. Our shots would wake you."

"So you think, cousin, that your rifles make all that hullaballoo? My father's rifle makes much more noise."

"The devil take you, you little scamp. I am positive that you have seen Gianetto. Maybe you've hidden him, in fact. Here, boys, search the house and see if our man isn't there. He could only walk on one foot, and he has too much sense, the rascal, to try and reach the *mâquis* limping. Besides, the trail of blood stops here."

"What will papa say?" asked Fortunato. "What will he say when he discovers that his house has been searched during his absence?"

"Do you realise that I can make you change your tune, you rogue?" cried the adjutant, as he pulled his ear. "Perhaps you will have something more to say when I have thrashed you with the flat of my sword."

Fortunato laughed in derision.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," he said meaningly.

"Do you realise, you rascal, that I can haul you off to Corte or to Bastia? I shall put you in a dungeon on straw, with your feet in irons, and I'll have your head chopped off unless you tell me where to find Gianetto Sanpiero."

The child laughed again derisively at this silly threat. He repeated:

"My father is Mateo Falcone."

"Adjutant, don't get us into trouble with Mateo," muttered one of the gendarmes.

You could see that Gamba was embarrassed. He whispered to his men, who had already searched the house thoroughly. This was not a lengthy matter, for a Corsican hut consists of one square room. There is no furniture

other than a table, benches, chests, cooking utensils, and weapons. Meanwhile, little Fortunato was stroking the cat, and seemed to take a malicious satisfaction in the discomfiture of his cousin and the gendarmes.

One gendarme approached the haystack. He looked at the cat and carelessly stuck a bayonet into the hay, shrugging his shoulders as if he thought the precaution absurd. Nothing stirred, and the child's face remained perfectly calm.

The adjutant and his men were desperate. They looked seriously out across the plain, as if they were inclined to go back home, when their leader, satisfied that threats would make no impression on Falcone's son, decided to make a final attempt, and see what coaxing and gifts might do.

"Little cousin," said he, "I can see that your eyes are open. You'll get on in life. But you are playing a risky game with me, and, if it weren't for the trouble it would give my cousin Mateo, God help me if I wouldn't carry you off with me."

"Nonsense!"

"But, when my cousin returns, I am going to tell him all about it, and he'll horsewhip you till the blood comes because you've been telling me lies."

"How do you know?"

"You'll see! . . . But see here! Be a good boy, and I'll give you a present."

"I advise you to go and look for Gianetto in the *mâquis*, cousin. If you hang about here much longer, it will take a cleverer man than you to catch him." The adjutant took a silver watch worth ten dollars out of his pocket. He noticed that little Fortunato's eyes sparkled as he looked at it, and he dangled the watch out to him at the end of its steel chain as he said:

"You scamp, wouldn't you like to have a watch like this hanging round your neck, and to strut up and down the streets of Porto-Vecchio as proud as a peacock? Folk would ask you what time it was and you would say, 'Look at my watch!' "

"When I'm a big boy, my uncle, the magistrate, will give me a watch."

"Yes, but your uncle's son has one already—not as fine as this, to be sure —but he is younger than you are."

The boy sighed.

"Well, would you like this watch, little cousin?"

Fortunato kept eyeing the watch out of the corner of his eye, like a cat that has been given a whole chicken to play with. It does not dare to pounce upon it, because it is afraid folk are laughing at it, but it turns its eyes away now and then so as to avoid temptation, and keeps licking its lips, as much as to say to its master: "What a cruel trick to play on a cat!" And yet Gamba seemed to be really offering him the watch. Fortunato did not hold out his hand, but said with a bitter smile:

"Why are you mocking me?"

"I swear that I am not mocking you. Only tell me where Gianetto is, and the watch is yours."

Fortunato smiled incredulously and fixed his dark eyes on those of the adjutant, trying to read them to see if the man could be trusted.

"May I lose my epaulettes," cried the adjutant, "if I do not give you the watch on this one condition! My men are witnesses, and I cannot back out of it."

As he spoke, he held the watch nearer and nearer till it almost touched the pale cheek of the boy, whose face clearly showed the struggle going on in his heart between greed and the claims of hospitality. His bare breast heaved till he was almost suffocated. Meanwhile the watch dangled and twisted and even touched the tip of his nose. Little by little, his right hand rose toward it, the tips of his fingers touched it, and the whole weight of it rested on his hand, although the adjutant still had it by the chain. . . . The face of the watch was blue. . . . The case was newly burnished. . . . It flamed like fire in the sun. . . . The temptation was too great.

Fortunato raised his left hand and pointed with his thumb over his shoulder to the haystack on which he was leaning. The adjutant understood him at once and let go the end of the chain. Fortunato felt that he was now sole possessor of the watch. He leaped away like a deer, and paused ten paces from the haystack which the gendarmes began to tumble over at once.

It was not long before they saw the hay begin to stir and a bleeding man came out with a stiletto in his hand. But when he tried to rise to his feet, his congealed wound prevented him from standing. He fell down. The adjutant flung himself upon his prey and wrested the stiletto from his grasp. He was speedily trussed up, in spite of his resistance, bound securely, and flung on the ground like a bundle of sticks. He turned his head toward Fortunato who had drawn near again.

"Son of . . . !" he exclaimed, more in contempt than in anger.

The child threw him the piece of silver, realising that he no longer deserved it, but the fugitive paid no attention to it. He merely said quietly to the adjutant:

"My dear Gamba, I cannot walk. You must carry me to town."

"You were running as fast as a kid just now," retorted his captor, roughly. "But don't worry! I'm so glad to have caught you that I could carry you a league on my own back without feeling it. Anyhow, my friend, we'll make a litter for you out of branches and your cloak. We'll find horses at the farm at Crespoli."

"Very well," said the prisoner. "I suppose you will put a little straw on the litter to make it easier for me."

While the gendarmes were busy, some making a crude litter of chestnut boughs, and others dressing Gianetto's wound, Mateo Falcone and his wife suddenly appeared at a turn of the path which led from the *mâquis*. His wife came first, bowed low beneath the weight of a huge sack of chestnuts, while her husband strolled along, carrying a gun in one hand, and another slung over his shoulder. It is beneath a man's dignity to carry any other burden than his weapons.

As soon as he saw the soldiers, Mateo's first thought was that they must have come to arrest him. But there was no reason for it. He had no quarrel with the forces of law and order. He had an excellent reputation. He was "well thought of," as they say, but he was a Corsican, and a mountaineer, and there are very few Corsican mountaineers who, if they search their past sufficiently, cannot find some peccadillo, a rifle shot or a thrust with a stiletto, or some other trifle. Mateo had a clearer conscience than most of his friends, for it was at least ten years since he had pointed a rifle at a man; but all the same it behooved him to be cautious, and he prepared to put up a good defence, if necessary.

"Wife," he said, "put down your sack and be on your guard."

She obeyed at once. He gave her the gun from his shoulder belt, as it seemed likely that it might be in his way. He cocked the other rifle, and advanced in a leisurely manner toward the house, skirting the trees beside the path, and ready, at the least sign of hostility, to throw himself behind the largest trunk and fire from cover. His wife followed close behind him, holding her loaded rifle and his cartridges. It was a good wife's duty, in case of trouble, to reload her husband's arms.

The adjutant, on his side, was much troubled at seeing Mateo advance upon him so with measured steps, pointing his rifle, and keeping his finger on the trigger.

"If it should happen," thought he, "that Gianetto turns out to be Mateo's relative or friend, and he wishes to defend him, two of his bullets will reach us as sure as a letter goes by post, and if he aims at me, in spite of our kinship . . . !"

In his perplexity, he put the best face he could on the matter, and went forward by himself to meet Mateo and tell him all that had happened, greeting him like an old friend. But the short distance between him and Mateo seemed fearfully long.

"Hello, there, old comrade!" he cried out. "How are you? I'm your cousin Gamba."

Mateo stood still and said not a word. As the other man spoke, he slowly raised the barrel of his rifle so that, by the time the adjutant came up to him, it was pointing to the sky.

"Good-day, brother," said the adjutant, holding out his hand. "It's an age since I've seen you."

"Good-day, brother."

"I just stopped by to pass the time of day with you and cousin Pepa. We've had a long march to-day, but we can't complain, for we've made a famous haul. We've just caught Gianetto Sanpiero."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Giuseppa. "He stole one of our milch goats a week ago."

Gamba was delighted at her words.

"Poor devil!" said Mateo, "he was hungry."

"The chap fought like a lion," pursued the adjutant, somewhat annoyed. "He killed one of my men, and as if that were not enough, broke Corporal Chardon's arm; not that it matters, he's only a Frenchman. . . . Then he hid himself so cleverly that the devil himself couldn't find him. If it hadn't been for my little cousin Fortunato, I should never have found him."

"Fortunato?" cried Mateo.

"Fortunato?" echoed Giuseppa.

"Yes! Gianetto was hidden in your haystack over there, but my little cousin soon showed up his tricks. I shall tell his uncle, the magistrate, and he'll send him a fine present as a reward. And both his name and yours shall be in the report that I'm sending to the Public Prosecutor."

"Damn you!" muttered Mateo under his breath.

They had now rejoined the gendarmes. Gianetto was already laid on his litter, and they were all ready to start. When he saw Mateo in Gamba's company, he smiled oddly; then, turning toward the door of the house, he spat at the threshold.

"The house of a traitor!"

It was asking for death to call Falcone a traitor. A quick stiletto thrust, and no need of a second, would have instantly wiped out the insult. But Mateo's only movement was to put his hand to his head as if he were stunned.

Fortunato had gone into the house when he saw his father coming. Presently he reappeared with a bowl of milk, which he offered with downcast eyes to Gianetto.

"Keep away from me!" thundered the outlaw.

Then, turning to one of the gendarmes, he said:

"Comrade, will you give me a drink?"

The gendarme put the flask in his hand, and the outlaw drank the water given him by the man with whom he had just been exchanging rifle shots. Then he requested that his hands might be tied crossed on his breast instead of behind his back.

"I would rather," he said, "lie comfortably."

They gratified his request. Then, at a sign from the adjutant, saying good-bye to Mateo, who vouchsafed no answer, they set off quickly toward the plain.

Ten minutes passed before Mateo opened his mouth. The child looked uneasily, first at his mother, then at his father, who was leaning on his gun and gazing at him with an expression of concentrated fury.

"You begin well," said Mateo at last, in a calm voice, terrifying enough to those who knew the man.

"Father!" cried the boy, with tears in his eyes, coming nearer as if to throw himself at his father's knee.

"Out of my sight!" Mateo shouted.

The child stopped short a few paces away from his father, and sobbed.

Giuseppa approached him. She had just noticed the watch-chain hanging out of his shirt.

"Who gave you that watch?" she asked sternly.

"My cousin, the adjutant."

Falcone snatched the watch and flung it against a stone with such violence that it was shattered into a thousand fragments.

"Woman," he said, "is this a child of mine?"

Giuseppa's brown cheeks flushed brick red.

"What are you saying, Mateo? Do you realise to whom you are speaking?"

"Yes, perfectly well. This child is the first traitor in my family."

Fortunato redoubled his sobs and choking, and Falcone kept watching him like a hawk. At last he struck the ground with the butt of his rifle, then flung it across his shoulder, returned to the path which led toward the *mâquis,* and commanded Fortunato to follow him. The child obeyed.

Giuseppa ran after Mateo and clutched his arm.

"He is your son," she said in a trembling voice, fixing her dark eyes on those of her husband, as if to read all that was passing in his soul.

"Leave me," replied Mateo. "I am his father."

Giuseppa kissed her son and went back weeping into the house. She flung herself on her knees before an image of the Blessed Virgin and prayed fervently. Falcone walked about two hundred paces along the path, and went down a little ravine where he stopped. He tested the ground with the butt of his rifle, and found it soft and easy to dig. The spot seemed suitable for his purpose.

"Fortunato, go over to that big rock."

The boy did as he was told. He knelt down.

"Father, Father, do not kill me!"

"Say your prayers!" shouted Mateo in a terrible voice.

The boy, stammering and sobbing, recited the Our Father and the Apostles' Creed. The father said "Amen!" in a firm voice at the end of each prayer.

"Are those all the prayers you know?"

"I know the Hail Mary, too, and the Litany my aunt taught me, Father."

"It is long, but never mind."

The boy finished the Litany in a stifled voice.

"Have you finished?"

"Oh, Father, forgive me! Forgive me! I'll never do it again. I'll beg my cousin, the magistrate, ever so hard to pardon Gianetto!"

He kept beseeching his father. Mateo loaded his gun and took aim.

"God forgive you!" he said.

The boy made a desperate effort to rise and clasp his father's knees, but he had no time. Mateo fired and Fortunato fell stone-dead.

Without glancing at the body, Mateo returned to the house to fetch a spade with which to dig his son's grave. He had only gone a few steps along the path when he met Giuseppa, running, for she had been alarmed by the rifle shot.

"What have you done?" she cried.

"Justice!"

"Where is he?"

"In the ravine. I am going to bury him. He died a Christian. I shall have a Mass said for him. Send word to my son-in-law, Tiodoro Bianchi, that he is to come and live with us." (1829)

ALPHONSE DAUDET The death of the Dauphin

THE LITTLE DAUPHIN is ill—the Dauphin is going to die. In all the churches the Host is elevated and tall candles burn for the recovery of the royal child. The streets of the ancient residence are sad and silent, the bells are mute, citizens peer curiously through the palace gratings, porters talk in solemn tones in the courts.

All the palace is astir. Chamberlains and majordomos hurry up and down the marble steps; the galleries are thronged with pages; courtiers in silken robes pass from group to group, asking the news in smothered accents. On the broad stairways weeping maids of honor bow low, and wipe their eyes with beautiful embroidered kerchiefs.

An assemblage of robed doctors gathers in the orangery. Through the glasses they can be seen waving their long black sleeves and inclining doctorally their perukes. Before the door walk the tutor and riding-master of the little Dauphin. They are waiting for decisions of the faculty. The riding-master swears like a trooper, the tutor quotes Horace. From the stable comes a long, plaintive neigh. It is the little Dauphin's chestnut, who, forgotten by the grooms, calls sadly from his empty crib.

And the king—where is the king? Shut up all alone at the farther end of the palace. Kings must not be seen to weep. Not so, however, the queen. Seated by the Dauphin's side, her lovely face all bathed in tears, she sobs before us all like the veriest serving-woman.

In his lace bed lies the little Dauphin. He is whiter than the pillow upon which his head reclines. They believe that he is asleep; but no, he is not asleep. The little Dauphin turns to his mother. "Madame the queen, why do you weep? Do you believe, like the rest, that I am going to die?" The queen tries to answer; sobs choke her utterance.

"Do not weep, madame the queen. You forget that I am the Dauphin; Dauphins do not die thus." The queen sobs more piteously. The little Dauphin is frightened. "Halloo!" exclaims he, "I do not want to die! Order instantly forty stout lansquenets to keep guard around our bed. Set a hundred large guns to watch night and day before our windows. And woe to Death should he dare approach us!"

To humor the royal child the queen makes a sign. In a twinkling, cannon are heard rolling in the court; forty stout lansquenets with their partisans range themselves around the room. They are old troopers and their mustaches are gray. The Dauphin recognizes one. "Lorrain!" he cries. The old soldier draws closer. "Let me look at your big sword. If Death comes for me you will kill him, will you not?" "Yes, monseigneur." And two big tears roll down his tanned cheeks.

The priest approaches the Dauphin. He speaks long in subdued tones and holds up the crucifix. The Dauphin shows surprise. Suddenly he interrupts him. "I see what you mean, monsieur the abbé; but would not my little friend Beppo die in my place if we pay him plenty of money?" The priest continues to speak. The Dauphin looks more and more surprised. When the priest ceases, he says, with a sigh, "All that is very sad, monsieur the abbé, but there is one comfort for me. When I get to the paradise of the stars I shall still be the Dauphin. The good God is my cousin, and will treat me according to my rank."

Then he turned to his mother, and said, "Let them bring my best clothes —the ermine doublet and velvet pumps. I want to make myself smart for the

angels, and enter paradise dressed like the Dauphin." Again the priest bends over the Dauphin, and speaks to him in low tones. In the midst of the discourse the royal child interrupts him angrily: "What! it is nothing, then, to be a Dauphin, after all!" and refusing to hear more, he turns his head to the wall and weeps bitterly. (1869)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON Markheim

"YES," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas-day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer can not look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clean account of how you came into the possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little, pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tip-toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas-present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the

thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady now," he went on, "this hand-glass—fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass," he said, hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favored," said he.

"I ask you," said Markheim, "for a Christmas-present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies—this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other, gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer, with some sharpness, and

then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I," cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other; why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop."

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blonde hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his great-coat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer; and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewer-like dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that league of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings, Markheim's eyes returned to the body

of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him, with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise; poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumor of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighboring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from that tender exer-

cise; happy family parties, struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger: every degree and age and humor, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbor hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweethearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Ay, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth

from this accusing neighborhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair day in a fisher's village: a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly colored: Brownrigg with her apprentice; the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion; he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realize the nature and greatness of his crime. So little awhile ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with

all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, with a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced toward the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And, as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armor posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul. And then again, and hearkening with every fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresisting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first story, the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitious

terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some willful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board, should break the mold of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; and stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; ay, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room, and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on the stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbors. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defenses. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were wakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brook-side, ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall) and the

painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vice. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked, pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the newcomer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candle-light of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the common-place, as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile; and when he added: "You are looking for the money, I believe?" it was in the tones of everyday politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

"I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favorite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "can not affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet, thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

"Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each

dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any willful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?"

"All this is very feelingly expressed," was the reply, "but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding toward you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you; I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?"

"For what price?" asked Markheim.

"I offer you the service for a Christmas gift," returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. "No," said he, "I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil."

"I have no objection to a death-bed repentance," observed the visitant.

"Because you disbelieve their efficacy!" Markheim cried.

"I do not say so," returned the other; "but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under color of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service—to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when

the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a deathbed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope."

"And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?"

"Murder is to me no special category," replied the other. "All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offered to forward your escape."

"I will lay my heart open to you," answered Markheim. "This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor, quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humor, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said, huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "in none! I have gone down in ail."

"Then," said the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul: my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment, the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanor.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried: "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales; up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change; they brightened and softened with a tender triumph; and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the further side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still

burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamor.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile. "You had better go for the police," said he: "I have killed your master."

(1885)

RUDYARD KIPLING

The man who would be king

"Brother to a prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy."

THE LAW, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable king and was promised the reversion of a kingdom—army, law-courts, revenue and policy all complete. But today I greatly fear that my king is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a Deficit in the Budget, which necessitated traveling not second-class, which is only half as dear as first-class, but by intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the intermediate class, and the population are either intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night journey is nasty, or loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronize refreshment-rooms. They carry their food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat sellers, and drink the roadside water. That is why in the hot weather intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered and, following the custom of intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whisky. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more

than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying—it's seven hundred millions," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of loaferdom that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money at all, owing to the hitch in the Budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the Treasury, there were no telegraph offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a station-master to make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you were traveling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well *and* good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time? 'Twon't be inconveniencing you, because I know that there's precious few pickings to be got out of those Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the *Backwoodsman.*"

"Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the Residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the Border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I *must* give him word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you was to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him: 'He has gone south for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window and say: 'He has gone south for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting

your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the west," he said with emphasis.

"Where have *you* come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the square—for the sake of my mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by appeals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it —and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run the Central India States just now as the correspondent of the *Backwoodsman.* There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slippered her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself and I'm the only man that would dare going into the state to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers and bleeding small native states with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The native states have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of native states so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native states were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers and tall writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and on the other the days of Harun-al-Raschid. When I left the train I did

business with divers kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress clothes and consorted with princes and politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in the day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little happy-go-lucky, native-managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay Mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one second-class on the train. I slipped the window and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half-covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone south for the week. He is gone south for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone south for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impidence. Did he say that I was to give you anything? 'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold because the wind was blowing off the sands. I climbed into my own train—not an intermediate carriage this time —and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them: and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from the Degumber borders.

Then I became respectable, and returned to an office where there were no kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person to the prejudice of discipline. Zenana-mission ladies arrive, and beg that the editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; colonels who have been

overpassed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve or twenty-four leading articles on Seniority versus Selection; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother missionary under special patronage of the editorial we; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punkah-pulling machines, carriage couplings, and unbreakable swords and axle-trees call with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball committees clamor to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle in and say: "I want a hundred lady's cards printed *at once,* please," which is manifestly part of an editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proofreader. And, all the time, the telephone bell is ringing madly, and kings are being killed on the Continent, and empires are saying "You're another," and Mister Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British Dominions, and the little black copy boys are whining "*kaa-pi chay-ha-yeh*" (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading light, and the press machines are red-hot to touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the hill-stations, or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write: "A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan District. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and thanks to the energetic efforts of the district authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death, etc."

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the empires and kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the hill-stations in the middle of their amusements say: "Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that the paper began

running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed the dawn would lower the thermometer from 96° to almost 84° for half an hour, and in that chill—you have no idea how cold is 84° on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A king or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the *loo,* the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flop of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretense. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there while the type clicked and clicked, and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the *loo* dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lip, to await the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man or struggling people was aware of the inconvenience the delay was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but as the clock hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their flywheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said: "It's him!" The second said: "So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here: 'The office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber State,'" said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said

the red-bearded man. "We'd *like* some drink—the contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look—but what we really want is advice. We don't want money. We ask you as a favor, because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is *me,* and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proofreader, street preacher, and correspondents of the *Backwoodsman,* when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light it."

I watched the test: The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well *and* good," said Carnehan of the eyebrows, wiping the froth from his mustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued: "The country isn't half worked out because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that without all the Government saying: 'Leave it alone and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except drink, and we have signed a contrack on that. *Therefore* we are going away to be kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come tomorrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see books and atlases, and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-*whack.* They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning it's the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two-and-thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the contrack," said Carnehan. "Neither women nor liquor, Daniel."

"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there and they fight, and in any place where they fight a man who knows how to drill men can always be a king. We shall go to those parts and say to any king we find: 'D'you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that king and seize his throne and establish a dy-nasty."

"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books."

He turned to the bookcases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty-two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller Frontier maps, hauled down volume Inf-Kan of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Roberts's Army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills—fourteen thousand feet—fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the *Sources of the Oxus.* Carnehan was deep in the *Encyclopædia.*

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot reflectively; "and it won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'mm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the *United Services' Institute.* Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over Raverty, Wood, the maps and the *Encyclopædia.*

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep, and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics, and if you come tomorrow evening down to the Serai we'll say good-by to you."

"You *are* two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a king as it looks. When we've got our kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

"Would two lunatics make a contrack like that?" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:

This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God—Amen and so forth.

(One) That me and you will settle this matter together: *i.e.,* to be Kings of Kafiristan.

(Two) That you and me will not, while this matter is being settled, look at any liquor, nor any woman black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.

(Three) That we conduct ourselves with dignity and discretion, and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him.

Signed by you and me this day.
Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan.
Daniel Dravot.
Both Gentlemen at Large.

"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now you know the sort of men that loafers are—we *are* loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and *do* you think that we would sign a contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having."

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai tomorrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and horses from the North load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eye-teeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussy-cats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep and musk in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind him was his servant bending under the load of a crate of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honor or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindi. "They foretell future events."

"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the Pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the border, and whose misfortunes were the laughing-stock of the bazaar. "Ohé, priest, whence come you and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! O thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs and perjurers! Who will take the Protected of God to the north to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the King of the Roos with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Khan be upon his labors!" He spread out the skirts of his gabardine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawar to Kabul in twenty days, *Huzrut,*" said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good-luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawar in a day! Ho! Hazar Mir Khan," he yelled to his servant, "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and, turning round to me,

cried: "Come thou also, Sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee King of Kafiristan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d'you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawar till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, O Lor'! Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot placidly. "Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a memento of your kindness, *Brother*. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my kingdom shall you have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-by," said Dravot, giving me his hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan leaned down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in the Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawar, wound up his letter with: "There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawar and associated

himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good fortune."

The two, then, were beyond the border. I would have prayed for them, but that night a real king died in Europe, and demanded an obituary notice.

THE WHEEL of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for something to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter and some of the trees in the office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of gray hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whisky. "What can I do for you?"

He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet, which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel, kings we were, with crowns upon our

heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whisky," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest, and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I shall be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at *me*," said Carnehan. "That comes afterwards, but for the Lord's sake don't distrack me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evening when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and . . . what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that caravan," I said at a venture, "after you had lit those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafiristan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kafirs didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheepskin over his shoulder, and shaved his head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to look like a heathen. That was in a most mountainous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than the goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night."

"Take some more whisky," I said very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no farther because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

"What did which do? There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carne-

han that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir.—No; they was two for three ha'pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woeful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot: 'For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off,' and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and the ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing: 'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man: 'If you are rich enough to buy you are rich enough to rob'; but before ever he could put his hand to his knife Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountainous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was mountainous and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party, Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a king couldn't sing it wasn't worth being king, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran down that valley chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men —fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns: 'This is the beginning of the business. We'll fight for the ten men,' and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men, and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where we was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow, too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down flat. Then he walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them

up and shakes hands all around to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was king already. They take the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head, and says 'That's all right. I'm in the know, too, and all these old jim-jams are my friends.' Then he opens his mouth and points down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says—'No'; and when the second man brings him food, he says—'No'; but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says—'Yes,' very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village, without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whisky and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be king?"

"I wasn't king," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the king, and a handsome man he looked with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of old Imbra, and the people came and worshiped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says, 'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each village by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says, 'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such, and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees

and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle and form fours, and advance in line, and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a little village there, and Carnehan says,—'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new kingdom. That was to impress the people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot, who had got into another valley all snow and ice and most mountainous. There was no people there and the army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks; for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest and I stays there alone with two of the army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big chief comes across the snow with kettle-drums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new god kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that chief was, and strokes my eyebrows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the chief and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' said the chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the army to show them drill and at the end of two weeks the men can maneuver about as well as volunteers. So he marches with the chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the chief's men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village too, and I gives the chief a rag from my coat, and says, 'Occupy till I come,' which was Scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, wherever he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of train I interrupted, "How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter? Oh! The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please.

It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the Punjab."

I remembered that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cipher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method, but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan; "and told him to come back because this kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took Er-Heb. The priests at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

"One morning I heard the devil's own noise of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marches down the hill with his army and a tail of hundreds of men, and, which was the most amazing—a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjus business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a god too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoiceful; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was —five-pound weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

" 'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The craft's the trick, so help me!' and he brings forward that same chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterwards, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the fellow-craft grip. He answers all right, and I tried the master's grip, but that was

a slip. 'A fellowcraft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The chiefs and the priests can work a fellowcraft lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the third degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the fellowcraft degree, but this is a miracle. A god and a grand-master of the craft am I, and a lodge in the third degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the chiefs of the villages.'

" 'It's against all the law,' I says, 'holding a lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any lodge.'

" 'It's a master-stroke of policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogy on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages, and see that we run up a lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the lodge room. The women must make aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of chiefs tonight and lodge tomorrow.'

"I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for the master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

"At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out that him and me were gods and sons of Alexander, and past grand-masters in the craft, and was come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names according as they were like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Dilworth, Pikky Kargan that was bazaar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on and so on.

"*The* most amazing miracle was at lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The minute Dravot puts on the master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on. 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took

and tilted over the grand-master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows all the other priests the master's mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple of Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says: 'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey, I declare myself Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan in this the mother lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing senior warden—and we opens the lodge in most ample form. It was an amazing miracle! The priests moved in lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that Peachey and Dravot raised such as was worthy—high priests and chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't raise more than ten of the biggest men because we didn't want to make the degree common. And they was clamoring to be raised.

" 'In another six months,' says Dravot, 'we'll hold another communication and see how you are working.' Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other and were fair sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people—sons of Alexander—and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people, and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months, because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang of, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plow, and now and again go out with some of the army and see what the other villages were doing, and make 'em throw rope bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were

afraid of me and the army, but they loved Dan. He was the best of friends with the priests and the chiefs; but any one could come across the hills with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai and Pikky Kargan from Shu, and an old chief we called Kefuzelum —it was like enough to his real name—and held councils with 'em when there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his Council of War, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak and Madora was his Privy Council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

"I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the Governor there the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the colonel of the regiment some more, and between the two and the tribes people, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty man-loads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the chiefs sent in to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew how to hold arms pretty straight. Even those cork-screwed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming on.

" 'I won't make a nation,' says he. 'I'll make an empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English. I'll take a census in the spring if the priests don't get frightened. There must be fair two million of 'em in these hills. The villages are full o' little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tries for India! Peachey, man,' he says, chewing his beard in great hunks, 'we shall be emperors—emperors of the earth. Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms. I'll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There's Mackray, Sergeant-pensioner at Segowli—many's the good dinner he's given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There's Donkin, the Warder of Tounghoo Jail; there's hundreds that I could lay my hands on if I was in India.

The Viceroy shall do it for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the grand lodge for what I've done as grand master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in driblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an empire. When everything was shipshape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say: "Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

" 'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

" 'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class commander-in-chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

" 'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark, but it did hurt me sore to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

" 'Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel without cursing. 'You're a king too, and the half of this kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em, that we can scatter about for our deputies. It's a huge great state, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.' He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

" 'I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. 'I've done all I could. I've drilled the men and shown the people how to stack their oats better; and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it kings always feel oppressed that way.'

" 'There's another thing, too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. 'The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.'

" 'For Gord's sake leave the women alone!' I says. 'We've both got all the work we can, though I *am* a fool. Remember the contrack and keep clear o' women.'

" 'The contrack only lasted till such time as we was kings; and kings we have been these months past,' says Dravot, weighing his crown in his hand.

'You go get a wife too, Peachey, a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come as fair as chicken and ham.'

" 'Don't tempt me!' I says. 'I will not have any dealings with a woman, not till we are a dam' side more settled than we are now. I've been doing the work o' two men and you've been doing the work o' three. Let's lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.'

" 'Who's talking o' *women*?' says Dravot. 'I said *wife*—a queen to breed a king's son for the king. A queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That's what I want.'

" 'Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was a plate layer?' says I. 'A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the station master's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impidence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers in the running-shed.'

" 'We've done with that,' says Dravot. 'These women are whiter than you or me, and a queen I will have for the winter months.'

" 'For the last time o' asking, Dan, do *not*,' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new raw kingdom to work over.'

" 'For the last time of answering I will,' says Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side, and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the Council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said he'd better ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the grand master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in lodge, and at council, which opened like lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I, 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at home, and these people are quite English.'

" 'The marriage of the king is a matter of state,' says Dan, in a white-hot

rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the council room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

" 'Billy Fish,' says I to the Chief of the Bashkai, 'what's the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend.' 'You know,' says Billy Fish. 'How should a man tell you, who knows everything? How can daughters of men marry gods or devils? It's not proper.'

"I remembered something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were gods, it wasn't for me to undeceive them.

" 'A god can do anything,' says I. 'If the king is fond of a girl he'll not let her die.' 'She'll have to,' said Billy Fish. 'There are all sorts of gods and devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen any more. Besides, you two know the mark cut in the stone. Only the gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the master.'

"I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master Mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the king.

" 'I'll have no nonsense of that kind,' says Dan. 'I don't want to interfere with your customs, but I'll take my own wife.' 'The girl's a little bit afraid,' says the priest. 'She thinks she's going to die, and they are aheartening her up down in the temple.'

" 'Hearten her very tender, then,' says Dravot, 'or I'll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you'll never want to be heartened again.' He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was crowned king twenty times over, could not but be risky. I got up very early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the chiefs talking together, too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

" 'What is up, Fish?' I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

" 'I can't rightly say,' says he; 'but if you can induce the king to drop all this nonsense about marriage you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.'

" 'That I do believe,' says I. 'But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me,

having fought against and for us, that the king and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

"'That may be,' says Billy Fish, 'and yet I should be sorry if it was.' He sinks his head upon his great fur coat for a minute and thinks. 'King,' says he, 'be you man or god or devil, I'll stick by you today. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over.'

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

"'For the last time drop it, Dan,' says I in a whisper. 'Billy Fish here says that there will be a row.'

"'A row among my people!' says Dravot. 'Not much. Peachey, you're a fool not to get a wife too. Where's the girl?' says he with a voice as loud as the braying of a jackass. 'Call up all the chiefs and priests, and let the emperor see if his wife suits him.'

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the center of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises, but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

"'She'll do,' said Dan, looking her over. 'What's to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.' He puts his arm round her. She shuts her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan's flaming red beard.

"'The slut's bitten me!' says he, clapping his hand to his neck; and sure enough his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his matchlockmen catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howls in their lingo, 'Neither god nor devil but a man!' I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the army began firing into the Bashkai men.

"'God A'mighty!' says Dan. 'What is the meaning o' this?'

"'Come back! Come away!' says Billy Fish. 'Ruin and mutiny is the matter. We'll break for Bashkai if we can.'

"I tried to give some sort of orders to my men—the men o' the regular army—but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of 'em with an English

Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shouting, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a god nor a devil but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathy; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

"'We can't stand,' said Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a king. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular army fired hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish and me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"Then they stopped firing and the horns in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for Gord's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head from that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands, which he could have done. 'An emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a knight of the queen.'

"'All right, Dan,' says I; 'but come along now while there's time.'

"'It's your fault,' says he, 'for not looking after your army better. There was mutiny in the midst, and you didn't know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionaries'-pass hunting hound!' He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heartsick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

"'I'm sorry, Dan,' says I, 'but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our Fifty-Seven. Maybe we'll make something out of it yet, when we've got back to Bashkai.'

"'Let's get to Bashkai, then,' says Dan, 'and by God, when I come back here again I'll sweep the valley so there isn't a bug in a blanket left!'

"We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

"'There's no hope o' getting clear,' says Billy Fish. 'The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn't you stick on as gods till things was more settled? I'm a dead man,' says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his gods.

"Next morning we was in a cruel bad country—all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to ask something, but they said never a word.

At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an army in position waiting in the middle!

" 'The runners have been very quick,' says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. 'They are waiting for us.'

"Three or four men began to fire from the enemy's side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

" 'We're done for,' says he. 'They are Englishmen, these people—and it's my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you've done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,' says he, 'shake hands with me and go along with Billy. Maybe they won't kill you. I'll go and meet 'em alone. It's me that did it. Me, the king!' "

" 'Go!' says I. 'Go to Hell, Dan. I'm with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out and we two will meet those folk.'

" 'I'm a chief,' says Billy Fish quite quiet. 'I stay with you. My men can go.'

"The Bashkai fellows didn't wait for a second word but ran off, and Dan and me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punkah-coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands and said, "What happened after that?"

The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound. Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the king knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, Sir, then and there, like a pig; and the king kicks up the bloody snow and says:—'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next?' But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, Sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, Sir. No, he didn't either. The king lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the paper-cutter, Sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the

bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. 'Damn your eyes!' says the king. 'D' you suppose I can't die like a gentleman?' He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. 'I've brought you to this, Peachey,' says he. 'Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafiristan, where you was late commander-in-chief of the emperor's forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.' 'I do,' says Peachey. 'Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.' 'Shake hands, Peachey,' says he. 'I'm going now.' Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, 'Cut, you beggars,' he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round, twenty thousand miles, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

"But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine-trees? They crucified him, Sir, as Peachey's hands will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn't die. He hung there and screamed; and they took him down next day and said it was a miracle that he wasn't dead. They took him down—poor old Peachey that hadn't done them any harm—that hadn't done them any . . ."

He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a god than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home; and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said: 'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, Sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom onto my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind, sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises, that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples.

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived —the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognized the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whisky and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a king once. I'll go to the deputy commissioner and ask to set in the poor-house till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs —in the south—at Marwar."

He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the deputy commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sang through his nose, turning his head from right to left:

"The Son of Man goes forth to war,
A golden crown to gain:
His blood-red banner streams afar—
Who follows in his train?"

I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me, whom he did not in the least recognize, and I left him singing it to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare of the superintendent of the asylum.

"He was admitted suffering from sunstroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I; "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the superintendent.

And there the matter rests. (1888)

ANTON CHEKHOV The darling

OLENKA, the daughter of the retired collegiate assessor, Plemyanniakov, was sitting in her back porch, lost in thought. It was hot, the flies were persistent and teasing, and it was pleasant to reflect that it would soon be evening. Dark rainclouds were gathering from the east, and bringing from time to time a breath of moisture in the air.

Kukin, who was the manager of an open-air theater called the Tivoli, and who lived in the lodge, was standing in the middle of the garden looking at the sky.

"Again!" he observed despairingly. "It's going to rain again! Rain every day, as though to spite me. I might as well hang myself! It's ruin! Fearful losses every day."

He flung up his hands, and went on, addressing Olenka:

"There! That's the life we lead, Olga Semyonovna. It's enough to make one cry. One works and does one's utmost; one wears oneself out, getting no sleep at night, and racks one's brain what to do for the best. And then what happens? To begin with, one's public is ignorant, boorish. I give them the very best operetta, a dainty masque, first rate music-hall artists. But do you suppose that's what they want! They don't understand anything of that sort. They want a clown; what they ask for is vulgarity. And then look at the weather! Almost every evening it rains. It started on the tenth of May, and it's kept it up all May and June. It's simply awful! The public doesn't come, but I've to pay the rent just the same, and pay the artists."

The next evening the clouds would gather again, and Kukin would say with an hysterical laugh:

"Well, rain away, then! Flood the garden, drown me! Damn my luck in this world and the next! Let the artists have me up! Send me to prison!—to Siberia!—the scaffold! ha, ha, ha!"

And next day the same thing.

Olenka listened to Kukin with silent gravity, and sometimes tears came into her eyes. In the end his misfortunes touched her; she grew to love him. He was a small thin man, with a yellow face, and curls combed forward on his forehead. He spoke in a thin tenor; as he talked his mouth worked on one side, and there was always an expression of despair on his face; yet he aroused a deep and genuine affection in her. She was always fond of some

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one, and could not exist without loving. In earlier days she had loved her papa, who now sat in a darkened room, breathing with difficulty; she had loved her aunt who used to come every other year from Bryansk; and before that, when she was at school, she had loved her French master. She was a gentle, soft-hearted, compassionate girl, with mild, tender eyes and very good health. At the sight of her full rosy cheeks, her soft white neck with a little dark mole on it, and the kind, naïve smile, which came into her face when she listened to anything pleasant, men thought, "Yes, not half bad," and smiled too, while lady visitors could not refrain from seizing her hand in the middle of a conversation, exclaiming in a gush of delight, "You darling!"

The house in which she had lived from her birth upwards, and which was left her in her father's will, was at the extreme end of the town, not far from the Tivoli. In the evenings and at night she could hear the band playing, and the crackling and banging of fireworks, and it seemed to her that it was Kukin struggling with his destiny, storming the entrenchments of his chief foe, the indifferent public; there was a sweet thrill at her heart, she had no desire to sleep, and when he returned home at daybreak, she tapped softly at her bedroom window, and showing him only her face and one shoulder through the curtain, she gave him a friendly smile. . . .

He proposed to her, and they were married. And when he had a closer view of her neck and her plump, fine shoulders, he threw up his hands, and said:

"You darling!"

He was happy, but as it rained on the day and night of his wedding, his face still retained an expression of despair.

They got on very well together. She used to sit in his office, to look after things in the Tivoli, to put down the accounts and pay the wages. And her rosy cheeks, her sweet, naïve, radiant smile, were to be seen now at the office window, now in the refreshment bar or behind the scenes of the theater. And already she used to say to her acquaintances that the theater was the chief and most important thing in life, and that it was only through the drama that one could derive true enjoyment and become cultivated and humane.

"But do you suppose the public understands that?" she used to say. "What they want is a clown. Yesterday we gave *Faust Inside Out,* and almost all the boxes were empty; but if Vanitchka and I had been producing some vulgar thing, I assure you the theater would have been packed. Tomorrow Vanitchka and I are doing *Orpheus in Hell.* Do come."

And what Kukin said about the theater and the actors she repeated. Like him she despised the public for their ignorance and their indifference to art; she took part in the rehearsals, she corrected the actors, she kept an

eye on the behavior of the musicians, and when there was an unfavorable notice in the local paper, she shed tears, and then went to the editor's office to set things right.

The actors were fond of her and used to call her "Vanitchka and I," and "the darling"; she was sorry for them and used to lend them small sums of money, and if they deceived her, she used to shed a few tears in private, but did not complain to her husband.

They got on well in the winter too. They took the theater in the town for the whole winter, and let it for short terms to a Little Russian company, or to a conjurer, or to a local dramatic society. Olenka grew stouter, and was always beaming with satisfaction, while Kukin grew thinner and yellower, and continually complained of their terrible losses, although he had not done badly all the winter. He used to cough at night, and she used to give him hot raspberry tea or lime-flower water, to rub him with eau de Cologne and to wrap him in her warm shawls.

"You're such a sweet pet!" she used to say with perfect sincerity, stroking his hair. "You're such a pretty dear!"

Towards Lent he went to Moscow to collect a new troupe, and without him she could not sleep, but sat all night at her window, looking at the stars, and she compared herself to the hens, who are awake all night and uneasy when the cock is not in the henhouse. Kukin was detained in Moscow, and wrote that he would be back at Easter, adding some instructions about the Tivoli. But on the Sunday before Easter, late in the evening, came a sudden ominous knock at the gate; some one was hammering on the gate as though on a barrel—boom, boom boom! The drowsy cook went flopping with her bare feet through the puddles, as she ran to open the gate.

"Please open," said some one outside in a thick bass. "There is a telegram for you."

Olenka had received telegrams from her husband before, but this time for some reason she felt numb with terror. With shaking hands she opened the telegram and read as follows:

Ivan Petrovitch died suddenly today. Awaiting immate instructions fufuneral Tuesday.

That was how it was written in the telegram—"fufuneral," and the utterly incomprehensible word "immate." It was signed by the stage manager of the operatic company.

"My darling!" sobbed Olenka. "Vanitchka, my precious, my darling! Why did I ever meet you! Why did I know you and love you! Your poor heart-broken Olenka is all alone without you!"

Kukin's funeral took place on Tuesday in Moscow, Olenka returned home

on Wednesday, and as soon as she got indoors she threw herself on her bed and sobbed so loudly that it could be heard next door, and in the street.

"Poor darling!" the neighbors said, as they crossed themselves. "Olga Semyonovna, poor darling! How she does take on!"

Three months later Olenka was coming home from mass, melancholy and in deep mourning. It happened that one of her neighbors, Vassily Andreitch Pustovalov, returning home from church, walked back beside her. He was the manager at Babakayev's, the timber merchant's. He wore a straw hat, a white waistcoat, and a gold watch-chain, and looked more like a country gentleman than a man in trade.

"Everything happens as it is ordained, Olga Semyonovna," he said gravely, with a sympathetic note in his voice; "and if any of our dear ones die, it must be because it is the will of God, so we ought to have fortitude and bear it submissively."

After seeing Olenka to her gate, he said good-by and went on. All day afterwards she heard his sedately dignified voice, and whenever she shut her eyes she saw his dark beard. She liked him very much. And apparently she had made an impression on him too, for not long afterwards an elderly lady, with whom she was only slightly acquainted, came to drink coffee with her, and as soon as she was seated at table began to talk about Pustovalov, saying that he was an excellent man whom one could thoroughly depend upon, and that any girl would be glad to marry him. Three days later Pustovalov came himself. He did not stay long, only about ten minutes, and he did not say much, but when he left, Olenka loved him—loved him so much that she lay awake all night in a perfect fever, and in the morning she sent for the elderly lady. The match was quickly arranged, and then came the wedding.

Pustovalov and Olenka got on very well together when they were married.

Usually he sat in the office till dinnertime, then he went out on business, while Olenka took his place, and sat in the office till evening, making up accounts and booking orders.

"Timber gets dearer every year; the price rises twenty per cent," she would say to her customers and friends. "Only fancy we used to sell local timber, and now Vassitchka always has to go for wood to the Mogilev district. And the freight!" she would add, covering her cheeks with her hands in horror. "The freight!"

It seemed to her that she had been in the timber trade for ages and ages, and that the most important and necessary thing in life was timber; and there was something intimate and touching to her in the very sound of words such as "baulk," "post," "beam," "pole," "scantling," "batten," "lath," "plank," etc.

At night when she was asleep she dreamed of perfect mountains of planks and boards, and long strings of wagons, carting timber somewhere far away. She dreamed that a whole regiment of six-inch beams forty feet high, standing on end, was marching upon the timber-yard; that logs, beams, and boards knocked together with the resounding crash of dry wood, kept falling and getting up again, piling themselves on each other. Olenka cried out in her sleep, and Pustovalov said to her tenderly: "Olenka, what's the matter, darling? Cross yourself!"

Her husband's ideas were hers. If he thought the room was too hot, or that business was slack, she thought the same. Her husband did not care for entertainments, and on holidays he stayed at home. She did likewise.

"You are always at home or in the office," her friends said to her. "You should go to the theater, darling, or to the circus."

"Vassitchka and I have no time to go to theaters," she would answer sedately. "We have no time for nonsense. What's the use of these theaters?"

On Saturdays Pustovalov and she used to go to the evening service; on holidays to early mass, and they walked side by side with softened faces as they came home from church. There was a pleasant fragrance about them both, and her silk dress rustled agreeably. At home they drank tea, with fancy bread and jams of various kinds, and afterwards they ate pie. Every day at twelve o'clock there was a savory smell of beet-root soup and of mutton or duck in their yard, and on fast-days of fish, and no one could pass the gate without feeling hungry. In the office the samovar was always boiling, and customers were regaled with tea and cracknels. Once a week the couple went to the baths and returned side by side, both red in the face.

"Yes, we have nothing to complain of, thank God," Olenka used to say to her acquaintances. "I wish every one were as well off as Vassitchka and I."

When Pustovalov went away to buy wood in the Mogilev district, she missed him dreadfully, lay awake and cried. A young veterinary surgeon in the army, called Smirnin, to whom they had let their lodge, used sometimes to come in in the evening. He used to talk to her and play cards with her, and this entertained her in her husband's absence. She was particularly interested in what he told her of his home life. He was married and had a little boy, but was separated from his wife because she had been unfaithful to him, and now he hated her and used to send her forty roubles a month for the maintenance of their son. And hearing of all this, Olenka sighed and shook her head. She was sorry for him.

"Well, God keep you," she used to say to him at parting, as she lighted him down the stairs with a candle. "Thank you for coming to cheer me up, and may the Mother of God give you health."

And she always expressed herself with the same sedateness and dignity,

the same reasonableness, in imitation of her husband. As the veterinary surgeon was disappearing behind the door below, she would say:

"You know, Vladimir Platonitch, you'd better make it up with your wife. You should forgive her for the sake of your son. You may be sure the little fellow understands."

And when Pustovalov came back, she told him in a low voice about the veterinary surgeon and his unhappy home life, and both sighed and shook their heads and talked about the boy, who, no doubt, missed his father, and by some strange connection of ideas, they went up to the holy ikons, bowed to the ground before them and prayed that God would give them children.

And so the Pustovalovs lived for six years quietly and peaceably in love and complete harmony.

But behold! one winter day after drinking hot tea in the office, Vassily Andreitch went out into the yard without his cap on to see about sending off some timber, caught cold and was taken ill. He had the best doctors, but he grew worse and died after four months' illness. And Olenka was a widow once more.

"I've nobody, now you've left me, my Darling," she sobbed, after her husband's funeral. "How can I live without you, in wretchedness and misery! Pity me, good people, all alone in the world!"

She went about dressed in black with long "weepers," and gave up wearing hat and gloves for good. She hardly ever went out, except to church, or to her husband's grave, and led the life of a nun. It was not till six months later that she took off the weepers and opened the shutters of the windows. She was sometimes seen in the mornings, going with her cook to market for provisions, but what went on in her house and how she lived now could only be surmised. People guessed, from seeing her drinking tea in her garden with the veterinary surgeon, who read the newspaper aloud to her, and from the fact that, meeting a lady she knew at the post office, she said to her:

"There is no proper veterinary inspection in our town, and that's the cause of all sorts of epidemics. One is always hearing of people's getting infection from the milk supply, or catching diseases from horses and cows. The health of domestic animals ought to be as well cared for as the health of human beings."

She repeated the veterinary surgeon's words, and was of the same opinion as he about everything. It was evident that she could not live a year without some attachment, and had found new happiness in the lodge. In any one else this would have been censured, but no one could think ill of Olenka; everything she did was so natural. Neither she nor the veterinary

surgeon said anything to other people of the change in their relations, and tried, indeed, to conceal it, but without success, for Olenka could not keep a secret. When he had visitors, men serving in his regiment, and she poured out tea or served the supper, she would begin talking of the cattle plague, of the foot and mouth disease, and of the municipal slaughter-houses. He was dreadfully embarrassed, and when the guests had gone, he would seize her by the hand and hiss angrily:

"I've asked you before not to talk about what you don't understand. When we veterinary surgeons are talking among ourselves, please don't put your word in. It's really annoying."

And she would look at him with astonishment and dismay, and ask him in alarm: "But, Voloditchka, what *am* I to talk about?"

And with tears in her eyes she would embrace him, begging him not to be angry, and they were both happy.

But this happiness did not last long. The veterinary surgeon departed, departed forever with his regiment, when it was transferred to a distant place —to Siberia, it may be. And Olenka was left alone.

Now she was absolutely alone. Her father had long been dead, and his armchair lay in the attic, covered with dust and lame of one leg. She got thinner and plainer, and when people met her in the street they did not look at her as they used to, and did not smile to her; evidently her best years were over and left behind, and now a new sort of life had begun for her, which did not bear thinking about. In the evening Olenka sat in the porch, and heard the band playing and the fireworks popping in the Tivoli, but now the sound stirred no response. She looked into her yard without interest, thought of nothing, wished for nothing, and afterwards, when night came on she went to bed and dreamed of her empty yard. She ate and drank as it were unwillingly.

And what was worst of all, she had no opinions of any sort. She saw the objects about her and understood what she saw, but could not form any opinion about them, and did not know what to talk about. And how awful it is not to have any opinions! One sees a bottle, for instance, or the rain, or a peasant driving in his cart, but what the bottle is for, or the rain, or the peasant, and what is the meaning of it, one can't say, and could not even for a thousand roubles. When she had Kukin, or Pustovalov, or the veterinary surgeon, Olenka could explain everything, and give her opinion about anything you like, but now there was the same emptiness in her brain and in her heart as there was in her yard outside. And it was as harsh and as bitter as wormwood in the mouth.

Little by little the town grew in all directions. The road became a street, and where the Tivoli and the timber-yard had been there were new turnings

and houses. How rapidly time passes! Olenka's house grew dingy, the roof got rusty, the shed sank on one side, and the whole yard was overgrown with docks and stinging-nettles. Olenka herself had grown plain and elderly; in summer she sat in the porch, and her soul, as before, was empty and dreary and full of bitterness. In winter she sat at her window and looked at the snow. When she caught the scent of spring, or heard the chime of the church bells, a sudden rush of memories from the past came over her, there was a tender ache in her heart, and her eyes brimmed over with tears; but this was only for a minute, and then came emptiness again and the sense of the futility of life. The black kitten, Briska, rubbed against her and purred softly, but Olenka was not touched by these feline caresses. That was not what she needed. She wanted a love that would absorb her whole being, her whole soul and reason—that would give her ideas and an object in life, and would warm her old blood. And she would shake the kitten off her skirt and say with vexation:

"Get along; I don't want you!"

And so it was, day after day and year after year, and no joy, and no opinions. Whatever Mavra, the cook, said she accepted.

One hot July day, towards evening, just as the cattle were being driven away, and the whole yard was full of dust, some one suddenly knocked at the gate. Olenka went to open it herself and was dumbfounded when she looked out: she saw Smirnin, the veterinary surgeon, gray-headed, and dressed as a civilian. She suddenly remembered everything. She could not help crying and letting her head fall on his breast without uttering a word, and in the violence of her feeling she did not notice how they both walked into the house and sat down to tea.

"My dear Vladimir Platonitch! What fate has brought you?" she muttered, trembling with joy.

"I want to settle here for good, Olga Semyonovna," he told her. "I have resigned my post, and have come to settle down and try my luck on my own account. Besides, it's time for my boy to go to school. He's a big boy. I am reconciled with my wife, you know."

"Where is she?" asked Olenka.

"She's at the hotel with the boy, and I'm looking for lodgings."

"Good gracious, my dear soul! Lodgings? Why not have my house? Why shouldn't that suit you? Why, my goodness, I wouldn't take any rent!" cried Olenka in a flutter, beginning to cry again. "You live here, and the lodge will do nicely for me. Oh, dear! how glad I am!"

Next day the roof was painted and the walls were whitewashed, and Olenka, with her arms akimbo, walked about the yard giving directions. Her face was beaming with her old smile, and she was brisk and alert as

though she had waked from a long sleep. The veterinary's wife arrived—a thin, plain lady, with short hair and a peevish expression. With her was her little Sasha, a boy of ten, small for his age, blue-eyed, chubby, with dimples in his cheeks. And scarcely had the boy walked into the yard when he ran after the cat, and at once there was the sound of his gay, joyous laugh.

"Is that your puss, Auntie?" he asked Olenka. "When she has little ones, do give us a kitten. Mamma is awfully afraid of mice."

Olenka talked to him, and gave him tea. Her heart warmed and there was a sweet ache in her bosom, as though the boy had been her own child. And when he sat at the table in the evening, going over his lessons, she looked at him with deep tenderness and pity as she murmured to herself:

"You pretty pet! . . . my precious! . . . Such a fair little thing, and so clever."

" 'An island is a piece of land which is entirely surrounded by water,' " he read aloud.

"An island is a piece of land," she repeated, and this was the first opinion to which she gave utterance with positive conviction after so many years of silence and dearth of ideas.

Now she had opinions of her own, and at supper she talked to Sasha's parents, saying how difficult the lessons were at the high schools, but that yet the high school was better than a commercial one, since with a high school education all careers were open to one, such as being a doctor or an engineer.

Sasha began going to the high school. His mother departed to Harkov to her sister's and did not return; his father used to go off every day to inspect cattle, and would often be away from home for three days together, and it seemed to Olenka as though Sasha was entirely abandoned, that he was not wanted at home, that he was being starved, and she carried him off to her lodge and gave him a little room there.

And for six months Sasha had lived in the lodge with her. Every morning Olenka came into his bedroom and found him fast asleep, sleeping noiselessly with his hand under his cheek. She was sorry to wake him.

"Sashenka," she would say mournfully, "get up, Darling. It's time for school."

He would get up, dress and say his prayers, and then sit down to breakfast, drink three glasses of tea, and eat two large cracknels and half a buttered roll. All this time he was hardly awake and a little ill-humored in consequence.

"You don't quite know your fable, Sashenka," Olenka would say, looking at him as though he were about to set off on a long journey. "What a lot of trouble I have with you! You must work and do your best, Darling, and obey your teachers."

"Oh, do leave me alone!" Sasha would say.

Then he would go down the street to school, a little figure, wearing a big cap and carrying a satchel on his shoulder. Olenka would follow him noiselessly.

"Sashenka!" she would call after him, and she would pop into his hand a date or a caramel. When he reached the street where the school was, he would feel ashamed of being followed by a tall, stout woman; he would turn round and say:

"You'd better go home, Auntie. I can go the rest of the way alone."

She would stand still and look after him fixedly till he had disappeared at the school gate.

Ah, how she loved him! Of her former attachments not one had been so deep; never had her soul surrendered to any feeling so spontaneously, so disinterestedly, and so joyously as now that her maternal instincts were aroused. For this little boy with the dimple in his cheek and the big school cap she would have given her whole life, she would have given it with joy and tears of tenderness. Why? Who can tell why?

When she had seen the last of Sasha, she returned home, contented and serene, brimming over with love; her face, which had grown younger during the last six months, smiled and beamed; people meeting her looked at her with pleasure.

"Good morning, Olga Semyonovna, Darling. How are you, Darling?"

"The lessons at the high school are very difficult now," she would relate at the market. "It's too much; in the first class yesterday they gave him a fable to learn by heart, and a Latin translation and a problem. You know it's too much for a little chap."

And she would begin talking about the teachers, the lessons, and the school books, saying just what Sasha said.

At three o'clock they had dinner together: in the evening they learned their lessons together and cried. When she put him to bed, she would stay a long time making the cross over him and murmuring a prayer; then she would go to bed and dream of that far-away, misty future when Sasha would finish his studies and become a doctor or an engineer, would have a big house of his own with horses and a carriage, would get married and have children. . . . She would fall asleep still thinking of the same thing, and tears would run down her cheeks from her closed eyes, while the black cat lay purring beside her: "Mrr, mrr, mrr."

Suddenly there would come a loud knock at the gate.

Olenka would wake up breathless with alarm, her heart throbbing. Half a minute later would come another knock.

"It must be a telegram from Harkov," she would think, beginning to

tremble from head to foot. "Sasha's mother is sending for him from Harkov. . . . Oh, mercy on us!"

She was in despair. Her head, her hands, and her feet would turn chill, and she would feel that she was the most unhappy woman in the world. But another minute would pass, voices would be heard: it would turn out to be the veterinary surgeon coming home from the club.

"Well, thank God!" she would think.

And gradually the load in her heart would pass off, and she would feel at ease. She would go back to bed thinking of Sasha, who lay sound asleep in the next room, sometimes crying out in his sleep:

"I'll give it you! Get away! Shut up!"

HENRY JAMES Mrs. Medwin

WELL, we *are* a pair!" the poor lady's visitor broke out to her, at the end of her explanation, in a manner disconcerting enough. The poor lady was Miss Cutter, who lived in South Audley Street, where she had an "upper half" so concise that it had to pass, boldly, for convenient; and her visitor was her half-brother, whom she had not seen for three years. She was remarkable for a maturity of which every symptom might have been observed to be admirably controlled, had not a tendency to stoutness just affirmed its independence. Her present, no doubt, insisted too much on her past, but with the excuse, sufficiently valid, that she must certainly once have been prettier. She was clearly not contented with once—she wished to be prettier again. She neglected nothing that could produce that illusion, and, being both fair and fat, dressed almost wholly in black. When she added a little color it was not, at any rate, to her drapery. Her small rooms had the peculiarity that everything they contained appeared to testify with vividness to her position in society, quite as if they had been furnished by the bounty of admiring friends. They were adorned indeed almost exclusively with objects that nobody buys, as had more than once been remarked by spectators of her own sex, for herself, and would have been luxurious if luxury consisted mainly in photographic portraits slashed across with signatures, in baskets of flowers beribboned with the cards of passing compatriots, and in a neat collection of red volumes, blue volumes, alphabetical volumes,

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aids to London lucidity, of every sort, devoted to addresses and engagements. To be in Miss Cutter's tiny drawing-room, in short, even with Miss Cutter alone—should you by any chance have found her so—was somehow to be in the world and in a crowd. It was like an agency—it bristled with particulars.

That was what the tall, lean, loose gentleman lounging there before her might have appeared to read in the suggestive scene over which, while she talked to him, his eyes moved without haste and without rest. "Oh, come, Mamie!" he occasionally threw off; and the words were evidently connected with the impression thus absorbed. His comparative youth spoke of waste even as her positive—her too positive—spoke of economy. There was only one thing, that is, to make up in him for everything he had lost, though it was distinct enough indeed that this thing might sometimes serve. It consisted in the perfection of an indifference, an indifference at the present moment directed to the plea—a plea of inability, of pure destitution—with which his sister had met him. Yet it had even now a wider embrace, took in quite sufficiently all consequences of queerness, confessed in advance to the false note that, in such a setting, he almost excruciatingly constituted. He cared as little that he looked at moments all his impudence as that he looked all his shabbiness, all his cleverness, all his history. These different things were written in him—in his premature baldness, his seamed, strained face, the lapse from bravery of his long tawny moustache; above all, in his easy, friendly, universally acquainted eye, so much too sociable for mere conversation. What possible relation with him could be natural enough to meet it? He wore a scant, rough Inverness cape and a pair of black trousers, wanting in substance and marked with the sheen of time, that had presumably once served for evening use. He spoke with the slowness helplessly permitted to Americans—as something too slow to be stopped—and he repeated that he found himself associated with Miss Cutter in a harmony worthy of wonder. She had been telling him not only that she couldn't possibly give him ten pounds, but that his unexpected arrival, should he insist on being much in view, might seriously interfere with arrangements necessary to her own maintenance; on which he had begun by replying that he of course knew she had long ago spent her money, but that he looked to her now exactly because she had, without the aid of that convenience, mastered the art of life.

"I'd really go away with a fiver, my dear, if you'd only tell me how you do it. It's no use saying only, as you've always said, that 'people are very kind to you.' What the devil are they kind to you *for*?"

"Well, one reason is precisely that no particular inconvenience has hitherto been supposed to attach to me. I'm just what I am," said Mamie Cutter;

"nothing less and nothing more. It's awkward to have to explain to you, which, moreover, I really needn't in the least. I'm clever and amusing and charming." She was uneasy and even frightened, but she kept her temper and met him with a grace of her own. "I don't think you ought to ask me more questions than I ask you."

"Ah, my dear," said the odd young man, "*I've* no mysteries. Why in the world, since it was what you came out for and have devoted so much of your time to, haven't you pulled it off? Why haven't you married?"

"Why haven't *you?*" she retorted. "Do you think that if I had it would have been better for you?—that my husband would for a moment have put up with you? Do you mind my asking you if you'll kindly go *now?*" she went on after a glance at the clock. "I'm expecting a friend, whom I must see alone, on a matter of great importance——"

"And my being seen with you may compromise your respectability or undermine your nerve?" He sprawled imperturbably in his place, crossing again, in another sense, his long black legs and showing, above his low shoes, an absurd reach of parti-coloured sock. "I take your point well enough, but mayn't you be after all quite wrong? If you can't do anything for me couldn't you at least do something *with* me? If it comes to that, I'm clever and amusing and charming too! I've been such an ass that you don't appreciate me. But people like me—I assure you they do. They usually don't know what an ass I've been; they only see the surface, which"—and he stretched himself afresh as she looked him up and down—"you *can* imagine them, can't you, rather taken with? I'm 'what I am' too; nothing less and nothing more. That's true of us as a family, you see. We *are* a crew!" He delivered himself serenely. His voice was soft and flat, his pleasant eyes, his simple tones tending to the solemn, achieved at moments that effect of quaintness which is, in certain connections, socially so known and enjoyed. "English people have quite a weakness for me—more than any others. I get on with them beautifully. I've always been with them abroad. They think me," the young man explained, "diabolically American."

"You!" Such stupidity drew from her a sigh of compassion.

Her companion apparently quite understood it. "Are you homesick, Mamie?" he asked, with wondering irrelevance.

The manner of the question made her for some reason, in spite of her preoccupations, break into a laugh. A shade of indulgence, a sense of other things, came back to her. "You *are* funny, Scott!"

"Well," remarked Scott, "that's just what I claim. But *are* you so homesick?" he spaciously inquired, not as if to a practical end, but from an easy play of intelligence.

"I'm just dying of it!" said Mamie Cutter.

"Why, so am I!" Her visitor had a sweetness of concurrence.

"We're the only decent people," Miss Cutter declared. "And I know. *You* don't—you can't; and I can't explain. Come in," she continued with a return of her impatience and an increase of her decision, "at seven sharp."

She had quitted her seat some time before, and now, to get him into motion, hovered before him while, still motionless, he looked up at her. Something intimate, in the silence, appeared to pass between them—a community of fatigue and failure and, after all, of intelligence. There was a final, cynical humour in it. It determined him, at any rate, at last, and he slowly rose, taking in again as he stood there the testimony of the room. He might have been counting the photographs, but he looked at the flowers with detachment. "Who's coming?"

"Mrs. Medwin."

"American?"

"Dear no!"

"Then what are you doing for her?"

"I work for everyone," she promptly returned.

"For everyone who pays? So I suppose. Yet isn't it only we who do pay?"

There was a drollery, not lost on her, in the way his queer presence lent itself to his emphasised plural. "Do you consider that *you* do?"

At this, with his deliberation, he came back to his charming idea. "Only try me, and see if I can't be *made* to. Work me in." On her sharply presenting her back he stared a little at the clock. "If I come at seven may I stay to dinner?"

It brought her round again. "Impossible. I'm dining out."

"With whom?"

She had to think. "With Lord Considine."

"Oh, my eye!" Scott exclaimed.

She looked at him gloomily. "Is *that* sort of tone what makes you pay? I think you might understand," she went on, "that if you're to sponge on me successfully you mustn't ruin me. I must have *some* remote resemblance to a lady."

"Yes? But why must *I*?" Her exasperated silence was full of answers, of which, however, his inimitable manner took no account. "You don't understand my real strength; I doubt if you even understand your own. You're clever, Mamie, but you're not so clever as I supposed. However," he pursued, "it's out of Mrs. Medwin that you'll get it."

"Get what?"

"Why, the cheque that will enable you to assist me."

On this, for a moment, she met his eyes. "If you'll come back at seven sharp—not a minute before, and not a minute after, I'll give you two five-pound notes."

He thought it over. "Whom are you expecting a minute after?"

It sent her to the window with a groan almost of anguish, and she answered nothing till she had looked at the street. "If you injure me, you know, Scott, you'll be sorry."

"I wouldn't injure you for the world. What I want to do in fact is really to help you, and I promise you that I won't leave you—by which I mean won't leave London—till I've effected something really pleasant for you. I like you, Mamie, because I like pluck; I like you much more than you like me. I like you very, *very* much." He had at last with this reached the door and opened it, but he remained with his hand on the latch. "What does Mrs. Medwin want of you?" he thus brought out.

She had come round to see him disappear, and in the relief of this prospect she again just indulged him. "The impossible."

He waited another minute. "And you're going to do it?"

"I'm going to do it," said Mamie Cutter.

"Well, then, that ought to be a haul. Call it *three* fivers!" he laughed. "At seven sharp." And at last he left her alone.

II

Miss Cutter waited till she heard the house-door close; after which, in a sightless, mechanical way, she moved about the room, readjusting various objects that he had not touched. It was as if his mere voice and accent had spoiled her form. But she was not left too long to reckon with these things, for Mrs. Medwin was promptly announced. This lady was not, more than her hostess, in the first flush of her youth; her appearance—the scattered remains of beauty manipulated by taste—resembled one of the light repasts in which the fragments of yesterday's dinner figure with a conscious ease that makes up for the want of presence. She was perhaps of an effect still too immediate to be called interesting, but she was candid, gentle and surprised—not fatiguingly surprised, only just in the right degree; and her white face—it was too white—with the fixed eyes, the somewhat touzled hair and the Louis Seize hat, might at the end of the very long neck have suggested the head of a princess carried, in a revolution, on a pike. She immediately took up the business that had brought her, with the air, however, of drawing from the omens then discernible less confidence than she had hoped. The complication lay in the fact that if it was Mamie's part to present the omens, that lady yet had so to colour them as to make her own service large. She perhaps overcoloured, for her friend gave way to momentary despair.

"What you mean is then that it's simply impossible?"

"Oh, no," said Mamie, with a qualified emphasis. "It's *possible.*"

"But disgustingly difficult?"

"As difficult as you like."

"Then what can I do that I haven't done?"

"You can only wait a little longer."

"But that's just what I *have* done. I've done nothing else. I'm always waiting a little longer!"

Miss Cutter retained, in spite of this pathos, her grasp of the subject. "*The* thing, as I've told you, is for you first to be seen."

"But if people won't look at me?"

"They will."

"They *will?*" Mrs. Medwin was eager.

"They shall," her hostess went on. "It's their only having heard—without having seen."

"But if they stare straight the other way?" Mrs. Medwin continued to object. "You can't simply go up to them and twist their heads about."

"It's just what I can," said Mamie Cutter.

But her charming visitor, heedless for the moment of this attenuation, had found the way to put it. "It's the old story. You can't go into the water till you swim, and you can't swim till you go into the water. I can't be spoken to till I'm seen, but I can't be seen till I'm spoken to."

She met this lucidity, Miss Cutter, with but an instant's lapse. "You say I can't twist their heads about. But I *have* twisted them."

It had been quietly produced, but it gave her companion a jerk. "They say 'Yes'?"

She summed it up. "All but one. She says 'No.'"

Mrs. Medwin thought; then jumped. "Lady Wantridge?"

Miss Cutter, as more delicate, only bowed admission. "I shall see her either this afternoon or late to-morrow. But she has written."

Her visitor wondered again. "May I see her letter?"

"No." She spoke with decision. "But I shall square her."

"Then how?"

"Well"—and Miss Cutter, as if looking upward for inspiration, fixed her eyes awhile on the ceiling—"well, it will come to me."

Mrs. Medwin watched her—it was impressive. "And will *they* come to you—the others?" This question drew out the fact that they would—so far, at least, as they consisted of Lady Edward, Lady Bellhouse and Mrs. Pouncer, who had engaged to muster, at the signal of tea, on the 14th—prepared, as it were, for the worst. There was of course always the chance that Lady Wantridge might take the field in such force as to paralyse them, though that danger, at the same time, seemed inconsistent with her being squared. It didn't perhaps all quite ideally hang together; but what it sufficiently came to was that if she was the one who could do most *for* a person in Mrs. Medwin's position she was also the one who could do most against. It would

therefore be distinctly what our friend familiarly spoke of as "collar-work." The effect of these mixed considerations was at any rate that Mamie eventually acquiesced in the idea, handsomely thrown out by her client, that she should have an "advance" to go on with. Miss Cutter confessed that it seemed at times as if one scarce *could* go on; but the advance was, in spite of this delicacy, still more delicately made—made in the form of a banknote, several sovereigns, some loose silver and two coppers, the whole contents of her purse, neatly disposed by Mrs. Medwin on one of the tiny tables. It seemed to clear the air for deeper intimacies, the fruit of which was that Mamie, lonely, after all, in her crowd, and always more helpful than helped, eventually brought out that the way Scott had been going on was what seemed momentarily to overshadow her own power to do so.

"I've had a descent from him." But she had to explain. "My half-brother—Scott Homer. A wretch."

"What kind of a wretch?"

"Every kind. I lose sight of him at times—he disappears abroad. But he always turns up again, worse than ever."

"Violent?"

"No."

"Maudlin?"

"No."

"Only unpleasant?"

"No. Rather pleasant. Awfully clever—awfully travelled and easy."

"Then what's the matter with him?"

Mamie mused, hesitated—seemed to see a wide past. "I don't know."

"Something in the background?" Then as her friend was silent, "Something queer about cards?" Mrs. Medwin threw off.

"I don't know—and I don't want to!"

"Ah, well, I'm sure *I* don't," Mrs. Medwin returned with spirit. The note of sharpness was perhaps also a little in the observation she made as she gathered herself to go. "Do you mind my saying something?"

Mamie took her eyes quickly from the money on the little stand. "You may say what you like."

"I only mean that anything awkward you may have to keep out of the way does seem to make more wonderful, doesn't it, that you should have got just where you are? I allude, you know, to your position."

"I see." Miss Cutter somewhat coldly smiled. "To my power."

"So awfully remarkable in an American."

"Ah, you like us so."

Mrs. Medwin candidly considered. "But we don't, dearest."

Her companion's smile brightened. "Then why do you come to me?"

"Oh, I like *you!*" Mrs. Medwin made out.

"Then that's it. There are no 'Americans.' It's always 'you.'"

"Me?" Mrs. Medwin looked lovely, but a little muddled.

"*Me!*" Mamie Cutter laughed. "But if you like me, you dear thing, you can judge if I like *you.*" She gave her a kiss to dismiss her. "I'll see you again when I've seen her."

"Lady Wantridge? I hope so, indeed. I'll turn up late to-morrow, if you don't catch me first. Has it come to you yet?" the visitor, now at the door, went on.

"No; but it will. There's time."

"Oh, a little less every day!"

Miss Cutter had approached the table and glanced again at the gold and silver and the note, not indeed absolutely overlooked the two coppers. "The balance," she put it, "the day after?"

"That very night, if you like."

"Then count on me."

"Oh, if I didn't——!" But the door closed on the dark idea. Yearningly then, and only when it had done so, Miss Cutter took up the money.

She went out with it ten minutes later, and, the calls on her time being many, remained out so long that at half-past six she had not come back. At that hour, on the other hand, Scott Homer knocked at her door, where her maid, who opened it with a weak pretence of holding it firm, ventured to announce to him, as a lesson well learnt, that he had not been expected till seven. No lesson, none the less, could prevail against his native art. He pleaded fatigue, her, the maid's, dreadful depressing London, and the need to curl up somewhere. If she would just leave him quiet half an hour that old sofa upstairs would do for it, of which he took quickly such effectual possession that when, five minutes later, she peeped, nervous for her broken vow, into the drawing-room, the faithless young woman found him extended at his length and peacefully asleep.

III

THE SITUATION before Miss Cutter's return developed in other directions still, and when that event took place, at a few minutes past seven, these circumstances were, by the foot of the stair, between mistress and maid, the subject of some interrogative gasps and scared admissions. Lady Wantridge had arrived shortly after the interloper, and wishing, as she said, to wait, had gone straight up in spite of being told he was lying down.

"She distinctly understood he was there?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, I thought it right to mention."

"And what did you call him?"

"Well, ma'am, I thought it unfair to *you* to call him anything but a gentleman."

Mamie took it all in, though there might well be more of it than one could quickly embrace. "But if she has had time," she flashed, "to find out he isn't one?"

"Oh, ma'am, she had a quarter of an hour."

"Then she isn't with him still?"

"No, ma'am; she came down again at last. She rang, and I saw her here, and she said she wouldn't wait longer."

Miss Cutter darkly mused. "Yet had already waited—?"

"Quite a quarter."

"Mercy on us!" She began to mount. Before reaching the top, however, she had reflected that quite a quarter was long if Lady Wantridge had only been shocked. On the other hand, it was short if she had only been pleased. But how *could* she have been pleased? The very essence of their actual crisis was just that there was no pleasing her. Mamie had but to open the drawing-room door indeed to perceive that this was not true at least of Scott Homer, who was horribly cheerful.

Miss Cutter expressed to her brother without reserve her sense of the constitutional, the brutal selfishness that had determined his mistimed return. It had taken place, in violation of their agreement, exactly at the moment when it was most cruel to her that he should be there, and if she must now completely wash her hands of him he had only himself to thank. She had come in flushed with resentment and for a moment had been voluble; but it would have been striking that, though the way he received her might have seemed but to aggravate, it presently justified him by causing their relation really to take a stride. He had the art of confounding those who would quarrel with him by reducing them to the humiliation of an irritated curiosity.

"What *could* she have made of you?" Mamie demanded.

"My dear girl, she's not a woman who's eager to make too much of anything—anything, I mean, that will prevent her from doing as she likes, what she takes into her head. Of course," he continued to explain, "if it's something she doesn't want to do, she'll make as much as Moses."

Mamie wondered if that was the way he talked to her visitor, but felt obliged to own to his acuteness. It was an exact description of Lady Wantridge, and she was conscious of tucking it away for future use in a corner of her miscellaneous little mind. She withheld, however, all present acknowledgment, only addressing him another question. "Did you really get on with her?"

"Have you still to learn, darling—I can't help again putting it to you—that I get on with everybody? That's just what I don't seem able to drive into you. Only see how I get on with *you.*"

She almost stood corrected. "What I mean is, of course, whether——"

"Whether she made love to me? Shyly, yet—or because—shamefully? She would certainly have liked awfully to stay."

"Then why didn't she?"

"Because, on account of some other matter—and I could see it was true—she hadn't time. Twenty minutes—she was here less—were all she came to give you. So don't be afraid I've frightened her away. She'll come back."

Mamie thought it over. "Yet you didn't go with her to the door?"

"She wouldn't let me, and I know when to do what I'm told—quite as much as what I'm not told. She wanted to find out about me. I mean from your little creature; a pearl of fidelity, by the way."

"But what on earth did she come up for?" Mamie again found herself appealing, and, just by that fact, showing her need of help.

"Because she always goes up." Then, as, in the presence of this rapid generalisation, to say nothing of that of such a relative altogether, Miss Cutter could only show as comparatively blank: "I mean she knows when to go up and when to come down. She has instincts; she didn't know whom you might have up here. It's a kind of compliment to you anyway. Why, Mamie," Scott pursued, "you don't know the curiosity we any of us inspire. You wouldn't believe what I've seen. The bigger bugs they are the more they're on the look-out."

Mamie still followed, but at a distance. "The look-out for what?"

"Why, for anything that will help them to live. You've been here all this time without making out then, about them, what I've had to pick out as I can? They're dead, don't you see? And *we're* alive."

"You? Oh!"—Mamie almost laughed about it.

"Well, they're a worn-out old lot, anyhow; they've used up their resources. They do look out; and I'll do them the justice to say they're not afraid—not even of me!" he continued as his sister again showed something of the same irony. "Lady Wantridge, at any rate, wasn't; that's what I mean by her having made love to me. She does what she likes. Mind it, you know." He was by this time fairly teaching her to know one of her best friends, and when, after it, he had come back to the great point of his lesson—that of her failure, through feminine inferiority, practically to grasp the truth that their being just as they were, he and she, was the real card for them to play—when he had renewed that reminder he left her absolutely in a state of dependence. Her impulse to press him on the subject of Lady Wantridge dropped; it was as if she had felt that, whatever had taken place, something

would somehow come of it. She was to be, in a manner, disappointed, but the impression helped to keep her over to the next morning, when, as Scott had foretold, his new acquaintance did reappear, explaining to Miss Cutter that she had acted the day before to gain time and that she even now sought to gain it by not waiting longer. What, she promptly intimated she had asked herself, could that friend be thinking of? She must show where she stood before things had gone too far. If she had brought her answer without more delay she wished to make it sharp. Mrs. Medwin? Never! "No, my dear—not I. *There* I stop."

Mamie had known it would be "collar-work," but somehow now, at the beginning, she felt her heart sink. It was not that she had expected to carry the position with a rush, but that, as always after an interval, her visitor's defences really loomed—and quite, as it were, to the material vision—too large. She was always planted with them, voluminous, in the very centre of the passage; was like a person accommodated with a chair in some unlawful place at the theatre. She wouldn't move and you couldn't get round. Mamie's calculation indeed had not been on getting round; she was obliged to recognise that, too foolishly and fondly, she had dreamed of producing a surrender. Her dream had been the fruit of her need; but, conscious that she was even yet unequipped for pressure, she felt, almost for the first time in her life, superficial and crude. She was to be paid—but with what was she, to that end, to pay? She had engaged to find an answer to this question, but the answer had not, according to her promise, "come." And Lady Wantridge meanwhile massed herself, and there was no view of her that didn't show her as verily, by some process too obscure to be traced, the hard depository of the social law. She was no younger, no fresher, no stronger, really, than any of them; she was only, with a kind of haggard fineness, a sharpened taste for life, and, with all sorts of things behind and beneath her, more abysmal and more immoral, more secure and more impertinent. The points she made were two in number. One was that she absolutely declined; the other was that she quite doubted if Mamie herself had measured the job. The thing couldn't be done. But say it *could* be; was Mamie quite the person to do it? To this Miss Cutter, with a sweet smile, replied that she quite understood how little she might seem so. "I'm only one of the persons to whom it has appeared that *you* are."

"Then who are the others?"

"Well, to begin with, Lady Edward, Lady Bellhouse and Mrs. Pouncer."

"Do you mean that they'll come to meet her?"

"I've seen them, and they've promised."

"To come, of course," Lady Wantridge said, "if *I* come."

Her hostess hesitated. "Oh, of course, you could prevent them. But I

should take it as awfully kind of you not to. *Won't* you do this for me?" Mamie pleaded.

Her friend looked about the room very much as Scott had done. "Do they really understand what it's *for*?"

"Perfectly. So that she may call."

"And what good will that do her?"

Miss Cutter faltered, but she presently brought it out. "Of course what one hopes is that you'll ask her."

"Ask her to call?"

"Ask her to dine. Ask her, if you'd be so *truly* sweet, for a Sunday, or something of that sort, and even if only in one of your *most* mixed parties, to Catchmore."

Miss Cutter felt the less hopeful after this effort in that her companion only showed a strange good nature. And it was not the amiability of irony; yet it *was* amusement. "Take Mrs. Medwin into my family?"

"Some day, when you're taking forty others."

"Ah, but what I don't see is what it does for *you*. You're already so welcome among us that you can scarcely improve your position even by forming for us the most delightful relation."

"Well, I know how dear you are," Mamie Cutter replied; "but one has, after all, more than one side, and more than one sympathy. I like her, you know." And even at this Lady Wantridge was not shocked; she showed that ease and blandness which were her way, unfortunately, of being most impossible. She remarked that *she* might listen to such things, because she was clever enough for them not to matter; only Mamie should take care how she went about saying them at large. When she became definite, however, in a minute, on the subject of the public facts, Miss Cutter soon found herself ready to make her own concession. Of course, she didn't dispute *them:* there they were; they were unfortunately on record, and nothing was to be done about them but to—Mamie found it, in truth, at this point, a little difficult.

"Well, what? Pretend already to have forgotten them?"

"Why not, when you've done it in so many other cases?"

"There *are* no other cases so bad. One meets them, at any rate, as they come. Some you can manage, others you can't. It's no use, you must give them up. They're past patching; there's nothing to be done with them. There's nothing, accordingly, to be done with Mrs. Medwin but to put her off." And Lady Wantridge rose to her height.

"Well, you know, I *do* do things," Mamie quavered with a smile so strained that it partook of exaltation.

"You help people? Oh yes, I've known you to do wonders. But stick,"

said Lady Wantridge with strong and cheerful emphasis, "to your Americans!"

Miss Cutter, gazing, got up. "You don't do justice, Lady Wantridge, to your own compatriots. Some of them are really charming. Besides," said Mamie, "working for mine often strikes me, so far as the interest—the inspiration and excitement, don't you know?—go, as rather too easy. You all, as I constantly have occasion to say, like us so!"

Her companion frankly weighed it. "Yes; it takes that to account for your position. I've always thought of you, nevertheless, as keeping, for their benefit, a regular working agency. They come to you, and you place them. There remains, I confess," her ladyship went on in the same free spirit, "the great wonder——"

"Of how I first placed my poor little self? Yes," Mamie bravely conceded, "when *I* began there was no agency. I just worked my passage. I didn't even come to *you*, did I? You never noticed me till, as Mrs. Short Stokes says, 'I was, 'way up!' Mrs. Medwin," she threw in, "can't get over it." Then, as her friend looked vague: "Over my social situation."

"Well, it's no great flattery to you to say," Lady Wantridge good-humouredly returned, "that she certainly can't hope for one resembling it." Yet it really seemed to spread there before them. "You simply *made* Mrs. Short Stokes."

"In spite of her name!" Mamie smiled.

"Oh, your names——! In spite of everything."

"Ah, I'm something of an artist." With which, and a relapse marked by her wistful eyes into the gravity of the matter, she supremely fixed her friend. She felt how little she minded betraying at last the extremity of her need, and it was out of this extremity that her appeal proceeded. "Have I really had your last word? It means so much to me."

Lady Wantridge came straight to the point. "You mean you depend on it?"

"Awfully!"

"Is it all you have?"

"All. Now."

"But Mrs. Short Stokes and the others—'rolling,' aren't they? Don't they pay up?"

"Ah," sighed Mamie, "if it wasn't for them——!"

Lady Wantridge perceived. "You've had so much?"

"I couldn't have gone on."

"Then what do you do with it all?"

"Oh, most of it goes back to them. There are all sorts, and it's all help. Some of them have nothing."

"Oh, if you feed the hungry," Lady Wantridge laughed, "you're indeed

in a great way of business. Is Mrs. Medwin"—her transition was immediate—"really rich?"

"Really. He left her everything."

"So that if I do say 'yes'——"

"It will quite set me up."

"I see—and how much more responsible it makes one! But I'd rather myself give you the money."

"Oh!" Mamie coldly murmured.

"You mean I mayn't suspect your prices? Well, I daresay I don't! But I'd rather give you ten pounds."

"Oh!" Mamie repeated in a tone that sufficiently covered her prices. The question was in every way larger. "Do you *never* forgive?" she reproachfully inquired. The door opened, however, at the moment she spoke, and Scott Homer presented himself.

IV

Scott Homer wore exactly, to his sister's eyes, the aspect he had worn the day before, and it also formed, to her sense, the great feature of his impartial greeting.

"How d'ye do, Mamie? How d'ye do, Lady Wantridge?"

"How d'ye do again?" Lady Wantridge replied with an equanimity striking to her hostess. It was as if Scott's own had been contagious; it was almost indeed as if she had seen him before. *Had* she ever so seen him—before the previous day? While Miss Cutter put to herself this question her visitor, at all events, met the one she had previously uttered.

"Ever 'forgive'?" this personage echoed in a tone that made as little account as possible of the interruption. "Dear, yes! The people I *have* forgiven!" She laughed—perhaps a little nervously; and she was now looking at Scott. The way she looked at him was precisely what had already had its effect for his sister. "The people I can!"

"Can you forgive *me?*" asked Scott Homer.

She took it so easily. "But—what?"

Mamie interposed; she turned directly to her brother. "Don't try her. Leave it so." She had had an inspiration; it was the most extraordinary thing in the world. "Don't try *him*"—she had turned to their companion. She looked grave, sad, strange. "Leave it so." Yes, it was a distinct inspiration, which she couldn't have explained, but which had come, prompted by something she had caught—the extent of the recognition expressed—in Lady Wantridge's face. It had come absolutely of a sudden, straight out of the opposition of the two figures before her—quite as if a concussion had struck a light. The light was helped by her quickened sense that her friend's silence on the incident of the day before showed some sort of consciousness. She looked surprised. "Do you know my brother?"

"*Do* I know you?" Lady Wantridge asked of him.

"No, Lady Wantridge," Scott pleasantly confessed, "not one little mite!"

"Well, then, if you *must* go—!" and Mamie offered her a hand. "But I'll go down with you. Not *you!*" she launched at her brother, who immediately effaced himself. His way of doing so—and he had already done so, as for Lady Wantridge, in respect to their previous encounter—struck her even at the moment as an instinctive, if slightly blind, tribute to her possession of an idea; and as such, in its celerity, made her so admire him and their common wit, that, on the spot, she more than forgave him his queerness. He was right. He could be as queer as he liked! The queerer the better! It was at the foot of the stairs, when she had got her guest down, that what she had assured Mrs. Medwin would come did indeed come. "*Did* you meet him here yesterday?"

"Dear, yes. Isn't he too funny?"

"Yes," said Mamie gloomily. "He *is* funny. But had you ever met him before?"

"Dear, no!"

"Oh!"—and Mamie's tone might have meant many things.

Lady Wantridge, however, after all, easily overlooked it. "I only knew he was one of your odd Americans. That's why, when I heard yesterday, here, that he was up there awaiting your return, I didn't let that prevent me. I thought he might be. He certainly," her ladyship laughed, "*is.*"

"Yes, he's very American," Mamie went on in the same way.

"As you say, we *are* fond of you! Good-bye," said Lady Wantridge.

But Mamie had not half done with her. She felt more and more—or she hoped at least—that she looked strange. She *was,* no doubt, if it came to that, strange. "Lady Wantridge," she almost convulsively broke out, "I don't know whether you'll understand me, but I seem to feel that I must act with you—I don't know what to call it!—responsibly. He *is* my brother."

"Surely—and why not?" Lady Wantridge stared. "He's the image of you!"

"Thank you!"—and Mamie was stranger than ever.

"Oh, he's good-looking. He's handsome, my dear. Oddly—but distinctly!" Her ladyship was for treating it much as a joke.

But Mamie, all sombre, would have none of this. She boldly gave him up. "I think he's awful."

"He is indeed—delightfully. And where *do* you get your ways of saying things? It isn't anything—and the things aren't anything. But it's so droll."

"Don't let yourself, all the same," Mamie consistently pursued, "be carried away by it. The thing can't be done—simply."

Lady Wantridge wondered. " 'Done simply'?"

"Done at all."

"But what can't be?"

"Why, what you might think—from his pleasantness. What he spoke of your doing for him."

Lady Wantridge recalled. "Forgiving him?"

"He asked you if you couldn't. But you can't. It's too dreadful for me, as so near a relation, to have, loyally—loyally to *you*—to say it. But he's impossible."

It was so portentously produced that her ladyship had somehow to meet it. "What's the matter with him?"

"I don't know."

"Then what's the matter with *you*?" Lady Wantridge inquired.

"It's because I *won't* know," Mamie—not without dignity—explained.

"Then *I* won't either!"

"Precisely. Don't. It's something," Mamie pursued, with some inconsequence, "that—somewhere or other, at some time or other—he appears to have done; something that has made a difference in his life."

" 'Something'?" Lady Wantridge echoed again. "What kind of thing?"

Mamie looked up at the light above the door through which the London sky was doubly dim. "I haven't the least idea."

"Then what kind of difference?"

Mamie's gaze was still at the light. "The difference you see."

Lady Wantridge, rather obligingly, seemed to ask herself what she saw "But I don't see any! It seems, at least," she added, "such an amusing one! And he has such nice eyes."

"Oh, *dear* eyes!" Mamie conceded; but with too much sadness, for the moment, about the connections of the subject, to say more.

It almost forced her companion, after an instant, to proceed. "Do you mean he can't go home?"

She weighed her responsibility. "I only make out—more's the pity!—that he doesn't."

"Is it then something too terrible——?"

She thought again. "I don't know what—for men—*is* too terrible."

"Well then, as you don't know what 'is' for women either—good-bye!" her visitor laughed.

It practically wound up the interview; which, however terminating thus on a considerable stir of the air, was to give Miss Cutter, the next few days, the sense of being much blown about. The degree to which to begin with, she had been drawn—or perhaps rather pushed—closer to Scott was marked in the brief colloquy that, on her friend's departure, she had with him. He had immediately said it. "You'll see if she doesn't ask me down!"

"So soon?"

"Oh, I've known them at places—at Cannes, at Pau, at Shanghai—to do it

sooner still. I always know when they will. You *can't* make out they don't love me!" He spoke almost plaintively, as if he wished she could.

"Then I don't see why it hasn't done you more good."

"Why, Mamie," he patiently reasoned, "what more good *could* it? As I tell you," he explained, "it has just been my life."

"Then why do you come to me for money?"

"Oh, they don't give me *that!*" Scott returned.

"So that it only means then, after all, that I, at the best, must keep you up?"

He fixed on her the nice eyes that Lady Wantridge admired. "Do you mean to tell me that already—at this very moment—I am not distinctly keeping *you?*"

She gave him back his look. "Wait till she *has* asked you, and then," Mamie added, "decline."

Scott, not too grossly, wondered. "As acting for *you?*"

Mamie's next injunction was answer enough. "But *before*—yes—call."

He took it in. "Call—but decline. Good."

"The rest," she said, "I leave to you." And she left it, in fact, with such confidence that for a couple of days she was not only conscious of no need to give Mrs. Medwin another turn of the screw, but positively evaded, in her fortitude, the reappearance of that lady. It was not till the third day that she waited upon her, finding her, as she had expected, tense.

"Lady Wantridge *will*—?"

"Yes, though she says she won't."

"She says she won't? O—oh!" Mrs. Medwin moaned.

"Sit tight all the same. I *have* her!"

"But how?"

"Through Scott—whom she wants."

"Your bad brother!" Mrs. Medwin stared. "What does she want of him?"

"To amuse them at Catchmore. Anything for that. And he *would.* But he sha'n't!" Mamie declared.

"He sha'n't go unless she comes. She must meet you first—You're my condition."

"O—o—oh!" Mrs. Medwin's tone was a wonder of hope and fear. "But doesn't he want to go?"

"He wants what *I* want. She draws the line at you. I draw the line at *him.*"

"But she—doesn't she mind that he's bad?"

It was so artless that Mamie laughed. "No; it doesn't touch her. Besides, perhaps he isn't. It isn't as for *you*—people seem not to know. He has settled everything, at all events, by going to see her. It's before her that he's the thing she will have to have."

"Have to?"

"For Sundays in the country. A feature—*the* feature."

"So she has asked him?"

"Yes; and he has declined."

"For *me?*" Mrs. Medwin panted.

"For me," said Mamie, on the doorstep. "But I don't leave him for long." Her hansom had waited. "She'll come."

Lady Wantridge did come. She met in South Audley Street, on the fourteenth, at tea, the ladies whom Mamie had named to her, together with three or four others, and it was rather a masterstroke for Miss Cutter that, if Mrs. Medwin was modestly present, Scott Homer was as markedly not. This occasion, however, is a medal that would take rare casting, as would also, for that matter, even the minor light and shade, the lower relief, of the pecuniary transaction that Mrs. Medwin's flushed gratitude scarce awaited the dispersal of the company munificently to complete. A new understanding indeed, on the spot rebounded from it, the conception of which, in Mamie's mind, had promptly bloomed. "He sha'n't go *now* unless he takes you." Then, as her fancy always moved quicker for her client than her client's own—"Down with him to Catchmore! When he goes to amuse them, *you,*" she comfortably declared, "shall amuse them too." Mrs. Medwin's response was again rather oddly divided, but she was sufficiently intelligible when it came to meeting the intimation that this latter would be an opportunity involving a separate fee. "Say," Mamie had suggested, "the same."

"Very well; the same."

The knowledge that it was to be the same had perhaps something to do, also, with the obliging spirit in which Scott eventually went. It was all, at the last, rather hurried—a party rapidly got together for the Grand Duke, who was in England but for the hour, who had good-naturedly proposed himself, and who liked his parties small, intimate and funny. This one was of the smallest, and it was finally judged to conform neither too little nor too much to the other conditions—after a brief whirlwind of wires and counterwires, and an iterated waiting of hansoms at various doors—to include Mrs. Medwin. It was from Catchmore itself that, snatching a moment on the wondrous Sunday afternoon, this lady had the harmonious thought of sending the new cheque. She was in bliss enough, but her scribble none the less intimated that it was Scott who amused them most. He *was* the feature. (1903)

JOSEPH CONRAD Heart of darkness

I

THE *Nellie*, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.

The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished sprits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.

The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bows looking to seaward. On the whole river there was nothing that looked half so nautical. He resembled a pilot, which to a seaman is trustworthiness personified. It was difficult to realize his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom.

Between us there was, as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation, it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's yarns—and even convictions. The Lawyer—the best of old fellows—had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones. Marlow sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol. The director, satisfied the anchor had good hold, made his way aft and sat down amongst us. We exchanged a few words lazily. Afterwards there was silence on board the yacht. For some reason or other we did not begin that game of dominoes. We felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid staring. The day was ending in a serenity of still and exquisite brilliance. The water shone pacifically; the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light; the

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very mist on the Essex marshes was like a gauzy and radiant fabric, hung from the wooded rises inland, and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds. Only the gloom to the west, brooding over the upper reaches, became more somber every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun.

And at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men.

Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs forever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, "followed the sea" with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled —the knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the *Golden Hind* returning with her round flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale to the *Erebus* and *Terror*, bound on other conquests—and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith—the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the dark "interlopers" of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned "generals" of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman lighthouse, a three-legged thing erect on a mudflat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway—a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places on the earth."

He was the only man of us who still "followed the sea." The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class. He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them—the ship; and so is their country—the sea. One ship is very much like another, and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance; for there is nothing mysterious to a seaman unless it be the sea itself, which is the mistress of his existence and as inscrutable as Destiny. For the rest, after his hours of work, a casual stroll or a casual spree on shore suffices to unfold for him the secret of a whole continent, and generally he finds the secret not worth knowing. The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine.

His remark did not seem at all surprising. It was just like Marlow. It was accepted in silence. No one took the trouble to grunt even; and presently he said, very slow—

"I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago—the other day. . . . Light came out of this river since—you say Knights? Yes; but it is like a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker—may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling! But darkness was here yesterday. Imagine the feelings of a commander of a fine—what d'ye call 'em—trireme in the Mediterranean, ordered suddenly to the north; run overland across the Gauls in a hurry; put in charge of one of these craft the legionaries—a wonderful lot of handy men they must have been, too—used to build, apparently by the hundred, in a month or two, if we may believe what we read. Imagine him here—the very end of the world, a sea the color of lead, a sky the color of smoke,—a kind of ship about as rigid as a concertina—and going up this river with stores, or orders, or what you like. Sand-banks, marshes, forests, savages,—precious little to eat fit for a civilized man, nothing but Thames water to drink. No Falernian wine here, no going ashore. Here and there a military camp lost in a wilderness, like a needle in a bundle of hay—cold, fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death,—death skulking in the air, in the water, in

the bush. They must have been dying like flies here. Oh, yes—he did it. Did it very well, too, no doubt, and without thinking much about it either, except afterwards to brag of what he had gone through in his time, perhaps. They were men enough to face the darkness. And perhaps he was cheered by keeping his eye on a chance of promotion to the fleet at Ravenna by and by, if he had good friends in Rome and survived the awful climate. Or think of a decent young citizen in a toga—perhaps too much dice, you know—coming out here in the train of some prefect, or tax-gatherer, or trader even, to mend his fortunes. Land in a swamp, march through the woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him,—all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. There's no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is also detestable. And it has a fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination—you know, imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate."

He paused.

"Mind," he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower—"Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency—the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force—nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretense but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . ."

He broke off. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other—then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river. We looked on, waiting patiently—there was nothing else to do till the end of the flood; but it was only after a long silence, when he said, in a hesitating voice, "I suppose you fellows remember

Marlow

I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit," that we knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences.

"I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally," he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would best like to hear; "yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me—and into my thoughts. It was somber enough, too—and pitiful—not extraordinary in any way—not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.

"I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China Seas—a regular dose of the East—six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes, just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you. It was very fine for a time, but after a bit I did get tired of resting. Then I began to look for a ship—I should think the hardest work on earth. But the ships wouldn't even look at me. And I got tired of that game, too.

"Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was one of these places, I remember. Well, I haven't been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the Equator, and in every sort of latitude all over the two hemispheres. I have been in some of them, and . . . well, we won't talk about that. But there was one yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak—that I had a hankering after.

"True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my childhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't

trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water—steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me.

"You understand it was a Continental concern, that Trading society; but I have a lot of relations living on the Continent, because it's cheap and not so nasty as it looks, they say.

"I am sorry to own I began to worry them. This was already a fresh departure for me. I was not used to getting things that way, you know. I always went my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I wouldn't have believed it of myself; but, then—you see—I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook. So I worried them. The men said 'My dear fellow,' and did nothing. Then—would you believe it?—I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work—to get a job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote: 'It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with,' etc., etc. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy.

"I got my appointment—of course; and I got it very quick. It appears the Company had received news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives. This was my chance, and it made me the more anxious to go. It was only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens. Fresleven—that was the fellow's name, a Dane—thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick. Oh, it didn't surprise me in the least to hear this, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly, while a big crowd of his people watched him, thunderstruck, till some man—I was told the chief's son—in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man—and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades. Then the whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen, while, on the other hand, the steamer Fresleven commanded left also in a bad panic, in charge of the engineer, I believe. Afterwards nobody seemed to trouble much about Fresleven's remains, till I got out and stepped into his shoes. I couldn't let it rest, though;

but when an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones. They were all there. The supernatural being had not been touched after he fell. And the village was deserted, the huts gaped black, rotting, all askew within the fallen enclosures. A calamity had come to it, sure enough. The people had vanished. Mad terror had scattered them, men, women, and children, through the bush, and they had never returned. What became of the hens I don't know either. I should think the cause of progress got them, anyhow. However, through this glorious affair I got my appointment, before I had fairly begun to hope for it.

"I flew around like mad to get ready, and before forty-eight hours I was crossing the Channel to show myself to my employers, and sign the contract. In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulcher. Prejudice no doubt. I had no difficulty in finding the Company's offices. It was the biggest thing in the town, and everybody I met was full of it. They were going to run an over-sea empire, and make no end of coin by trade.

"A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting between the stones, imposing carriage archways right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar. I slipped through one of these cracks, went up a swept and ungarnished staircase, as arid as a desert, and opened the first door I came to. Two women, one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs, knitting black wool. The slim one got up and walked straight at me—still knitting with down-cast eyes—and only just as I began to think of getting out of her way, as you would for a somnambulist, stood still, and looked up. Her dress was as plain as an umbrella-cover, and she turned round without a word and preceded me into a waiting-room. I gave my name, and looked about. Deal table in the middle, plain chairs all around the walls, on one end a large shining map, marked with all the colors of a rainbow. There was a vast amount of red—good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and, on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers of progress drink the jolly lager-beer. However, I wasn't going into any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the center. And the river was there—fascinating—deadly—like a snake. Ough! A door opened, a white-haired secretarial head, but wearing a compassionate expression, appeared, and a skinny forefinger beckoned me into the sanctuary. Its light was dim, and a heavy writing-desk squatted in the middle. From behind that structure came out an impression of pale plumpness in a frock-coat. The great man himself. He was five feet six, I should judge, and

had his grip on the handle-end of ever so many millions. He shook hands, I fancy, murmured vaguely, was satisfied with my French. *Bon voyage.*

"In about forty-five seconds I found myself again in the waiting-room with the compassionate secretary, who, full of desolation and sympathy, made me sign some document. I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets. Well, I am not going to.

"I began to feel slightly uneasy. You know I am not used to such ceremonies, and there was something ominous in the atmosphere. It was just as though I had been let into some conspiracy—I don't know—something not quite right; and I was glad to get out. In the outer room the two women knitted black wool feverishly. People were arriving, and the younger one was walking back and forth introducing them. The old one sat on her chair. Her flat cloth slippers were propped up on a foot-warmer, and a cat reposed on her lap. She wore a starched white affair on her head, had a wart on one cheek, and silver-rimmed spectacles hung on the tip of her nose. She glanced at me above the glasses. The swift and indifferent placidity of that look troubled me. Two youths with foolish and cheery countenances were being piloted over, and she threw at them the same quick glance of unconcerned wisdom. She seemed to know all about them and about me, too. An eerie feeling came over me. She seemed uncanny and fateful. Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. *Ave!* Old knitter of black wool. *Morituri te salutant.* Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again—not half, by a long way.

"There was yet a visit to the doctor. 'A simple formality,' assured me the secretary, with an air of taking an immense part in all my sorrows. Accordingly a young chap wearing his hat over the left eyebrow, some clerk I suppose,—there must have been clerks in the business, though the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead—came from somewhere upstairs, and led me forth. He was shabby and careless, with inkstains on the sleeves of his jacket, and his cravat was large and billowy, under a chin shaped like the toe of an old boot. It was a little too early for the doctor, so I proposed a drink, and thereupon he developed a vein of joviality. As we sat over our vermouths he glorified the Company's business, and by and by I expressed casually my surprise at him not going out there. He became very cool and collected all at once. 'I am not such a fool as I look, quoth Plato to his disciples,' he said sententiously, emptied his glass with great resolution, and we rose.

"The old doctor felt my pulse, evidently thinking of something else the while. 'Good, good for there,' he mumbled, and then with a certain eager-

ness asked me whether I would let him measure my head. Rather surprised, I said Yes, when he produced a thing like calipers and got the dimensions back and front and every way, taking notes carefully. He was an unshaven little man in a threadbare coat like a gaberdine, with his feet in slippers, and I thought him a harmless fool. 'I always ask leave, in the interests of science, to measure the crania of those going out there,' he said. 'And when they come back, too?' I asked. 'Oh, I never see them,' he remarked; and, moreover, the changes take place inside, you know.' He smiled, as if at some quiet joke. 'So you are going out there. Famous. Interesting, too.' He gave me a searching glance, and made another note. 'Ever any madness in your family?' he asked, in a matter-of-fact tone. I felt very annoyed. 'Is that question in the interests of science, too?' 'It would be,' he said, without taking notice of my irritation, 'interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals, on the spot, but . . .' 'Are you an alienist?' I interrupted. 'Every doctor should be—a little,' answered that original, imperturbably. 'I have a little theory which you Messieurs who go out there must help me to prove. This is my share in the advantages my country shall reap from the possession of such a magnificent dependency. The mere wealth I leave to others. Pardon my questions, but you are the first Englishman coming under my observation . . .' I hastened to assure him I was not in the least typical. 'If I were,' said I, 'I wouldn't be talking like this with you.' 'What you say is rather profound, and probably erroneous,' he said, with a laugh. 'Avoid irritation more than exposure to the sun. Adieu. How do you English say, eh? Good-by. Ah! Good-by. Adieu. In the tropics one must before everything keep calm.' . . . He lifted a warning forefinger. . . . *'Du calme, du calme. Adieu.'*

"One thing more remained to do—say good-by to my excellent aunt. I found her triumphant. I had a cup of tea—the last decent cup of tea for many days—and in a room that most soothingly looked just as you would expect a lady's drawing-room to look, we had a long quiet chat by the fireside. In the course of these confidences it became quite plain to me I had been represented to the wife of the high dignitary, and goodness knows to how many more people besides, as an exceptional and gifted creature—a piece of good fortune for the Company—a man you don't get hold of every day. Good heavens! and I was going to take charge of a two-penny-halfpenny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital—you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug, got carried off her feet. She talked about 'weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid

ways,' till, upon my word, she made me quite uncomfortable. I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit.

" 'You forget, dear Charlie, that the laborer is worthy of his hire,' she said, brightly. It's queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there has never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset. Some confounded fact we men have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation would start up and knock the whole thing over.

"After this I got embraced, told to wear flannel, be sure to write often, and so on—and I left. In the street—I don't know why—a queer feeling came to me that I was an impostor. Odd thing that I, who used to clear out for any part of the world at twenty-four hours' notice, with less thought than most men give to the crossing of a street, had a moment—I won't say of hesitation, but of startled pause, before this commonplace affair. The best way I can explain it to you is by saying that, for a second or two, I felt as though, instead of going to the center of a continent, I were about to set off for the center of the earth.

"I left in a French steamer, and she called in every blamed port they have out there, for, as far as I could see, the sole purpose of landing soldiers and custom-house officers. I watched the coast. Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you—smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, Come and find out. This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. The edge of a colossal jungle, so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, ran straight, like a ruled line, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist. The sun was fierce, the land seemed to glisten and drip with steam. Here and there grayish-whitish specks showed up clustered inside the white surf, with a flag flying above them perhaps. Settlements some centuries old, and still no bigger than pinheads on the untouched expanse of their background. We pounded along, stopped, landed soldiers; went on, landed custom-house clerks to levy toll in what looked like a God-forsaken wilderness, with a tin shed and a flag-pole lost in it; landed more soldiers—to take care of the custom-house clerks, presumably. Some, I heard, got drowned in the surf; but whether they did or not, nobody seemed particularly to care. They were just flung out there, and on we went. Every day the coast looked the same, as though we had not moved; but we passed various places—trading places—with names like Gran' Bassam, Little Popo; names that seemed to belong to some sordid farce acted in front of a sinister backcloth. The idleness of a passenger, my isolation amongst all these men with whom I had no point of contact, the oily and languid sea,

the uniform somberness of the coast, seemed to keep me away from the truth of things, within the toil of a mournful and senseless delusion. The voice of the surf heard now and then was a positive pleasure, like the speech of a brother. It was something natural, that had its reason, that had a meaning. Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks—these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at. For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away. Once, I remember, we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast. There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. It appears the French had one of their wars going on thereabouts. Her ensign dropped limp like a rag; the muzzles of the long six-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull; the greasy, slimy swell swung her up lazily and let her down, swaying her thin masts. In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech—and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of natives—he called them enemies!—hidden out of sight somewhere.

"We gave her her letters (I heard the men in that lonely ship were dying of fever at the rate of three a day) and went on. We called at some more places with farcical names, where the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthy atmosphere as of an overheated catacomb; all along the formless coast bordered by dangerous surf, as if Nature herself had tried to ward off intruders; in and out of rivers, streams of death in life, whose banks were rotting into mud, whose waters, thickened into slime, invaded the contorted mangroves, that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair. Nowhere did we stop long enough to get a particularized impression, but the general sense of vague and oppressive wonder grew upon me. It was like a weary pilgrimage amongst hints for nightmares.

"It was upward of thirty days before I saw the mouth of the big river. We anchored off the seat of the government. But my work would not begin till some two hundred miles farther on. So as soon as I could I made a start for a place thirty miles higher up.

"I had my passage on a little sea-going steamer. Her captain was a Swede,

and knowing me for a seaman, invited me on the bridge. He was a young man, lean, fair, and morose, with lanky hair and a shuffling gait. As we left the miserable little wharf, he tossed his head contemptuously at the shore. 'Been living there?' he asked. I said, 'Yes.' 'Fine lot these government chaps—are they not?' he went on, speaking English with great precision and considerable bitterness. 'It is funny what some people will do for a few francs a month. I wonder what becomes of that kind when it goes up-country?' I said to him I expected to see that soon. 'So-o-o!' he exclaimed. He shuffled athwart, keeping one eye ahead vigilantly. 'Don't be too sure,' he continued. 'The other day I took up a man who hanged himself on the road. He was a Swede, too.' 'Hanged himself! Why, in God's name?' I cried. He kept on looking out watchfully. 'Who knows? The sun was too much for him, or the country perhaps.'

"At last we opened a reach. A rocky cliff appeared, mounds of turned-up earth by the shore, houses on a hill, others with iron roofs, amongst a waste of excavations, or hanging to the declivity. A continuous noise of the rapids above hovered over this scene of inhabited devastation. A lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants. A jetty projected into the river. A blinding sunlight drowned all this at times in a sudden recrudescence of glare. 'There's your Company's station,' said the Swede, pointing to three wooden barrack-like structures on the rocky slope. 'I will send your things up. Four boxes did you say? So. Farewell.'

"I came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass, then found a path leading up the hill. It turned aside for the bowlders, and also for an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air. One was off. The thing looked as dead as the carcass of some animal. I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails. To the left a clump of trees made a shady spot, where dark things seemed to stir feebly. I blinked, the path was steep. A horn tooted to the right, and I saw the black people run. A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared on the face of the rock. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way or anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on.

"A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking. Another report from the cliff made me think suddenly

of that ship of war I had seen firing into a continent. It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily up-hill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Behind this raw matter one of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work, strolled despondently, carrying a rifle by its middle. He had a uniform jacket with one button off, and seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings.

"Instead of going up, I turned and descended to the left. My idea was to let that chain-gang get out of sight before I climbed the hill. You know I am not particularly tender; I've had to strike and to fend off. I've had to resist and to attack sometimes—that's only one way of resisting—without counting the exact cost, according to the demands of such sort of life as I had blundered into. I've seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire; but, by all the stars! these were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils, that swayed and drove men—men, I tell you. But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly. How insidious he could be, too, I was only to find out several months later and a thousand miles farther. For a moment I stood appalled, as though by a warning. Finally I descended the hill, obliquely, towards the trees I had seen.

"I avoided a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole. It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do. I don't know. Then I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was not broken. It was a wanton smash-up. At last I got under the trees. My purpose was to stroll into the shade for a moment; but no sooner within than it seemed to me I had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno. The rapids were near, and an uninterrupted, uniform, headlong, rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove, where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved,

with a mysterious sound—as though the tearing pace of the launched earth had suddenly become audible.

"Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. Another mine on the cliff went off, followed by a slight shudder of the soil under my feet. The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die.

"They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now,—nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air—and nearly as thin. I began to distinguish the gleam of the eyes under the trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young—almost a boy—but you know with them it's hard to tell. I found nothing else to do but to offer him one of my good Swede's ship's biscuits I had in my pocket. The fingers closed slowly on it and held—there was no other movement and no other glance. He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck— Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge—an ornament—a charm—a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas.

"Near the same tree two more bundles of acute angles sat with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence. While I stood horror-struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his hand, then sat up in the sunlight, crossing his shins in front of him, and after a time let his woolly head fall on his breastbone.

"I didn't want any more loitering in the shade, and I made haste towards the station. When near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision. I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clean necktie, and varnished boots. No hat. Hair parted,

brushed, oiled, under a green-lined parasol held in a big white hand. He was amazing, and had a penholder behind his ear.

"I shook hands with this miracle, and I learned he was the Company's chief accountant, and that all the book-keeping was done at this station. He had come out for a moment, he said, 'to get a breath of fresh air.' The expression sounded wonderfully odd, with its suggestion of sedentary desk-life. I wouldn't have mentioned the fellow to you at all, only it was from his lips that I first heard the name of the man who is so indissolubly connected with the memories of that time. Moreover, I respected the fellow. Yes; I respected his collars, his vast cuffs, his brushed hair. His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser's dummy; but in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance. That's backbone. His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character. He had been out nearly three years; and, later, I could not help asking him how he managed to sport such linen. He had just the faintest blush, and said modestly, 'I've been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult. She had a distaste for the work.' Thus this man had verily accomplished something. And he was devoted to his books, which were in apple-pie order.

"Everything else in the station was in a muddle,—heads, things, buildings. Strings of dusty niggers with splay feet arrived and departed; a stream of manufactured goods, rubbishy cottons, beads, and brass-wire set into the depths of darkness, and in return came a precious trickle of ivory.

"I had to wait in the station for ten days—an eternity. I lived in a hut in the yard, but to be out of the chaos I would sometimes get into the accountant's office. It was built of horizontal planks, and so badly put together that, as he bent over his high desk, he was barred from neck to heels with narrow strips of sunlight. There was no need to open the big shutter to see. It was hot there, too; big flies buzzed fiendishly, and did not sting, but stabbed. I sat generally on the floor, while, of faultless appearance (and even slightly scented), perching on a high stool, he wrote, he wrote. Sometimes he stood up for exercise. When a trucklebed with a sick man (some invalid agent from up-country) was put in there, he exhibited a gentle annoyance. 'The groans of this sick person,' he said, 'distract my attention. And without that it is extremely difficult to guard against clerical errors in this climate.'

"One day he remarked, without lifting his head, 'In the interior you will no doubt meet Mr. Kurtz.' On my asking who Mr. Kurtz was, he said he was a first-class agent; and seeing my disappointment at this information, he added slowly, laying down his pen, 'He is a very remarkable person.' Further questions elicited from him that Mr. Kurtz was at present in charge of a trading post, a very important one, in the true ivory-country, at 'the very bottom of there. Sends in as much ivory as all the others put together. . . .'

He began to write again. The sick man was too ill to groan. The flies buzzed in a great peace.

"Suddenly there was a growing murmur of voices and a great tramping of feet. A caravan had come in. A violent babble of uncouth sounds burst out on the other side of the planks. All the carriers were speaking together, and in the midst of the uproar the lamentable voice of the chief agent was heard 'giving it up' tearfully for the twentieth time that day. . . . He rose slowly. 'What a frightful row,' he said. He crossed the room gently to look at the sick man, and returning, said to me, 'He does not hear.' 'What! Dead?' I asked, startled. 'No, not yet,' he answered, with great composure. Then, alluding with a toss of the head to the tumult in the stationyard, 'When one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages—hate them to the death.' He remained thoughtful for a moment. 'When you see Mr. Kurtz,' he went on, 'tell him for me that everything here'—he glanced at the desk—'is very satisfactory. I don't like to write to him—with those messengers of ours you never know who may get hold of your letter—at that Central Station.' He stared at me for a moment with his mild, bulging eyes. 'Oh, he will go far, very far,' he began again. 'He will be a somebody in the Administration before long. They, above—the Council in Europe, you know—mean him to be.'

"He turned to his work. The noise outside had ceased, and presently in going out I stopped at the door. In the steady buzz of flies the homeward-bound agent was lying flushed and insensible; the other, bent over his books, was making correct entries of perfectly correct transactions; and fifty feet below the doorstep I could see the still tree-tops of the grove of death.

"Next day I left that station at last, with a caravan of sixty men, for a two-hundred-mile tramp.

"No use telling you much about that. Paths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat; and a solitude, a solitude, nobody, not a hut. The population had cleared out a long time ago. Well, if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to traveling on the road between Deal and Gravesend, catching the yokels right and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon. Only here the dwellings were gone, too. Still I passed through several abandoned villages. There's something pathetically childish in the ruins of grass walls. Day after day, with the stamp and shuffle of sixty pair of bare feet behind me, each pair under a sixty-lb. load. Camp, cook, sleep, strike camp, march. Now and then a carrier dead in harness, at rest in the long grass near the path, with an

empty water-gourd and his long staff lying by his side. A great silence around and above. Perhaps on some quiet night the tremor of far-off drums, sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild—and perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country. Once a white man in an unbuttoned uniform, camping on the path with an armed escort of lank Zanzibars, very hospitable and festive—not to say drunk. Was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep, unless the body of a middle-aged Negro, with a bullet-hole in the forehead, upon which I absolutely stumbled three miles farther on, may be considered as a permanent improvement. I had a white companion, too, not a bad chap, but rather too fleshy and with the exasperating habit of fainting on the hot hillsides, miles away from the least bit of shade and water. Annoying, you know, to hold your own coat like a parasol over a man's head while he is coming-to. I couldn't help asking him once what he meant by coming there at all. 'To make money, of course. What do you think?' he said, scornfully. Then he got fever, and had to be carried in a hammock slung under a pole. As he weighed sixteen stone I had no end of rows with the carriers. They jibbed, ran away, sneaked off with their loads in the night—quite a mutiny. So, one evening, I made a speech in English with gestures, not one of which was lost to the sixty pairs of eyes before me, and the next morning I started the hammock off in front all right. An hour afterwards I came upon the whole concern wrecked in a bush—man, hammock, groans, blankets, horrors. The heavy pole had skinned his poor nose. He was very anxious for me to kill somebody, but there wasn't the shadow of a carrier near. I remembered the old doctor, —'It would be interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals, on the spot.' I felt I was becoming scientifically interesting. However, all that is to no purpose. On the fifteenth day I came in sight of the big river again, and hobbled into the Central Station. It was on a back water surrounded by scrub and forest, with a pretty border of smelly mud on one side, and on the three others enclosed by a crazy fence of rushes. A neglected gap was all the gate it had, and the first glance at the place was enough to let you see the flabby devil was running that show. White men with long staves in their hands appeared languidly from amongst the buildings, strolling up to take a look at me, and then retired out of sight somewhere. One of them, a stout, excitable chap with black mustaches, informed me with great volubility and many digressions, as soon as I told him who I was, that my steamer was at the bottom of the river. I was thunderstruck. What, how, why? Oh, it was 'all right.' The 'manager himself' was there. All quite correct. 'Everybody had behaved splendidly! splendidly!'—'you must,' he said in agitation, 'go and see the general manager at once. He is waiting!'

"I did not see the real significance of that wreck at once. I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure—not at all. Certainly the affair was too stupid—when I think of it—to be altogether natural. Still. . . . But at the moment it presented itself simply as a confounded nuisance. The steamer was sunk. They had started two days before in a sudden hurry up the river with the manager on board, in charge of some volunteer skipper, and before they had been out three hours they tore the bottom out of her on stones, and she sank near the south bank. I asked myself what I was to do there, now my boat was lost. As a matter of fact, I had plenty to do in fishing my command out of the river. I had to set about it the very next day. That, and the repairs when I brought the pieces to the station, took some months.

"My first interview with the manager was curious. He did not ask me to sit down after my twenty-mile walk that morning. He was commonplace in complexion, in feature, in manners, and in voice. He was of middle size and of ordinary build. His eyes, of the usual blue, were perhaps remarkably cold, and he certainly could make his glance fall on one as trenchant and heavy as an ax. But even at these times the rest of his person seemed to disclaim the intention. Otherwise there was only an indefinable, faint expression of his lips, something stealthy—a smile—not a smile—I remember it, but I can't explain. It was unconscious, this smile was, though just after he had said something it got intensified for an instant. It came at the end of his speeches like a seal applied on the words to make the meaning of the commonest phrase appear absolutely inscrutable. He was a common trader, from his youth up employed in these parts—nothing more. He was obeyed, yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect. He inspired uneasiness. That was it! Uneasiness. Not a definite mistrust—just uneasiness —nothing more. You have no idea how effective such a . . . a . . . faculty can be. He had no genius for organizing, for initiative, or for order even. That was evident in such things as the deplorable state of the station. He had no learning, and no intelligence. His position had come to him—why? Perhaps because he was never ill. . . . He had served three terms of three years out there. . . . Because triumphant health in the general rout of constitutions is a kind of power in itself. When he went home on leave he rioted on a large scale—pompously. Jack ashore—with a difference—in externals only. This one could gather from his casual talk. He originated nothing, he could keep the routine going—that's all. But he was great. He was great by this little thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man. He never gave that secret away. Perhaps there was nothing within him. Such a suspicion made one pause—for out there there were no external checks. Once when various tropical diseases had laid low almost every 'agent' in the station, he was heard to say, 'Men who come out here

should have no entrails.' He sealed the utterance with that smile of his, as though it had been a door opening into a darkness he had in his keeping. You fancied you had seen things—but the seal was on. When annoyed at meal-times by the constant quarrels of the white men about precedence, he ordered an immense round table to be made, for which a special house had to be built. This was the station's mess-room. Where he sat was the first place—the rest were nowhere. One felt this to be his unalterable conviction. He was neither civil nor uncivil. He was quiet. He allowed his 'boy'—an overfed young Negro from the coast—to treat the white men, under his very eyes, with provoking insolence.

"He began to speak as soon as he saw me. I had been very long on the road. He could not wait. Had to start without me. The up-river stations had to be relieved. There had been so many delays already that he did not know who was dead and who was alive, and how they got on—and so on, and so on. He paid no attention to my explanations, and, playing with a stick of sealing-wax, repeated several times that the situation was 'very grave, very grave.' There were rumors that a very important station was in jeopardy, and its chief, Mr. Kurtz, was ill. Hoped it was not true. Mr. Kurtz was . . . I felt weary and irritable. Hang Kurtz, I thought. I interrupted him by saying I had heard of Mr. Kurtz on the coast. 'Ah! So they talk of him down there,' he murmured to himself. Then he began again, assuring me Mr. Kurtz was the best agent he had, an exceptional man, of the greatest importance to the Company; therefore I could understand his anxiety. He was, he said, 'very, very uneasy.' Certainly he fidgeted on his chair a good deal, exclaimed, 'Ah, Mr. Kurtz!' broke the stick of sealing-wax and seemed dumfounded by the accident. Next thing he wanted to know 'how long it would take to.' . . . I interrupted him again. Being hungry, you know, and kept on my feet too, I was getting savage. 'How can I tell?' I said. 'I haven't even seen the wreck yet—some months, no doubt.' All this talk seemed to me so futile. 'Some months,' he said. 'Well, let us say three months before we can make a start. Yes. That ought to do the affair.' I flung out of his hut (he lived all alone in a clay hut with a sort of veranda) muttering to myself my opinion of him. He was a chattering idiot. Afterwards I took it back when it was borne in upon me startlingly with what extreme nicety he had estimated the time requisite for the 'affair.'

"I went to work the next day, turning, so to speak, my back on that station. In that way only it seemed to me I could keep my hold on the redeeming facts of life. Still, one must look about sometimes; and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims be-

witched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse. By Jove! I've never seen anything so unreal in my life. And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion.

"Oh, these months! Well, never mind. Various things happened. One evening a grass shed full of calico, cotton prints, beads, and I don't know what else, burst into a blaze so suddenly that you would have thought the earth had opened to let an avenging fire consume all that trash. I was smoking my pipe quietly by my dismantled steamer, and saw them all cutting capers in the light, with their arms lifted high, when the stout man with mustaches came tearing down to the river, a tin pail in his hand, assured me that everybody was 'behaving splendidly, splendidly,' dipped about a quart of water and tore back again. I noticed there was a hole in the bottom of his pail.

"I strolled up. There was no hurry. You see the thing had gone off like a box of matches. It had been hopeless from the very first. The flame had leaped high, driven everybody back, lighted up everything—and collapsed. The shed was already a heap of embers glowing fiercely. A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself: afterwards he arose and went out—and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again. As I approached the glow from the dark I found myself at the back of two men, talking. I heard the name of Kurtz pronounced, then the words, 'take advantage of this unfortunate accident.' One of the men was the manager. I wished him a good evening. 'Did you ever see anything like it—eh? it is incredible,' he said, and walked off. The other man remained. He was a first-class agent, young, gentlemanly, a bit reserved, with a forked little beard and a hooked nose. He was stand-offish with the other agents, and they on their side said he was the manager's spy upon them. As to me, I had hardly ever spoken to him before. We got into talk, and by and by we strolled away from the hissing ruins. Then he asked me to his room, which was in the main building of the station. He struck a match, and I perceived that this young aristocrat had not only a silver-mounted dressing-case but also a whole candle all to himself. Just at that time the manager was the only man supposed to have any right to candles. Native mats covered the clay walls; a collection of spears, assegais, shields, knives was hung up in trophies. The business intrusted to this fellow was the making of bricks—so I had been informed; but there wasn't a fragment of a brick anywhere in the station, and he had been there more than a year—waiting. It seems he could

not make bricks without something, I don't know what—straw, maybe. Anyway, it could not be found there, and as it was not likely to be sent from Europe, it did not appear clear to me what he was waiting for. An act of special creation perhaps. However, they were all waiting—all the sixteen or twenty pilgrims of them—for something; and upon my word it did not seem an uncongenial occupation, from the way they took it, though the only thing that ever came to them was disease—as far as I could see. They beguiled the time by backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it, of course. It was as unreal as everything else—as the philanthropic pretense of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account,—but as to effectually lifting a little finger—oh, no. By heavens! there is something after all in the world allowing one man to steal a horse while another must not look at a halter. Steal a horse straight out. Very well. He has done it. Perhaps he can ride. But there is a way of looking at a halter that would provoke the most charitable of saints into a kick.

"I had no idea why he wanted to be sociable, but as we chatted in there it suddenly occurred to me the fellow was trying to get at something—in fact, pumping me. He alluded constantly to Europe, to the people I was supposed to know there—putting leading questions as to my acquaintances in the sepulchral city, and so on. His little eyes glittered like mica discs—with curiosity—though he tried to keep up a bit of superciliousness. At first I was astonished, but very soon I became awfully curious to see what he would find out from me. I couldn't possibly imagine what I had in me to make it worth his while. It was very pretty to see how he baffled himself, for in truth my body was full only of chills, and my head had nothing in it but that wretched steamboat business. It was evident he took me for a perfectly shameless prevaricator. At last he got angry, and, to conceal a movement of furious annoyance, he yawned. I rose. Then I noticed a small sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch. The background was somber—almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torch-light on the face was sinister.

"It arrested me, and he stood by civilly, holding an empty half-pint champagne bottle (medical comforts) with the candle stuck in it. To my question he said Mr. Kurtz had painted this—in this very station more than a year ago—while waiting for means to go to his trading-post. 'Tell me, pray,' said I, 'who is this Mr. Kurtz?'

"'The chief of the Inner Station,' he answered in a short tone, looking

away. 'Much obliged,' I said, laughing. 'And you are the brickmaker of the Central Station. Every one knows that.' He was silent for a while. 'He is a prodigy,' he said at last. 'He is an emissary of pity, and science, and progress, and devil knows what else. We want,' he began to declaim suddenly, 'for the guidance of the cause intrusted to us by Europe, so to speak, higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose.' 'Who says that?' I asked. 'Lots of them,' he replied. 'Some even write that; and so *he* comes here, a special being, as you ought to know.' 'Why ought I to know?' I interrupted, really surprised. He paid no attention. 'Yes. To-day he is chief of the best station, next year he will be assistant-manager, two years more and . . . but I daresay you know what he will be in two years' time. You are of the new gang—the gang of virtue. The same people who sent him specially also recommended you. Oh, don't say no. I've my own eyes to trust.' Light dawned upon me. My dear aunt's influential acquaintances were producing an unexpected effect upon that young man. I nearly burst into a laugh. 'Do you read the Company's confidential correspondence?' I asked. He hadn't a word to say. It was great fun. 'When Mr. Kurtz,' I continued, severely, 'is General Manager, you won't have the opportunity.'

"He blew the candle out suddenly, and we went outside. The moon had risen. Black figures strolled about listlessly, pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing; steam ascended in the moonlight, the beaten nigger groaned somewhere. 'What a row the brute makes!' said the indefatigable man with the mustaches, appearing near us. 'Serves him right. Transgression—punishment—bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That's the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future. I was just telling the manager. . . .' He noticed my companion, and became crestfallen all at once. 'Not in bed yet,' he said, with a kind of servile heartiness; 'it's so natural. Ha! Danger—agitation.' He vanished. I went on to the river-side, and the other followed me. I heard a scathing murmur at my ear, 'Heap of muffs—go to.' The pilgrims could be seen in knots gesticulating, discussing. Several had still their staves in their hands. I verily believe they took these sticks to bed with them. Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally in the moonlight, and through the dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart—its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life. The hurt nigger moaned feebly somewhere near by, and then fetched a deep sigh that made me mend my pace away from there. I felt a hand introducing itself under my arm. 'My dear sir,' said the fellow, 'I don't want to be misunderstood, and especially by you, who will see Mr. Kurtz long before I can have that pleasure. I wouldn't like him to get a false idea of my disposition. . . .'

"I let him run on, this papier-mâché Mephistopheles, and it seemed to me

that if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him, and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe. He, don't you see, had been planning to be assistant-manager by and by under the present man, and I could see that the coming of that Kurtz had upset them both not a little. He talked precipitately, and I did not try to stop him. I had my shoulders against the wreck of my steamer, hauled up on the slope like a carcass of some big river animal. The smell of mud, of primeval mud, by Jove! was in my nostrils, the high stillness of primeval forest was before my eyes; there were shiny patches on the black creek. The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver—over the rank grass, over the mud, upon the wall of matted vegetation standing higher than the wall of a temple, over the great river I could see through a somber gap glittering, glittering, as it flowed broadly by without a murmur. All this was great, expectant, mute, while the man jabbered about himself. I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. What were we who had strayed in here? Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us? I felt how big, how confoundedly big, was that thing that couldn't talk, and perhaps was deaf as well. What was in there? I could see a little ivory coming out from there, and I had heard Mr. Kurtz was in there. I had heard enough about it, too—God knows! Yet somehow it didn't bring any image with it—no more than if I had been told an angel or a fiend was in there. I believed it in the same way one of you might believe there are inhabitants in the planet Mars. I knew once a Scotch sailmaker who was certain, dead sure, there were people in Mars. If you asked him for some idea how they looked and behaved, he would get shy and mutter something about 'walking on all-fours.' If you as much as smiled, he would—though a man of sixty-four—offer to fight you. I would not have gone so far as to fight for Kurtz, but I went for him near enough to a lie. You know I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie, not because I am straighter than the rest of us, but simply because it appalls me. There is a taint of death, a flavor of mortality in lies—which is exactly what I hate and detest in the world—what I want to forget. It makes me miserable and sick, like biting something rotten would do. Temperament, I suppose. Well, I went near enough to it by letting the young fool there believe anything he liked to imagine as to my influence in Europe. I became in an instant as much of a pretense as the rest of the bewitched pilgrims. This simply because I had a notion it somehow would be of help to that Kurtz whom at the time I did not see—you understand. He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensa-

tion, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams. . . ."

He was silent for a while.

". . . No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence—that which makes its truth, its meaning —its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream —alone. . . ."

He paused again as if reflecting, then added—

"Of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know. . . ."

It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice. There was not a word from anybody. The others might have been asleep, but I was awake. I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clew to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river.

". . . Yes—I let him run on," Marlow began again, "and think what he pleased about the powers that were behind me. I did! And there was nothing behind me! There was nothing but that wretched, old, mangled steamboat I was leaning against, while he talked fluently about 'the necessity for every man to get on.' 'And when one comes out here, you conceive, it is not to gaze at the moon.' Mr. Kurtz was a 'universal genius,' but even a genius would find it easier to work with 'adequate tools—intelligent men.' He did not make bricks—why, there was a physical impossibility in the way—as I was well aware; and if he did secretarial work for the manager, it was because 'no sensible man rejects wantonly the confidence of his superiors.' Did I see it? I saw it. What more did I want? What I really wanted was rivets, by heaven! Rivets. To get on with the work—to stop the hole. Rivets I wanted. There were cases of them down at the coast—cases—piled up—burst—split! You kicked a loose rivet at every second step in that station yard on the hillside. Rivets had rolled into the grove of death. You could fill your pockets with rivets for the trouble of stooping down—and there wasn't one rivet to be found where it was wanted. We had plates that would do, but nothing to fasten them with. And every week the messenger, a lone negro, letter-bag on shoulder and staff in hand, left our station for the coast. And several times a week a coast caravan came in with trade goods—ghastly glazed calico that made you shudder only to look at it; glass beads, valued about a penny a quart, confounded spotted cotton handkerchiefs. And no rivets. Three carriers could have brought all that was wanted to set that steamboat afloat.

"He was becoming confidential now, but I fancy my unresponsive attitude must have exasperated him at last, for he judged it necessary to inform me he feared neither God nor devil, let alone any mere man. I said I could see that very well, but what I wanted was a certain quantity of rivets—and rivets were what really Mr. Kurtz wanted, if he had only known it. Now letters went to the coast every week. . . . 'My dear sir,' he cried, 'I write from dictation.' I demanded rivets. There was a way—for an intelligent man. He changed his manner; became very cold, and suddenly began to talk about a hippopotamus; wondered whether sleeping on board the steamer (I stuck to my salvage night and day) I wasn't disturbed. There was an old hippo that had the bad habit of getting out on the bank and roaming at night over the station grounds. The pilgrims used to turn out in a body and empty every rifle they could lay hands on at him. Some even had sat up o' nights for him. All this energy was wasted, though. 'That animal has a charmed life,' he said; 'but you can say this only of brutes in this country. No man—you apprehend me?—no man here bears a charmed life.' He stood there for a moment in the moonlight with his delicate hooked nose set a little askew, and his mica eyes glittering without a wink, then, with a curt good night, he strode off. I could see he was disturbed and considerably puzzled, which made me feel more hopeful than I had been for days. It was a great comfort to turn from that chap to my influential friend, the battered, twisted, ruined, tin-pot steamboat. I clambered on board. She rang under my feet like an empty Huntley & Palmer biscuit-tin kicked along a gutter; she was nothing so solid in make, and rather less pretty in shape, but I had expended enough hard work on her to make me love her. No influential friend would have served me better. She had given me a chance to come out a bit—to find out what I could do. No, I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don't like work—no man does—but I like what is in the work,—the chance to find yourself. Your own reality—for yourself, not for others—what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means.

"I was not surprised to see somebody sitting aft, on the deck, with his legs dangling over the mud. You see I rather chummed with the few mechanics there were in that station, whom the other pilgrims naturally despised—on account of their imperfect manners, I suppose. This was the foreman—a boiler-maker by trade—a good worker. He was a lank, bony, yellow-faced man, with big intense eyes. His aspect was worried, and his head was as bald as the palm of my hand; but his hair in falling seemed to have stuck to his chin, and had prospered in the new locality, for his beard hung down to his waist. He was a widower with six young children (he had left them in charge of a sister of his to come out there), and the passion of his life was

pigeon-flying. He was an enthusiast and a connoisseur. He would rave about pigeons. After work hours he used sometimes to come over from his hut for a talk about his children and his pigeons; at work, when he had to crawl in the mud under the bottom of the steamboat, he would tie up that beard of his in a kind of white serviette he brought for the purpose. It had loops to go over his ears. In the evening he could be seen squatted on the bank rinsing that wrapper in the creek with great care, then spreading it solemnly on a bush to dry.

"I slapped him on the back and shouted, 'We shall have rivets!' He scrambled to his feet exclaiming, 'No! Rivets!' as though he couldn't believe his ears. Then in a low voice, 'You . . . eh?' I don't know why we behaved like lunatics. I put my finger to the side of my nose and nodded mysteriously. 'Good for you!' he cried, snapped his fingers above his head, lifting one foot. I tried a jig. We capered on the iron deck. A frightful clatter came out of that hulk, and the virgin forest on the other bank of the creek sent it back in a thundering roll upon the sleeping station. It must have made some of the pilgrims sit up in their hovels. A dark figure obscured the lighted doorway of the manager's hut, vanished, then, a second or so after, the doorway itself vanished, too. We stopped, and the silence driven away by the stamping of our feet flowed back again from the recesses of the land. The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. And it moved not. A deadened burst of mighty splashes and snorts reached us from afar, as though an ichthyosaurus had been taking a bath of glitter in the great river. 'After all,' said the boiler-maker in a reasonable tone, 'why shouldn't we get the rivets?' Why not, indeed? I did not know of any reason why we shouldn't. 'They'll come in three weeks,' I said, confidently.

"But they didn't. Instead of rivets there came an invasion, an infliction, a visitation. It came in sections during the next three weeks, each section headed by a donkey carrying a white man in new clothes and tan shoes, bowing from that elevation right and left to the impressed pilgrims. A quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers trod on the heels of the donkeys; a lot of tents, campstools, tin boxes, white cases, brown bales would be shot down in the courtyard, and the air of mystery would deepen a little over the muddle of the station. Five such installments came, with their absurd air of disorderly flight with the loot of innumerable outfit shops and provision stores, that, one would think, they were lugging, after a raid, into the wilderness for equitable division. It was an inextricable mess of things decent in themselves but that human folly made look like the spoils of thieving.

"This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition, and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom of foresight or of serious intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe. Who paid the expenses of the noble enterprise I don't know; but the uncle of our manager was leader of that lot.

"In exterior he resembled a butcher in a poor neighborhood, and his eyes had a look of sleepy cunning. He carried his fat paunch with ostentation on his short legs, and during the time his gang infested the station spoke to no one but his nephew. You could see these two roaming about all day long with their heads close together in an everlasting confab.

"I had given up worrying myself about the rivets. One's capacity for that kind of folly is more limited than you would suppose. I said Hang!—and let things slide. I had plenty of time for meditation, and now and then I would give some thought to Kurtz. I wasn't very interested in him. No. Still, I was curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there."

II

ONE EVENING as I was lying flat on the deck of my steamboat, I heard voices approaching—and there were the nephew and the uncle strolling along the bank. I laid my head on my arm again, and had nearly lost myself in a doze, when somebody said in my ear, as it were: 'I am as harmless as a little child, but I don't like to be dictated to. Am I the manager—or am I not? I was ordered to send him there. It's incredible.' . . . I became aware that the two were standing on the shore alongside the forepart of the steamboat, just below my head. I did not move; it did not occur to me to move: I was sleepy. 'It *is* unpleasant,' grunted the uncle. 'He has asked the Administration to be sent there,' said the other, 'with the idea of showing what he could do; and I was instructed accordingly. Look at the influence that man must have. Is it not frightful?' They both agreed it was frightful, then made several bizarre remarks: 'Make rain and fine weather—one man—the Council—by the nose'—bits of absurd sentences that got the better of my drowsiness, so that I had pretty near the whole of my wits about me when the uncle said, 'The climate may do away with this difficulty for you. Is he alone there?' 'Yes,' answered the manager; 'he sent his assistant down the river with a note to me in these terms: "Clear this poor devil out of the country, and don't bother sending more of that sort. I had rather be alone than have the kind of men

you can dispose of with me." It was more than a year ago. Can you imagine such impudence!' 'Anything since then?' asked the other, hoarsely. 'Ivory,' jerked the nephew; 'lots of it—prime sort—lots—most annoying, from him.' 'And with that?' questioned the heavy rumble. 'Invoice,' was the reply fired out, so to speak. Then silence. They had been talking about Kurtz.

"I was broad awake by this time, but, lying perfectly at ease, remained still, having no inducement to change my position. 'How did that ivory come all this way?' growled the elder man, who seemed very vexed. The other explained that it had come with a fleet of canoes in charge of an English half-caste clerk Kurtz had with him; that Kurtz had apparently intended to return himself, the station being by that time bare of goods and stores, but after coming three hundred miles, had suddenly decided to go back, which he started to do alone in a small dugout with four paddlers, leaving the half-caste to continue down the river with the ivory. The two fellows there seemed astounded at anybody attempting such a thing. They were at a loss for an adequate motive. As to me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time. It was a distinct glimpse: the dugout, four paddling savages, and the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home—perhaps; setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards his empty and desolate station. I did not know the motive. Perhaps he was just simply a fine fellow who stuck to his work for its own sake. His name, you understand, had not been pronounced once. He was 'that man.' The half-caste, who, as far as I could see, had conducted a difficult trip with great prudence and pluck, was invariably alluded to as 'that scoundrel.' The 'scoundrel' had reported that the 'man' had been very ill—had recovered imperfectly. . . . The two below me moved away then a few paces, and strolled back and forth at some little distance. I heard: 'Military post—doctor—two hundred miles—quite alone now—unavoidable delays—nine months—no news—strange rumors.' They approached again, just as the manager was saying, 'No one, as far as I know, unless a species of wandering trader—a pestilential fellow, snapping ivory from the natives.' Who was it they were talking about now? I gathered in snatches that this was some man supposed to be in Kurtz's district, and of whom the manager did not approve. 'We will not be free from unfair competition till one of these fellows is hanged for an example,' he said. 'Certainly,' grunted the other; 'get him hanged! Why not? Anything—anything can be done in this country. That's what I say; nobody here, you understand, *here,* can endanger your position. And why? You stand the climate—you outlast them all. The danger is in Europe; but there before I left I took care to—' They moved off and whispered, then their voices rose again. 'The extraordinary series of delays is not my fault. I did my best.' The fat man sighed. 'Very sad.' 'And the pestiferous

absurdity of his talk,' continued the other; 'he bothered me enough when he was here. "Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a center for trade, of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing." Conceive you—that ass! And he wants to be manager! No, it's—' Here he got choked by excessive indignation, and I lifted my head the least bit. I was surprised to see how near they were—right under me. I could have spat upon their hats. They were looking on the ground, absorbed in thought. The manager was switching his leg with a slender twig: his sagacious relative lifted his head. 'You have been well since you came out this time?' he asked. The other gave a start. 'Who? I? Oh! Like a charm—like a charm. But the rest —oh, my goodness! All sick. They die so quick, too, that I haven't the time to send them out of the country—it's incredible!' 'H'm. Just so,' grunted the uncle. 'Ah! my boy, trust to this—I say, trust to this.' I saw him extend his short flipper of an arm for a gesture that took in the forest, the creek, the mud, the river,—seemed to beckon with a dishonoring flourish before the sunlit face of the land a treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart. It was so startling that I leaped to my feet and looked back at the edge of the forest, as though I had expected an answer of some sort to that black display of confidence. You know the foolish notions that come to one sometimes. The high stillness confronted these two figures with its ominous patience, waiting for the passing away of a fantastic invasion.

"They swore aloud together—out of sheer fright, I believe—then pretending not to know anything of my existence, turned back to the station. The sun was low; and leaning forward side by side, they seemed to be tugging painfully uphill their two ridiculous shadows of unequal length, that trailed behind them slowly over the tall grass without bending a single blade.

"In a few days the Eldorado Expedition went into the patient wilderness, that closed upon it as the sea closes over a diver. Long afterwards the news came that all the donkeys were dead. I know nothing as to the fate of the less valuable animals. They, no doubt, like the rest of us, found what they deserved. I did not inquire. I was then rather excited at the prospect of meeting Kurtz very soon. When I say very soon I mean it comparatively. It was just two months from the day we left the creek when we came to the bank below Kurtz's station.

"Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side

by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off forever from everything you had known once—somewhere—far away—in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it any more; I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out, when I shaved by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a look-out for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day's steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality—the reality, I tell you—fades. The inner truth is hidden—luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight-ropes for—what is it? half-a-crown a tumble—"

" 'Try to be civil, Marlow,' growled a voice, and I knew there was at least one listener awake besides myself.

"I beg your pardon. I forgot the heartache which makes up the rest of the price. And indeed what does the price matter, if the trick be well done? You do your tricks very well. And I didn't do badly either, since I managed not to sink that steamboat on my first trip. It's a wonder to me yet. Imagine a blindfolded man set to drive a van over a bad road. I sweated and shivered over that business considerably, I can tell you. After all, for a seaman, to scrape the bottom of the thing that's supposed to float all the time under his care is the unpardonable sin. No one may know of it, but you never forget the thump—eh? A blow on the very heart. You remember it, you dream of it, you wake up at night and think of it—years after—and go hot and cold all over. I don't pretend to say that steamboat floated all the time. More than once she had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows—cannibals—in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them. And, after all, they did not eat each other before my

face: they had brought along a provision of hippo-meat which went rotten, and made the mystery of the wilderness stink in my nostrils. Phoo! I can sniff it now. I had the manager on board and three or four pilgrims with their staves—all complete. Sometimes we came upon a station close by the bank, clinging to the skirts of the unknown, and the white men rushing out of a tumble-down hovel, with great gestures of joy and surprise and welcome, seemed very strange—had the appearance of being held there captive by a spell. The word ivory would ring in the air for a while—and on we went again into the silence, along empty reaches, round the still bends, between the high walls of our winding way, reverberating in hollow claps the ponderous beat of the stern-wheel. Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high; and at their foot, hugging the bank against the stream, crept the little begrimed steamboat, like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing, that feeling. After all, if you were small, the grimy beetle crawled on—which was just what you wanted it to do. Where the pilgrims imagined it crawled to I don't know. To some place where they expected to get something, I bet! For me it crawled towards Kurtz—exclusively; but when the steam-pipes started leaking we crawled very slow. The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell. The dawns were heralded by the descent of a chill stillness; the wood-cutters slept, their fires burned low; the snapping of a twig would make you start. We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were traveling in the night of first

ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign—and no memories.

"The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were— No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything—because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valor, rage—who can tell?—but truth—truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder—the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true stuff—with his own inborn strength. Principles won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags—rags that would fly off at the first good shake. No; you want a deliberate belief. An appeal to me in this fiendish row —is there? Very well; I hear; I admit, but I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced. Of course, a fool, what with sheer fright and fine sentiments, is always safe. Who's that grunting? You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no—I didn't. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, be hanged! I had no time. I had to mess about with whitelead and strips of woolen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steam-pipes—I tell you. I had to watch the steering, and circumvent those snags, and get the tinpot along by hook or by crook. There was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man. And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me, and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity—and he had filed teeth, too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed; and

what he knew was this—that should the water in that transparent thing disappear, the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry through the greatness of his thirst, and take a terrible vengeance. So he sweated and fired up and watched the glass fearfully (with an impromptu charm, made of rags, tied to his arm, and a piece of polished bone, as big as a watch, stuck flatways through his lower lip), while the wooden banks slipped past us slowly, the short noise was left behind, the interminable miles of silence—and we crept on, towards Kurtz. But the snags were thick, the water was treacherous and shallow, the boiler seemed indeed to have a sulky devil in it, and thus neither that fireman nor I had any time to peer into our creepy thoughts.

"Some fifty miles below the Inner Station we came upon a hut of reeds, an inclined and melancholy pole, with the unrecognizable tatters of what had been a flag of some sort flying from it, and a neatly stacked woodpile. This was unexpected. We came to the bank, and on the stack of firewood found a flat piece of board with some faded pencil-writing on it. When deciphered it said: 'Wood for you. Hurry up. Approach cautiously.' There was a signature, but it was illegible—not Kurtz—a much longer word. 'Hurry up.' Where? Up the river? 'Approach cautiously.' We had not done so. But the warning could not have been meant for the place where it could be only found after approach. Something was wrong above. But what—and how much? That was the question. We commented adversely upon the imbecility of that telegraphic style. The bush around said nothing, and would not let us look very far, either. A torn curtain of red twill hung in the doorway of the hut, and flapped sadly in our faces. The dwelling was dismantled; but we could see a white man had lived there not very long ago. There remained a rude table—a plank on two posts; a heap of rubbish reposed in a dark corner, and by the door I picked up a book. It had lost its covers, and the pages had been thumbed into a state of extremely dirty softness; but the back had been lovingly stitched afresh with white cotton thread, which looked clean yet. It was an extraordinary find. Its title was, *An Inquiry into some Points of Seamanship*, by a man Towser, Towson—some such name—Master in his Majesty's Navy. The matter looked dreary reading enough, with illustrative diagrams and repulsive tables of figures, and the copy was sixty years old. I handled this amazing antiquity with the greatest possible tenderness, lest it should dissolve in my hands. Within, Towson or Towser was inquiring earnestly into the breaking strain of ships' chains and tackle, and other such matters. Not a very enthralling book; but at the first glance you could see there a singleness of intention, an honest concern for the right way of going to work, which made these humble pages, thought out so many years ago, luminous with another than a professional light. The simple old sailor, with his talk of chains and purchases, made me forget the

jungle and the pilgrims in a delicious sensation of having come upon something unmistakably real. Such a book being there was wonderful enough; but still more astounding were the notes penciled in the margin, and plainly referring to the text. I couldn't believe my eyes! They were in cipher! Yes, it looked like cipher. Fancy a man lugging with him a book of that description into this nowhere and studying it—and making notes—in cipher at that! It was an extravagant mystery.

"I had been dimly aware for some time of a worrying noise, and when I lifted my eyes I saw the wood pile was gone, and the manager, aided by all the pilgrims, was shouting at me from the river-side. I slipped the book into my pocket. I assure you to leave off reading was like tearing myself away from the shelter of an old and solid friendship.

"I started the lame engine ahead. 'It must be this miserable trader—this intruder,' exclaimed the manager, looking back malevolently at the place we had left. 'He must be English,' I said. 'It will not save him from getting into trouble if he is not careful,' muttered the manager darkly. I observed with assumed innocence that no man was safe from trouble in this world.

"The current was more rapid now, the steamer seemed at her last gasp, the stern-wheel flopped languidly, and I caught myself listening on tiptoe for the next beat of the boat, for in sober truth I expected the wretched thing to give up every moment. It was like watching the last flickers of a life. But still we crawled. Sometimes I would pick out a tree a little way ahead to measure our progress towards Kurtz by, but I lost it invariably before we got abreast. To keep the eyes so long on one thing was too much for human patience. The manager displayed a beautiful resignation. I fretted and fumed and took to arguing with myself whether or no I would talk openly with Kurtz; but before I could come to any conclusion it occurred to me that my speech or my silence, indeed any action of mine, would be a mere futility. What did it matter what any one knew or ignored? What did it matter who was manager? One gets sometimes such a flash of insight. The essentials of this affair lay deep under the surface, beyond my reach, and beyond my power of meddling.

"Towards the evening of the second day we judged ourselves about eight miles from Kurtz's station. I wanted to push on; but the manager looked grave, and told me the navigation up there was so dangerous that it would be advisable, the sun being very low already, to wait where we were till next morning. Moreover, he pointed out that if the warning to approach cautiously were to be followed, we must approach in daylight—not at dusk, or in the dark. This was sensible enough. Eight miles meant nearly three hours' steaming for us, and I could also see suspicious ripples at the upper end of the reach. Nevertheless, I was annoyed beyond expression at the de-

lay, and most unreasonably, too, since one night more could not matter much after so many months. As we had plenty of wood, and caution was the word, I brought up in the middle of the stream. The reach was narrow, straight, with high sides like a railway cutting. The dusk came gliding into it long before the sun had set. The current ran smooth and swift, but a dumb immobility sat on the banks. The living trees, lashed together by the creepers and every living bush of the undergrowth, might have been changed into stone, even to the slenderest twig, to the lightest leaf. It was not sleep—it seemed unnatural, like a state of trance. Not the faintest sound of any kind could be heard. You looked on amazed, and began to suspect yourself of being deaf—then the night came suddenly, and struck you blind as well. About three in the morning some large fish leaped, and the loud splash made me jump as though a gun had been fired. When the sun rose there was a white fog, very warm and clammy, and more blinding than the night. It did not shift or drive; it was just there, standing all round you like something solid. At eight or nine, perhaps, it lifted as a shutter lifts. We had a glimpse of the towering multitude of trees, of the immense matted jungle, with the blazing little ball of the sun hanging over it—all perfectly still—and then the white shutter came down again, smoothly, as if sliding in greased grooves. I ordered the chain, which we had begun to heave in, to be paid out again. Before it stopped running with a muffled rattle, a cry, a very loud cry, as of infinite desolation, soared slowly in the opaque air. It ceased. A complaining clamor, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears. The sheer unexpectedness of it made my hair stir under my cap. I don't know how it struck the others: to me it seemed as though the mist itself had screamed, so suddenly, and apparently from all sides at once, did this tumultuous and mournful uproar arise. It culminated in a hurried outbreak of almost intolerably excessive shrieking, which stopped short, leaving us stiffened in a variety of silly attitudes, and obstinately listening to the nearly as appalling and excessive silence. 'Good God! What is the meaning—' stammered at my elbow one of the pilgrims,—a little fat man, with sandy hair and red whiskers, who wore side-spring boots, and pink pajamas tucked into his socks. Two others remained open-mouthed a whole minute, then dashed into the little cabin, to rush out incontinently and stand darting scared glances, with Winchesters at 'ready' in their hands. What we could see was just the steamer we were on, her outlines blurred as though she had been on the point of dissolving, and a misty strip of water, perhaps two feet broad, around her—and that was all. The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned. Just nowhere. Gone, disappeared; swept off without leaving a whisper or a shadow behind.

"I went forward, and ordered the chain to be hauled in short, so as to be

ready to trip the anchor and move the steamboat at once if necessary. 'Will they attack?' whispered an awed voice 'We will be all butchered in this fog,' murmured another. The faces twitched with the strain, the hands trembled slightly, the eyes forgot to wink. It was very curious to see the contrast of expressions of the white men and of the black fellows of our crew, who were as much strangers to that part of the river as we, though their homes were only eight hundred miles away. The whites, of course, greatly discomposed, had besides a curious look of being painfully shocked by such an outrageous row. The others had an alert, naturally interested expression; but their faces were essentially quiet, even those of the one or two who grinned as they hauled at the chain. Several exchanged short, grunting phrases, which seemed to settle the matter to their satisfaction. Their headman, a young, broad-chested black, severely draped in dark-blue fringed cloths, with fierce nostrils and his hair all done up artfully in oily ringlets, stood near me. 'Aha!' I said, just for good fellowship's sake. 'Catch 'em,' he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth—'catch 'im. Give 'im to us.' 'To you, eh?' I asked; 'what would you do with them?' 'Eat 'im!' he said, curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. I would no doubt have been properly horrified, had it not occurred to me that he and his chaps must be very hungry: that they must have been growing increasingly hungry for at least this month past. They had been engaged for six months (I don't think a single one of them had any clear idea of time, as we at the end of countless ages have. They still belonged to the beginnings of time—had no inherited experience to teach them as it were), and of course, as long as there was a piece of paper written over in accordance with some farcical law or other made down the river, it didn't enter anybody's head to trouble how they would live. Certainly they had brought with them some rotten hippo-meat, which couldn't have lasted very long, anyway, even if the pilgrims hadn't, in the midst of a shocking hullabaloo, thrown a considerable quantity of it overboard. It looked like a high-handed proceeding; but it was really a case of legitimate self-defense. You can't breathe dead hippo waking, sleeping, and eating, and at the same time keep your precarious grip on existence. Besides that, they had given them every week three pieces of brass wire, each about nine inches long; and the theory was they were to buy their provisions with that currency in river-side villages. You can see how *that* worked. There were either no villages, or the people were hostile, or the director, who like the rest of us fed out of tins, with an occasional old he-goat thrown in, didn't want to stop the steamer for some more or less recondite reason. So, unless they swallowed the wire itself, or made loops of it to snare the fishes with, I don't see what good their extravagant salary could

be to them. I must say it was paid with a regularity worthy of a large and honorable trading company. For the rest, the only thing to eat—though it didn't look eatable in the least—I saw in their possession was a few lumps of some stuff like half-cooked dough, of a dirty lavender color, they kept wrapped in leaves, and now and then swallowed a piece of, but so small that it seemed done more for the looks of the thing than for any serious purpose of sustenance. Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us—they were thirty to five—and have a good tuck-in for once, amazes me now when I think of it. They were big powerful men, with not much capacity to weigh the consequences, with courage, with strength, even yet, though their skins were no longer glossy and their muscles no longer hard. And I saw that something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there. I looked at them with a swift quickening of interest—not because it occurred to me I might be eaten by them before very long, though I own to you that just then I perceived—in a new light, as it were—how unwholesome the pilgrims looked, and I hoped, yes, I positively hoped, that my aspect was not so—what shall I say?—so—unappetizing: a touch of fantastic vanity which fitted well with the dream-sensation that pervaded all my days at that time. Perhaps I had a little fever, too. One can't live with one's finger everlastingly on one's pulse. I had often 'a little fever,' or a little touch of other things—the playful paw-strokes of the wilderness, the preliminary trifling before the more serious onslaught which came in due course. Yes; I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity. Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear—or some kind of primitive honor? No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is; and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. Don't you know the devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its somber and brooding ferocity? Well, I do. It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonor, and the perdition of one's soul—than this kind of prolonged hunger. Sad, but true. And these chaps, too, had no earthly reason for any kind of scruple. Restraint! I would just as soon have expected restraint from a hyena prowling amongst the corpses of a battlefield. But there was the fact facing me—the fact dazzling, to be seen, like the foam on the depths of the sea, like a ripple on an unfathomable enigma, a mystery greater—when I thought of it—than the curious, inexplicable note of desperate grief in this savage clamor that had swept by us on the river-bank, behind the blind whiteness of the fog.

"Two pilgrims were quarreling in hurried whispers as to which bank. 'Left.' 'No, no; how can you? Right, right, of course.' 'It is very serious,' said the manager's voice behind me; 'I would be desolated if anything should happen to Mr. Kurtz before we came up.' I looked at him, and had not the slightest doubt he was sincere. He was just the kind of man who would wish to preserve appearances. That was his restraint. But when he muttered something about going on at once, I did not even take the trouble to answer him. I knew, and he knew, that it was impossible. Were we to let go our hold of the bottom, we would be absolutely in the air—in space. We wouldn't be able to tell where we were going to—whether up or down stream, or across—till we fetched against one bank or the other,—and then we wouldn't know at first which it was. Of course I made no move. I had no mind for a smash-up. You couldn't imagine a more deadly place for a shipwreck. Whether drowned at once or not, we were sure to perish speedily in one way or another. 'I authorize you to take all the risks,' he said, after a short silence. 'I refuse to take any,' I said, shortly; which was just the answer he expected, though its tone might have surprised him. 'Well, I must defer to your judgment. You are captain,' he said, with marked civility. I turned my shoulder to him in sign of my appreciation, and looked into the fog. How long would it last? It was the most hopeless look-out. The approach to this Kurtz grubbing for ivory in the wretched bush was beset by as many dangers as though he had been an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle. 'Will they attack, do you think?' asked the manager, in a confidential tone.

"I did not think they would attack, for several obvious reasons. The thick fog was one. If they left the bank in their canoes they would get lost in it, as we would be if we attempted to move. Still, I had also judged the jungle of both banks quite impenetrable—and yet eyes were in it, eyes that had seen us. The river-side bushes were certainly very thick; but the undergrowth behind was evidently penetrable. However, during the short lift I had seen no canoes anywhere in the reach—certainly not abreast of the steamer. But what made the idea of attack inconceivable to me was the nature of the noise—of the cries we had heard. They had not the fierce character boding immediate hostile intention. Unexpected, wild, and violent as they had been, they had given me an irresistible impression of sorrow. The glimpse of the steamboat had for some reason filled those savages with unrestrained grief. The danger, if any, I expounded, was from our proximity to a great human passion let loose. Even extreme grief may ultimately vent itself in violence—but more generally takes the form of apathy. . . .

"You should have seen the pilgrims stare! They had no heart to grin, or even to revile me: but I believe they thought me gone mad—with fright,

maybe. I delivered a regular lecture. My dear boys, it was no good bothering. Keep a look-out? Well, you may guess I watched the fog for the signs of lifting as a cat watches a mouse; but for anything else our eyes were of no more use to us than if we had been buried miles deep in a heap of cotton-wool. It felt like it, too—choking, warm, stifling. Besides, all I said, though it sounded extravagant, was absolutely true to fact. What we afterwards alluded to as an attack was really an attempt at repulse. The action was very far from being aggressive—it was not even defensive, in the usual sense: it was undertaken under the stress of desperation, and in its essence was purely protective.

"It developed itself, I should say, two hours after the fog lifted, and its commencement was at a spot, roughly speaking, about a mile and a half below Kurtz's station. We had just floundered and flopped round a bend, when I saw an islet, a mere grassy hummock of bright green, in the middle of the stream. It was the only thing of the kind; but as we opened the reach more, I perceived it was the head of a long sandbank, or rather of a chain of shallow patches stretching down the middle of the river. They were discolored, just awash, and the whole lot was seen just under the water, exactly as a man's backbone is seen running down the middle of his back under the skin. Now, as far as I did see, I could go to the right or to the left of this. I didn't know either channel, of course. The banks looked pretty well alike, the depth appeared the same; but as I had been informed the station was on the west side, I naturally headed for the western passage.

"No sooner had we fairly entered it than I became aware it was much narrower than I had supposed. To the left of us there was the long uninterrupted shoal, and to the right a high, steep bank heavily overgrown with bushes. Above the bush the trees stood in serried ranks. The twigs overhung the current thickly, and from distance to distance a large limb of some tree projected rigidly over the stream. It was then well on in the afternoon, the face of the forest was gloomy, and a broad strip of shadow had already fallen on the water. In this shadow we steamed up—very slowly, as you may imagine. I sheered her well inshore—the water being deepest near the bank, as the sounding-pole informed me.

"One of my hungry and forbearing friends was sounding in the bows just below me. This steamboat was exactly like a decked scow. On the deck, there were two little teak-wood houses, with doors and windows. The boiler was in the fore-end, and the machinery right astern. Over the whole there was a light roof, supported on stanchions. The funnel projected through that roof, and in front of the funnel a small cabin built of light planks served for a pilot-house. It contained a couch, two camp-stools, a loaded Martini-Henry leaning in one corner, a tiny table, and the steering-wheel.

It had a wide door in front and a broad shutter at each side. All these were always thrown open, of course. I spent my days perched up there on the extreme fore-end of that roof, before the door. At night I slept, or tried to, on the couch. An athletic black belonging to some coast tribe, and educated by my poor predecessor, was the helmsman. He sported a pair of brass earrings, wore a blue cloth wrapper from the waist to the ankles, and thought all the world of himself. He was the most unstable kind of fool I had ever seen. He steered with no end of a swagger while you were by; but if he lost sight of you, he became instantly the prey of an abject funk, and would let that cripple of a steamboat get the upper hand of him in a minute.

"I was looking down at the sounding-pole, and feeling much annoyed to see at each try a little more of it stick out of that river, when I saw my poleman give up the business suddenly, and stretch himself flat on the deck, without even taking the trouble to haul his pole in. He kept hold on it though, and it trailed in the water. At the same time the fireman, whom I could also see below me, sat down abruptly before his furnace and ducked his head. I was amazed. Then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about —thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot-house. All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet—perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at! I stepped in quickly to close the shutter on the land-side. That fool-helmsman, his hands on the spokes, was lifting his knees high, stamping his feet, champing his mouth, like a reined-in horse. Confound him! And we were staggering within ten feet of the bank. I had to lean right out to swing the heavy shutter, and I saw a face amongst the leaves on the level with my own, looking at me very fierce and steady; and then suddenly, as though a veil had been removed from my eyes, I made out, deep in the tangled gloom, naked breasts, arms, legs, glaring eyes,—the bush was swarming with human limbs in movement, glistening, of bronze color. The twigs shook, swayed, and rustled, the arrows flew out of them, and then the shutter came to. 'Steer her straight,' I said to the helmsman. He held his head rigid, face forward; but his eyes rolled, he kept on lifting and setting down his feet gently, his mouth foamed a little. 'Keep quiet!' I said in a fury. I might just as well have ordered a tree not to sway in the wind. I darted out. Below me there was a great scuffle of feet on the iron deck; confused exclamations; a voice screamed, 'Can you turn back?' I caught sight of a V-shaped ripple on the water ahead. What? Another snag! A fusillade burst out under my feet. The pilgrims had opened with their Winchesters, and were simply squirting lead into that bush. A

deuce of a lot of smoke came up and drove slowly forward. I swore at it. Now I couldn't see the ripple or the snag either. I stood in the doorway, peering, and the arrows came in swarms. They might have been poisoned, but they looked as though they wouldn't kill a cat. The bush began to howl. Our wood-cutters raised a warlike whoop; the report of a rifle just at my back deafened me. I glanced over my shoulder, and the pilothouse was yet full of noise and smoke when I made a dash at the wheel. The fool-nigger had dropped everything, to throw the shutter open and let off that Martini-Henry. He stood before the wide opening, glaring, and I yelled at him to come back, while I straightened the sudden twist out of that steamboat. There was no room to turn even if I had wanted to, the snag was somewhere very near ahead in that confounded smoke, there was no time to lose, so I just crowded her into the bank—right into the bank, where I knew the water was deep.

"We tore slowly along the overhanging bushes in a whirl of broken twigs and flying leaves. The fusillade below stopped short, as I had foreseen it would when the squirts got empty. I threw my head back to a glinting whizz that traversed the pilot-house, in at one shutter-hole and out at the other. Looking past that mad helmsman, who was shaking the empty rifle and yelling at the shore, I saw vague forms of men running bent double, leaping, gliding, distinct, incomplete, evanescent. Something big appeared in the air before the shutter, the rifle went overboard, and the man stepped back swiftly, looked at me over his shoulder in an extraordinary, profound, familiar manner, and fell upon my feet. The side of his head hit the wheel twice, and the end of what appeared a long cane clattered round and knocked over a little camp-stool. It looked as though after wrenching that thing from somebody ashore he had lost his balance in the effort. The thin smoke had blown away, we were clear of the snag, and looking ahead I could see that in another hundred yards or so I would be free to sheer off, away from the bank; but my feet felt so very warm and wet that I had to look down. The man had rolled on his back and stared straight up at me; both his hands clutched that cane. It was the shaft of a spear that, either thrown or lunged through the opening, had caught him in the side just below the ribs; the blade had gone in out of sight, after making a frightful gash; my shoes were full; a pool of blood lay very still, gleaming dark-red under the wheel; his eyes shone with an amazing luster. The fusillade burst out again. He looked at me anxiously, gripping the spear like something precious, with an air of being afraid I would try to take it away from him. I had to make an effort to free my eyes from his gaze and attend to steering. With one hand I felt above my head for the line of the steam whistle, and jerked out screech after screech hurriedly. The tumult of angry and war-

like yells was checked instantly, and then from the depths of the woods went out such a tremulous and prolonged wail of mournful fear and utter despair as may be imagined to follow the flight of the last hope from the earth. There was a great commotion in the bush; the shower of arrows stopped, a few dropping shots rang out sharply—then silence, in which the languid beat of the stern-wheel came plainly to my ears. I put the helm hard a-starboard at the moment when the pilgrim in pink pajamas, very hot and agitated, appeared in the doorway. 'The manager sends me—' he began in an official tone, and stopped short. 'Good God!' he said, glaring at the wounded man.

"We two whites stood over him, and his lustrous and inquiring glance enveloped us both. I declare it looked as though he would presently put to us some question in an understandable language; but he died without uttering a sound, without moving a limb, without twitching a muscle. Only in the very last moment, as though in response to some sign we could not see, to some whisper we could not hear, he frowned heavily, and that frown gave to his black death-mask an inconceivably somber, brooding, and menacing expression. The luster of inquiring glance faded swiftly into vacant glassiness. 'Can you steer?' I asked the agent eagerly. He looked very dubious; but I made a grab at his arm, and he understood at once I meant him to steer whether or no. To tell you the truth, I was morbidly anxious to change my shoes and socks. 'He is dead,' murmured the fellow, immensely impressed. 'No doubt about it,' said I, tugging like mad at the shoe-laces. 'And by the way, I suppose Mr. Kurtz is dead as well by this time.'

"For the moment that was the dominant thought. There was a sense of extreme disappointment, as though I had found out I had been striving after something altogether without a substance. I couldn't have been more disgusted if I had traveled all this way for the sole purpose of talking with Mr. Kurtz. Talking with . . . I flung one shoe overboard, and became aware that that was exactly what I had been looking forward to—a talk with Kurtz. I made the strange discovery that I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing. I didn't say to myself, 'Now I will never see him,' or 'Now I will never shake him by the hand,' but, 'Now I will never hear him.' The man presented himself as a voice. Not of course that I did not connect him with some sort of action. Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together? That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out preëminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating

stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.

"The other shoe went flying unto the devil-god of that river. I thought, by Jove! it's all over. We are too late; he has vanished—the gift has vanished, by means of some spear, arrow, or club. I will never hear that chap speak after all,—and my sorrow had a startling extravagance of emotion, even such as I had noticed in the howling sorrow of these savages in the bush. I couldn't have felt more lonely desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had missed my destiny in life. . . . Why do you sigh in this beastly way, somebody? Absurd? Well, absurd. Good Lord! mustn't a man ever—Here, give me some tobacco." . . .

There was a pause of profound stillness, then a match flared, and Marlow's lean face appeared, worn, hollow, with downward folds and drooped eyelids, with an aspect of concentrated attention; and as he took vigorous draws at his pipe, it seemed to retreat and advance out of the night in the regular flicker of the tiny flame. The match went out.

"Absurd!" he cried. "This is the worst of trying to tell. . . . Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses, like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal—you hear—normal from year's end to year's end. And you say, Absurd! Absurd be—exploded! Absurd! My dear boys, what can you expect from a man who out of sheer nervousness had just flung overboard a pair of new shoes! Now I think of it, it is amazing I did not shed tears. I am, upon the whole, proud of my fortitude. I was cut to the quick at the idea of having lost the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz. Of course I was wrong. The privilege was waiting for me. Oh, yes, I heard more than enough. And I was right, too. A voice. He was very little more than a voice. And I heard—him—it—this voice—other voices—all of them were so little more than voices—and the memory of that time itself lingers around me, impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense. Voices, voices—even the girl herself—now—"

He was silent for a long time.

"I laid the ghost of his gifts at last with a lie," he began, suddenly. "Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it—completely. They—the women I mean—are out of it—should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it. You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr. Kurtz saying, 'My Intended.' You would have perceived directly then how completely she was out of it. And the lofty frontal bone of Mr. Kurtz! They say the hair goes on growing sometimes, but this—ah—specimen, was impressively bald.

The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball —an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and—lo!—he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favorite. Ivory? I should think so. Heaps of it, stacks of it. The old mud shanty was bursting with it. You would think there was not a single tusk left either above or below the ground in the whole country. 'Mostly fossil,' the manager had remarked, disparagingly. It was no more fossil than I am; but they call it fossil when it is dug up. It appears these niggers do bury the tusks sometimes—but evidently they couldn't bury this parcel deep enough to save the gifted Mr. Kurtz from his fate. We filled the steamboat with it, and had to pile a lot on the deck. Thus he could see and enjoy as long as he could see, because the appreciation of this favor had remained with him to the last. You should have heard him say, 'My ivory.' Oh, yes, I heard him. 'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my—' everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places. Everything belonged to him—but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own. That was the reflection that made you creepy all over. It was impossible—it was not good for one either—trying to imagine. He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land—I mean literally. You can't understand. How could you? —with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbors ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums—how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammeled feet may take him into by the way of solitude—utter solitude without a policeman—by the way of silence—utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbor can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness. Of course you may be too much of a fool to go wrong—too dull even to know you are being assaulted by the powers of darkness. I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with the devil: the fool is too much of a fool, or the devil too much of a devil—I don't know which. Or you may be such a thunderingly exalted creature as to be altogether deaf and blind to anything but heavenly sights and sounds. Then the earth for you is only a standing place—and whether to be like this is your loss or your gain I won't pretend to say. But most of us are neither one nor the other. The earth for us is a place to live in, where we must put

up with sights, with sounds, with smells, too, by Jove!—breathe dead hippo, so to speak, and not be contaminated. And there, don't you see? your strength comes in, the faith in your ability for the digging of unostentatious holes to bury the stuff in—your power of devotion, not to yourself, but to an obscure, back-breaking business. And that's difficult enough. Mind, I am not trying to excuse or even explain—I am trying to account to myself for—for—Mr. Kurtz—for the shade of Mr. Kurtz. This initiated wraith from the back of Nowhere honored me with its amazing confidence before it vanished altogether. This was because it could speak English to me. The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and—as he was good enough to say himself—his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz; and by and by I learned that, most appropriately, the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs had intrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance. And he had written it, too. I've seen it. I've read it. It was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high-strung, I think. Seventeen pages of close writing he had found time for! But this must have been before his—let us say—nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which—as far as I reluctantly gathered from what I heard at various times—were offered up to him—do you understand?—to Mr. Kurtz himself. But it was a beautiful piece of writing. The opening paragraph, however, in the light of later information, strikes me now as ominous. He began with the argument that we whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings—we approach them with the might as of a deity,' and so on, and so on. 'By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded,' etc. etc. From that point he soared and took me with him. The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember, you know. It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence—of words—of burning noble words. There were no practical hints to interrupt the magic current of phrases, unless a kind of note at the foot of the last page, scrawled evidently much later, in an unsteady hand, may be regarded as the exposition of a method. It was very simple, and at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!' The curious part was that he had apparently forgotten all about the valuable postscriptum, because, later on, when he in a sense came to himself, he repeatedly entreated me to take good care of 'my pamphlet' (he called it),

as it was sure to have in the future a good influence upon his career. I had full information about all these things, and, besides, as it turned out, I was to have the care of his memory. I've done enough for it to give me the indisputable right to lay it, if I choose, for an everlasting rest in the dustbin of progress, amongst all the sweepings and, figuratively speaking, all the dead cats of civilization. But then, you see, I can't choose. He won't be forgotten. Whatever he was, he was not common. He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honor; he could also fill the small souls of the pilgrims with bitter misgivings: he had one devoted friend at least, and he had conquered one soul in the world that was neither rudimentary nor tainted with self-seeking. No; I can't forget him, though I am not prepared to affirm the fellow was exactly worth the life we lost in getting to him. I missed my late helmsman awfully, —I missed him even while his body was still lying in the pilot-house. Perhaps you will think it passing strange this regret for a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back—a help—an instrument. It was a kind of partnership. He steered for me—I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created, of which I only became aware when it was suddenly broken. And the intimate profundity of that look he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory—like a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment.

"Poor fool! If he had only left that shutter alone. He had no restraint, no restraint—just like Kurtz—a tree swayed by the wind. As soon as I had put on a dry pair of slippers, I dragged him out, after first jerking the spear out of his side, which operation I confess I performed with my eyes shut tight. His heels leaped together over the little door-step; his shoulders were pressed to my breast; I hugged him from behind desperately. Oh! he was heavy, heavy; heavier than any man on earth, I should imagine. Then without more ado I tipped him overboard. The current snatched him as though he had been a wisp of grass, and I saw the body roll over twice before I lost sight of it forever. All the pilgrims and the manager were then congregated on the awning-deck about the pilot-house, chattering at each other like a flock of excited magpies, and there was a scandalized murmur at my heartless promptitude. What they wanted to keep that body hanging about for I can't guess. Embalm it, maybe. But I had also heard another, and a very ominous, murmur on the deck below. My friends the wood-cutters were likewise scandalized, and with a better show of reason—though I admit that the reason itself was quite inadmissible. Oh, quite! I had made up my mind that if my late helmsman was to be eaten, the fishes alone should have him. He had been a very second-rate helmsman while

alive, but now he was dead he might have become a first-class temptation, and possibly cause some startling trouble. Besides, I was anxious to take the wheel, the man in pink pajamas showing himself a hopeless duffer at the business.

"This I did directly the simple funeral was over. We were going half-speed, keeping right in the middle of the stream, and I listened to the talk about me. They had given up Kurtz, they had given up the station; Kurtz was dead, and the station had been burnt—and so on—and so on. The red-haired pilgrim was beside himself with the thought that at least this poor Kurtz had been properly avenged. 'Say! We must have made a glorious slaughter of them in the bush. Eh? What do you think? Say?' He positively danced, the bloodthirsty little gingery beggar. And he had nearly fainted when he saw the wounded man! I could not help saying, 'You made a glorious lot of smoke, anyhow.' I had seen, from the way the tops of the bushes rustled and flew, that almost all the shots had gone too high. You can't hit anything unless you take aim and fire from the shoulder; but these chaps fired from the hip with their eyes shut. The retreat, I maintained—and I was right—was caused by the screeching of the steam-whistle. Upon this they forgot Kurtz, and began to howl at me with indignant protests.

"The manager stood by the wheel murmuring confidentially about the necessity of getting well away down the river before dark at all events, when I saw in the distance a clearing on the river-side and the outlines of some sort of building. 'What's this?' I asked. He clapped his hands in wonder. 'The station!' he cried. I edged in at once, still going half-speed.

"Through my glasses I saw the slope of a hill interspersed with rare trees and perfectly free from undergrowth. A long decaying building on the summit was half buried in the high grass; the large holes in the peaked roof gaped black from afar; the jungle and the woods made a background. There was no enclosure or fence of any kind; but there had been one apparently, for near the house half-a-dozen slim posts remained in a row, roughly trimmed, and with their upper ends ornamented with round carved balls. The rails, or whatever there had been between, had disappeared. Of course the forest surrounded all that. The river-bank was clear, and on the water-side I saw a white man under a hat like a cartwheel beckoning persistently with his whole arm. Examining the edge of the forest above and below, I was almost certain I could see movements—human forms gliding here and there. I steamed past prudently, then stopped the engines and let her drift down. The man on the shore began to shout, urging us to land. 'We have been attacked,' screamed the manager. 'I know—I know. It's all right,' yelled back the other, as cheerful as you please. 'Come along. It's all right. I am glad.'

"His aspect reminded me of something I had seen—something funny I

had seen somewhere. As I maneuvered to get alongside, I was asking myself, 'What does this fellow look like?' Suddenly I got it. He looked like a harlequin. His clothes had been made of some stuff that was brown holland probably, but it was covered with patches all over, with bright patches, blue, red and yellow,—patches on the back, patches on the front, patches on elbows, on knees; colored binding around his jacket, scarlet edging at the bottom of his trousers; and the sunshine made him look extremely gay and wonderfully neat withal, because you could see how beautifully all this patching had been done. A beardless, boyish face, very fair, no features to speak of, nose peeling, little blue eyes, smiles and frowns chasing each other over that open countenance like sunshine and shadow on a wind-swept plain. 'Look out, captain!' he cried; 'there's a snag lodged in her last night.' 'What! Another snag?' I confess I swore shamefully. I had nearly holed my cripple, to finish off that charming trip. The harlequin on the bank turned his little pug-nose up to me. 'You English?' he asked, all smiles. 'Are you?' I shouted from the wheel. The smiles vanished, and he shook his head as if sorry for my disappointment. Then he brightened up. 'Never mind!' he cried, encouragingly. 'Are we in time?' I asked. 'He is up there,' he replied, with a toss of the head up the hill, and becoming gloomy all of a sudden. His face was like the autumn sky, overcast one moment and bright the next.

"When the manager, escorted by the pilgrims, all of them armed to the teeth, had gone to the house this chap came on board. 'I say, I don't like this. These natives are in the bush,' I said. He assured me earnestly it was all right. 'They are simple people,' he added; 'well, I am glad you came. It took me all my time to keep them off.' 'But you said it was all right,' I cried. 'Oh, they meant no harm,' he said; and as I stared he corrected himself, 'Not exactly.' Then vivaciously, 'My faith, your pilot-house wants a clean-up!' In the next breath he advised me to keep enough steam on the boiler to blow the whistle in case of any trouble. 'One good screech will do more for you than all your rifles. They are simple people,' he repeated. He rattled away at such a rate he quite overwhelmed me. He seemed to be trying to make up for lots of silence, and actually hinted, laughing, that such was the case. 'Don't you talk with Mr. Kurtz?' I said. 'You don't talk with that man—you listen to him,' he exclaimed with severe exaltation. 'But now—' He waved his arm, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the uttermost depths of despondency. In a moment he came up again with a jump, possessed himself of both my hands, shook them continuously, while he gabbled: 'Brother sailor . . . honor . . . pleasure . . . delight . . . introduce myself . . . Russian . . . son of an arch-priest . . . Government of Tambov. . . . What? Tobacco! English tobacco; the excellent English tobacco! Now, that's brotherly. Smoke? Where's a sailor that does not smoke?'

"The pipe soothed him, and gradually I made out he had run away from school, had gone to sea in a Russian ship; ran away again; served some time in English ships; was now reconciled with the arch-priest. He made a point of that. 'But when one is young one must see things, gather experience, ideas; enlarge the mind.' 'Here!' I interrupted. 'You can never tell! Here I met Mr. Kurtz,' he said, youthfully solemn and reproachful. I held my tongue after that. It appears he had persuaded a Dutch trading house on the coast to fit him out with stores and goods, and had started for the interior with a light heart, and no more idea of what would happen to him than a baby. He had been wandering about that river for nearly two years alone, cut off from everybody and everything. 'I am not so young as I look. I am twenty-five,' he said. 'At first old Van Shuyten would tell me to go to the devil,' he narrated with keen enjoyment; 'but I stuck to him, and talked and talked, till at last he got afraid I would talk the hind-leg off his favorite dog, so he gave me some cheap things and a few guns, and told me he hoped he would never see my face again. Good old Dutchman, Van Shuyten. I've sent him one small lot of ivory a year ago, so that he can't call me a little thief when I get back. I hope he got it. And for the rest I don't care. I had some wood stacked for you. That was my old house. Did you see?'

"I gave him Towson's book. He made as though he would kiss me, but restrained himself. 'The only book I had left, and I thought I had lost it,' he said, looking at it ecstatically. 'So many accidents happen to a man going about alone, you know. Canoes get upset sometimes—and sometimes you've got to clear out so quick when the people get angry.' He thumbed the pages. 'You made notes in Russian?' I asked. He nodded. 'I thought they were written in cipher,' I said. He laughed, then became serious. 'I had lots of trouble to keep these people off,' he said. 'Did they want to kill you?' I asked. 'Oh, no!' he cried, and checked himself. 'Why did they attack us?' I pursued. He hesitated, then said shamefacedly, 'They don't want him to go.' 'Don't they?' I said curiously. He nodded a nod full of mystery and wisdom. 'I tell you,' he cried, 'this man has enlarged my mind.' He opened his arms wide, staring at me with his little blue eyes that were perfectly round."

III

I LOOKED at him, lost in astonishment. There he was before me, in motley, as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbable, inexplicable, and altogether bewildering. He was an insoluble problem. It was inconceivable how he had existed, how he had succeeded in getting so far, how he had managed to remain—why he did not instantly disappear. 'I went a little farther,' he said, 'then still a little farther—till I had gone so far that I don't know how I'll ever get back. Never mind. Plenty time. I can manage. You take Kurtz away quick—quick—I tell you.' The glamour of youth enveloped his parti-colored

rags, his destitution, his loneliness, the essential desolation of his futile wanderings. For months—for years—his life hadn't been worth a day's purchase; and there he was gallantly, thoughtlessly alive, to all appearance indestructible solely by the virtue of his few years and of his unreflecting audacity. I was seduced into something like admiration—like envy. Glamour urged him on, glamour kept him unscathed. He surely wanted nothing from the wilderness but space to breathe in and to push on through. His need was to exist, and to move onwards at the greatest possible risk, and with a maximum of privation. If the absolutely pure, uncalculating, unpractical spirit of adventure had ever ruled a human being, it ruled this be-patched youth. I almost envied him the possession of this modest and clear flame. It seemed to have consumed all thought of self so completely, that even while he was talking to you, you forgot that it was he—the man before your eyes—who had gone through these things. I did not envy him his devotion to Kurtz, though. He had not meditated over it. It came to him and he accepted it with a sort of eager fatalism. I must say that to me it appeared about the most dangerous thing in every way he had come upon so far.

"They had come together unavoidably, like two ships becalmed near each other, and lay rubbing sides at last. I suppose Kurtz wanted an audience, because on a certain occasion, when encamped in the forest, they had talked all night, or more probably Kurtz had talked. 'We talked of everything,' he said, quite transported at the recollection. 'I forgot there was such a thing as sleep. The night did not seem to last an hour. Everything! Everything! . . . Of love, too.' 'Ah, he talked to you of love!' I said, much amused. 'It isn't what you think,' he cried, almost passionately. 'It was in general. He made me see things—things.'

"He threw his arms up. We were on deck at the time, and the headman of my wood-cutters, lounging near by, turned upon him his heavy and glittering eyes. I looked around, and I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness. 'And, ever since, you have been with him, of course?' I said.

"On the contrary. It appears their intercourse had been very much broken by various causes. He had, as he informed me proudly, managed to nurse Kurtz through two illnesses (he alluded to it as you would to some risky feat), but as a rule Kurtz wandered alone far in the depths of the forest. 'Very often coming to this station, I had to wait days and days before he would turn up,' he said. 'Ah, it was worth waiting for!—sometimes.' 'What was he doing? exploring or what?' I asked. 'Oh, yes, of course'; he had

discovered lots of villages, a lake, too—he did not know exactly in what direction; it was dangerous to inquire too much—but mostly his expeditions had been for ivory. 'But he had no goods to trade with by that time,' I objected. 'There's a good lot of cartridges left even yet,' he answered, looking away. 'To speak plainly, he raided the country,' I said. He nodded. 'Not alone, surely!' He muttered something about the villages round that lake. 'Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?' I suggested. He fidgeted a little. 'They adored him,' he said. The tone of these words was so extraordinary that I looked at him searchingly. It was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance to speak of Kurtz. The man filled his life, occupied his thoughts, swayed his emotions. 'What can you expect?' he burst out; 'he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know—and they had never seen anything like it—and very terrible. He could be very terrible. You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man. No, no, no! Now—just to give you an idea—I don't mind telling you he wanted to shoot me, too, one day—but I don't judge him.' 'Shoot you!' I cried. 'What for?' 'Well, I had a small lot of ivory the chief of that village near my house gave me. You see I used to shoot game for them. Well, he wanted it, and wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot me unless I gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased. And it was true, too. I gave him the ivory. What did I care! But I didn't clear out. No, no, I couldn't leave him. I had to be careful, of course, till we got friendly again for a time. He had his second illness then. Afterwards I had to keep out of the way; but I didn't mind. He was living for the most part in those villages on the lake. When he came down to the river, sometimes he would take to me, and sometimes it was better for me to be careful. This man suffered too much. He hated all this, and somehow he couldn't get away. When I had a chance I begged him to try and leave while there was time; I offered to go back with him. And he would say yes, and then he would remain; go off on another ivory hunt; disappear for weeks; forget himself amongst these people—forget himself—you know.' 'Why! he's mad,' I said. He protested indignantly. Mr. Kurtz couldn't be mad. If I had heard him talk, only two days ago, I wouldn't dare hint at such a thing. . . . I had taken up my binoculars while we talked, and was looking at the shore, sweeping the limit of the forest at each side and at the back of the house. The consciousness of there being people in that bush, so silent, so quiet—as silent and quiet as the ruined house on the hill—made me uneasy. There was no sign on the face of nature of this amazing tale that was not so much told as suggested to me in desolate exclamations, completed by shrugs, in interrupted phrases, in hints ending in

deep sighs. The woods were unmoved, like a mask—heavy, like the closed door of a prison—they looked with their air of hidden knowledge, of patient expectation, of unapproachable silence. The Russian was explaining to me that it was only lately that Mr. Kurtz had come down to the river, bringing along with him all the fighting men of that lake tribe. He had been absent for several months—getting himself adored, I suppose—and had come down unexpectedly, with the intention to all appearance of making a raid either across the river or down stream. Evidently the appetite for more ivory had got the better of the—what shall I say?—less material aspirations. However he had got much worse suddenly. 'I heard he was lying helpless, and so I came up—took my chance,' said the Russian. 'Oh, he is bad, very bad.' I directed my glass to the house. There were no signs of life, but there was the ruined roof, the long mud wall peeping above the grass, with three little square window-holes, no two of the same size; all this brought within reach of my hand, as it were. And then I made a brusque movement, and one of the remaining posts of that vanished fence leaped up in the field of my glass. You remember I told you I had been struck at the distance by certain attempts at ornamentation, rather remarkable in the ruinous aspect of the place. Now I had suddenly a nearer view, and its first result was to make me throw my head back as if before a blow. Then I went carefully from post to post with my glass, and I saw my mistake. These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic; they were expressive and puzzling, striking and disturbing—food for thought and also for vultures if there had been any looking down from the sky; but at all events for such ants as were industrious enough to ascend the pole. They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces had not been turned to the house. Only one, the first I had made out, was facing my way. I was not so shocked as you may think. The start back I had given was really nothing but a movement of surprise. I had expected to see a knob of wood there, you know. I returned deliberately to the first I had seen—and there it was, black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids,—a head that seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and with the shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of the teeth, was smiling, too, smiling continuously at some endless and jocose dream of that eternal slumber.

"I am not disclosing any trade secrets. In fact, the manager said afterwards that Mr. Kurtz's methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him—some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he

knew of this deficiency himself I can't say. I think the knowledge came to him at last—only at the very last. But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude—and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core. . . . I put down the glass, and the head that had appeared near enough to be spoken to seemed at once to have leaped away from me into inaccessible distance.

"The admirer of Mr. Kurtz was a bit crestfallen. In a hurried indistinct voice he began to assure me he had not dared to take these—say, symbols—down. He was not afraid of the natives; they would not stir till Mr. Kurtz gave the word. His ascendancy was extraordinary. The camps of these people surrounded the place, and the chiefs came every day to see him. They would crawl. . . . 'I don't want to know anything of the ceremonies used when approaching Mr. Kurtz,' I shouted. Curious, this feeling that came over me that such details would be more intolerable than those heads drying on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz's windows. After all, that was only a savage sight, while I seemed at one bound to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist—obviously—in the sunshine. The young man looked at me with surprise. I suppose it did not occur to him that Mr. Kurtz was no idol of mine. He forgot I hadn't heard of any of these splendid monologues on, what was it? on love, justice, conduct of life—or what not. If it had come to crawling before Mr. Kurtz, he crawled as much as the veriest savage of them all. I had no idea of the conditions, he said: these heads were the heads of rebels. I shocked him excessively by laughing. Rebels! What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers—and these were rebels. Those rebellious heads looked very subdued to me on their sticks. 'You don't know how such a life tries a man like Kurtz,' cried Kurtz's last disciple. 'Well, and you?' I said. 'I! I! I am a simple man. I have no great thoughts. I want nothing from anybody. How can you compare me to . . . ?' His feelings were too much for speech, and suddenly he broke down. 'I don't understand,' he groaned, 'I've been doing my best to keep him alive and that's enough. I had no hand in all this. I have no abilities. There hasn't been a drop of medicine or a mouthful of invalid food for months here. He was shamefully abandoned. A man like this, with such ideas. Shamefully! Shamefully! I—I—haven't slept for the last ten nights. . . .'

"His voice lost itself in the calm of the evening. The long shadows of the forest had slipped downhill while we talked, had gone far beyond the

ruined hovel, beyond the symbolic row of stakes. All this was in the gloom, while we down there were yet in the sunshine, and the stretch of the river abreast of the clearing glittered in a still and dazzling splendor, with a murky and overshadowed bend above and below. Not a living soul was seen on the shore. The bushes did not rustle.

"Suddenly round the corner of the house a group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground. They waded waist-deep in the grass, in a compact body, bearing an improvised stretcher in their midst. Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape, a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land; and, as if by enchantment, streams of human beings—of naked human beings—with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark-faced and pensive forest. The bushes shook, the grass swayed for a time, and then everything stood still in attentive immobility.

" 'Now, if he does not say the right thing to them we are all done for,' said the Russian at my elbow. The knot of men with the stretcher had stopped, too, halfway to the steamer, as if petrified. I saw the man on the stretcher sit up, lank and with an uplifted arm, above the shoulders of the bearers. 'Let us hope that the man who can talk so well of love in general will find some particular reason to spare us this time,' I said. I resented bitterly the absurd danger of our situation, as if to be at the mercy of that atrocious phantom had been a dishonoring necessity. I could not hear a sound, but through my glasses I saw the thin arm extended commandingly, the lower jaw moving, the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks. Kurtz—Kurtz—that means short in German—don't it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life—and death. He looked at least seven feet long. His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him. A deep voice reached me faintly. He must have been shouting. He fell back suddenly. The stretcher shook as the bearers staggered forward again, and almost at the same time I noticed that the crowd of savages was vanishing without any perceptible movement of retreat, as if the forest that had ejected these beings so suddenly had drawn them in again as the breath is drawn in a long aspiration.

"Some of the pilgrims behind the stretcher carried his arms—two shot-

guns, a heavy rifle, and a light revolver-carbine—the thunderbolts of that pitiful Jupiter. The manager bent over him murmuring as he walked beside his head. They laid him down in one of the little cabins—just a room for a bedplace and a camp-stool or two, you know. We had brought his belated correspondence, and a lot of torn envelopes and open letters littered his bed. His hand roamed feebly amongst these papers. I was struck by the fire of his eyes and the composed languor of his expression. It was not so much the exhaustion of disease. He did not seem in pain. This shadow looked satiated and calm, as though for the moment it had had its fill of all the emotions.

"He rustled one of the letters, and looking straight in my face said, 'I am glad.' Somebody had been writing to him about me. These special recommendations were turning up again. The volume of tone he emitted without effort, almost without the trouble of moving his lips, amazed me. A voice! a voice! It was grave, profound, vibrating, while the man did not seem capable of a whisper. However, he had enough strength in him—factitious no doubt —to very nearly make an end of us, as you shall hear directly.

"The manager appeared silently in the doorway; I stepped out at once and he drew the curtain after me. The Russian, eyed curiously by the pilgrims, was staring at the shore. I followed the direction of his glance.

"Dark human shapes could be made out in the distance, flitting indistinctly against the gloomy border of the forest, and near the river two bronze figures, leaning on tall spears, stood in the sunlight under fantastic head-dresses of spotted skins, warlike and still in statuesque repose. And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman.

"She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul.

"She came abreast of the steamer, stood still, and faced us. Her long shadow fell to the water's edge. Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect of

wild sorrow and of dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-shaped resolve. She stood looking at us without a stir, and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose. A whole minute passed, and then she made a step forward. There was a low jingle, a glint of yellow metal, a sway of fringed draperies, and she stopped as if her heart had failed her. The young fellow by my side growled. The pilgrims murmured at my back. She looked at us all as if her life had depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance. Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene.

"She turned away slowly, walked on, following the bank, and passed into the bushes to the left. Once only her eyes gleamed back at us in the dusk of the thickets before she disappeared.

" 'If she had offered to come aboard I really think I would have tried to shoot her,' said the man of patches, nervously. 'I have been risking my life every day for the last fortnight to keep her out of the house. She got in one day and kicked up a row about those miserable rags I picked up in the storeroom to mend my clothes with. I wasn't decent. At least it must have been that, for she talked like a fury to Kurtz for an hour, pointing at me now and then. I don't understand the dialect of this tribe. Luckily for me, I fancy Kurtz felt too ill that day to care, or there would have been mischief. I don't understand. . . . No—it's too much for me. Ah, well, it's all over now.'

"At this moment I heard Kurtz's deep voice behind the curtain: 'Save me! —save the ivory, you mean. Don't tell me. Save *me!* Why, I've had to save you. You are interrupting my plans now. Sick! Sick! Not so sick as you would like to believe. Never mind. I'll carry my ideas out yet—I will return. I'll show you what can be done. You with your little peddling notions—you are interfering with me. I will return. I . . .'

"The manager came out. He did me the honor to take me under the arm and lead me aside. 'He is very low, very low,' he said. He considered it necessary to sigh, but neglected to be consistently sorrowful. 'We have done all we could for him—haven't we? But there is no disguising the fact, Mr. Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously—that's my principle. We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time. Deplorable! Upon the whole, the trade will suffer. I don't deny there is a remarkable quantity of ivory—mostly fossil. We must save it, at all events—but look how precarious the position is—and why? Because the method is unsound.' 'Do you,' said I, looking at the shore, 'call it "unsound method"?'

'Without doubt,' he exclaimed hotly. 'Don't you?' . . . 'No method at all,' I murmured after a while. 'Exactly,' he exulted. 'I anticipated this. Shows a complete want of judgment. It is my duty to point it out in the proper quarter.' 'Oh,' said I, 'that fellow—what's his name?—the brickmaker, will make a readable report for you.' He appeared confounded for a moment. It seemed to me I had never breathed an atmosphere so vile, and I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief—positively for relief. 'Nevertheless I think Mr. Kurtz is a remarkable man,' I said with emphasis. He started, dropped on me a cold heavy glance, said very quietly, 'he *was*,' and turned his back on me. My hour of favor was over; I found myself lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe: I was unsound! Ah! but it was something to have at least a choice of nightmares.

"I had turned to the wilderness really, not to Mr. Kurtz, who, I was ready to admit, was as good as buried. And for a moment it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets. I felt an intolerable weight oppressing my breast, the smell of the damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night. . . . The Russian tapped me on the shoulder. I heard him mumbling and stammering something about 'brother seaman—couldn't conceal—knowledge of matters that would affect Mr. Kurtz's reputation.' I waited. For him evidently Mr. Kurtz was not in his grave; I suspect that for him Mr. Kurtz was one of the immortals. 'Well!' said I at last, 'speak out. As it happens, I am Mr. Kurtz's friend—in a way.'

"He stated with a good deal of formality that had we not been 'of the same profession,' he would have kept the matter to himself without regard to consequences. 'He suspected there was an active ill will towards him on the part of these white men that—' 'You are right,' I said, remembering a certain conversation I had overheard. 'The manager thinks you ought to be hanged.' He showed a concern at this intelligence which amused me at first. 'I had better get out of the way quietly,' he said, earnestly. 'I can do no more for Kurtz now, and they would soon find some excuse. What's to stop them? There's a military post three hundred miles from here.' 'Well, upon my word,' said I, 'perhaps you had better go if you have any friends amongst the savages near by.' 'Plenty,' he said. 'They are simple people—and I want nothing, you know.' He stood biting his lip, then: 'I don't want any harm to happen to these whites here, but of course I was thinking of Mr. Kurtz's reputation—but you are a brother seaman and—' 'All right,' said I, after a time. 'Mr. Kurtz's reputation is safe with me.' I did not know how truly I spoke.

"He informed me, lowering his voice, that it was Kurtz who had ordered the attack to be made on the steamer. 'He hated sometimes the idea of being

taken away—and then again. . . . But I don't understand these matters. I am a simple man. He thought it would scare you away—that you would give it up, thinking him dead. I could not stop him. Oh, I had an awful time of it this last month.' 'Very well,' I said. 'He is all right now.' 'Ye-e-es,' he muttered, not very convinced apparently. 'Thanks,' said I; 'I shall keep my eyes open.' 'But quiet—eh?' he urged, anxiously. 'It would be awful for his reputation if anybody here—' I promised a complete discretion with great gravity. 'I have a canoe and three black fellows waiting not very far. I am off. Could you give me a few Martini-Henry cartridges?' I could, and did, with proper secrecy. He helped himself, with a wink at me, to a handful of my tobacco. 'Between sailors—you know—good English tobacco.' At the door of the pilot-house he turned round—'I say, haven't you a pair of shoes you could spare?' He raised one leg. 'Look.' The soles were tied with knotted strings sandal-wise under his bare feet. I rooted out an old pair, at which he looked with admiration before tucking them under his left arm. One of his pockets (bright red) was bulging with cartridges, from the other (dark blue) peeped 'Towson's Inquiry,' etc., etc. He seemed to think himself excellently well equipped for a renewed encounter with the wilderness. 'Ah! I'll never, never meet such a man again. You ought to have heard him recite poetry—his own, too, it was, he told me. Poetry!' He rolled his eyes at the recollection of these delights. 'Oh, he enlarged my mind!' 'Good-by,' said I. He shook hands and vanished in the night. Sometimes I ask myself whether I had ever really seen him—whether it was possible to meet such a phenomenon! . . .

"When I woke up shortly after midnight his warning came to my mind with its hint of danger that seemed, in the starred darkness, real enough to make me get up for the purpose of having a look round. On the hill a big fire burned, illuminating fitfully a crooked corner of the station-house. One of the agents with a picket of a few of our blacks, armed for the purpose, was keeping guard over the ivory; but deep within the forest, red gleams that wavered, that seemed to sink and rise from the ground amongst confused columnar shapes of intense blackness, showed the exact position of the camp where Mr. Kurtz's adorers were keeping their uneasy vigil. The monotonous beating of a big drum filled the air with muffled shocks and a lingering vibration. A steady droning sound of many men chanting each to himself some weird incantation came out from the black, flat wall of the woods as the humming of bees comes out of a hive, and had a strange narcotic effect upon my half-awake senses. I believe I dozed off leaning over the rail, till an abrupt burst of yells, an overwhelming outbreak of a pent-up and mysterious frenzy, woke me up in a bewildered wonder. It was cut short all at once, and the low droning went on with an effect of audible and

soothing silence. I glanced casually into the little cabin. A light was burning within, but Mr. Kurtz was not there.

"I think I would have raised an outcry if I had believed my eyes. But I didn't believe them at first—the thing seemed so impossible. The fact is I was completely unnerved by a sheer blank fright, pure abstract terror, unconnected with any distinct shape of physical danger. What made this emotion so overpowering was—how shall I define it?—the moral shock I received, as if something altogether monstrous, intolerable to thought and odious to the soul, had been thrust upon me unexpectedly. This lasted of course the merest fraction of a second, and then the usual sense of commonplace, deadly danger, the possibility of a sudden onslaught and massacre, or something of the kind, which I saw impending, was positively welcome and composing. It pacified me, in fact, so much, that I did not raise an alarm.

"There was an agent buttoned up inside an ulster and sleeping on a chair on deck within three feet of me. The yells had not awakened him; he snored very slightly; I left him to his slumbers and leaped ashore. I did not betray Mr. Kurtz—it was ordered I should never betray him—it was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice. I was anxious to deal with this shadow by myself alone,—and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with any one the peculiar blackness of that experience.

"As soon as I got on the bank I saw a trail—a broad trail through the grass. I remember the exultation with which I said to myself, 'He can't walk —he is crawling on all-fours—I've got him.' The grass was wet with dew. I strode rapidly with clenched fists. I fancy I had some vague notion of falling upon him and giving him a drubbing. I don't know. I had some imbecile thoughts. The knitting old woman with the cat obtruded herself upon my memory as a most improper person to be sitting at the other end of such an affair. I saw a row of pilgrims squirting lead in the air out of Winchesters held to the hip. I thought I would never get back to the steamer, and imagined myself living alone and unarmed in the woods to an advanced age. Such silly things—you know. And I remember I confounded the beat of the drum with the beating of my heart, and was pleased at its calm regularity.

"I kept to the track though—then stopped to listen. The night was very clear; a dark blue space, sparkling with dew and starlight, in which black things stood very still. I thought I could see a kind of motion ahead of me. I was strangely cocksure of everything that night. I actually left the track and ran in a wide semicircle (I verily believe chuckling to myself) so as to get in front of that stir, of that motion I had seen—if indeed I had seen anything. I was circumventing Kurtz as though it had been a boyish game.

"I came upon him, and, if he had not heard me coming, I would have

fallen over him, too, but he got up in time. He rose, unsteady, long, pale, indistinct, like a vapor exhaled by the earth, and swayed slightly, misty and silent before me; while at my back the fires loomed between the trees, and the murmur of many voices issued from the forest. I had cut him off cleverly; but when actually confronting him I seemed to come to my senses, I saw the danger in its right proportion. It was by no means over yet. Suppose he began to shout? Though he could hardly stand, there was still plenty of vigor in his voice. 'Go away—hide yourself,' he said, in that profound tone. It was very awful. I glanced back. We were within thirty yards from the nearest fire. A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns—antelope horns, I think—on its head. Some sorcerer, some witch-man, no doubt: it looked fiend-like enough. 'Do you know what you are doing?' I whispered. 'Perfectly,' he answered, raising his voice for that single word: it sounded to me far off and yet loud, like a hail through a speaking-trumpet. If he makes a row we are lost, I thought to myself. This clearly was not a case for fisticuffs, even apart from the very natural aversion I had to beat that Shadow—this wandering and tormented thing. 'You will be lost,' I said—'utterly lost.' One gets sometimes such a flash of inspiration, you know. I did say the right thing, though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our intimacy were being laid—to endure —to endure—even to the end—even beyond.

"'I had immense plans,' he muttered irresolutely. 'Yes,' said I; 'but if you try to shout I'll smash your head with—' There was not a stick or a stone near. 'I will throttle you for good,' I corrected myself. 'I was on the threshold of great things,' he pleaded, in a voice of longing, with a wistfulness of tone that made my blood run cold. 'And now for this stupid scoundrel—' 'Your success in Europe is assured in any case,' I affirmed, steadily. I did not want to have the throttling of him, you understand—and indeed it would have been very little use for any practical purpose. I tried to break the spell—the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness—that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions. This alone, I was convinced, had driven him out to the edge of the forest, to the bush, towards the gleam of fires, the throb of drums, the drone of weird incantations; this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations. And, don't you see, the terror of the position was not in being knocked on the head—though I had a very lively sense of that danger, too—but in this, that I had to deal with a being to whom I could not appeal in the name of anything high or low. I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him—himself—his own exalted and incredible degradation. There was nothing either above or below him,

and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces. He was alone, and I before him did not know whether I stood on the ground or floated in the air. I've been telling you what we said—repeating the phrases we pronounced—but what's the good? They were common everyday words—the familiar, vague sounds exchanged on every waking day of life. But what of that? They had behind them, to my mind, the terrific suggestiveness of words heard in dreams, of phrases spoken in nightmares. Soul! If anybody had ever struggled with a soul, I am the man. And I wasn't arguing with a lunatic either. Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear—concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear; and therein was my only chance —barring, of course, the killing him there and then, which wasn't so good, on account of unavoidable noise. But his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had—for my sins, I suppose—to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself. No eloquence could have been so withering to one's belief in mankind as his final burst of sincerity. He struggled with himself, too. I saw it,—I heard it. I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself. I kept my head pretty well; but when I had him at last stretched on the couch, I wiped my forehead, while my legs shook under me as though I had carried half a ton on my back down that hill. And yet I had only supported him, his bony arm clasped round my neck—and he was not much heavier than a child.

"When next day we left at noon, the crowd, of whose presence behind the curtain of trees I had been acutely conscious all the time, flowed out of the woods again, filled the clearing, covered the slope with a mass of naked, breathing, quivering, bronze bodies. I steamed up a bit, then swung downstream, and two thousand eyes followed the evolutions of the splashing, thumping, fierce river-demon beating the water with its terrible tail and breathing black smoke into the air. In front of the first rank, along the river, three men, plastered with bright red earth from head to foot, strutted to and fro restlessly. When we came abreast again, they faced the river, stamped their feet, nodded their horned heads, swayed their scarlet bodies; they shook towards the fierce river-demon a bunch of black feathers, a mangy skin with a pendent tail—something that looked like a dried gourd; they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany.

"We had carried Kurtz into the pilot-house: there was more air there. Lying on the couch, he stared through the open shutter. There was an eddy

in the mass of human bodies, and the woman with helmeted head and tawny cheeks rushed out to the very brink of the stream. She put out her hands, shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance.

" 'Do you understand this?' I asked.

"He kept on looking out past me with fiery, longing eyes, with a mingled expression of wistfulness and hate. He made no answer, but I saw a smile, a smile of indefinable meaning, appear on his colorless lips that a moment after twitched convulsively. 'Do I not?' he said slowly, gasping, as if the words had been torn out of him by a supernatural power.

"I pulled the string of the whistle, and I did this because I saw the pilgrims on deck getting out their rifles with an air of anticipating a jolly lark. At the sudden screech there was a movement of abject terror through that wedged mass of bodies. 'Don't! don't you frighten them away,' cried some one on deck disconsolately. I pulled the string time after time. They broke and ran, they leaped, they crouched, they swerved, they dodged the flying terror of the sound. The three red chaps had fallen flat, face down on the shore, as though they had been shot dead. Only the barbarous and superb woman did not so much as flinch, and stretched tragically her bare arms after us over the somber and glittering river.

"And then that imbecile crowd down on the deck started their little fun, and I could see nothing more for smoke.

"The brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness, bearing us down towards the sea with twice the speed of our upward progress; and Kurtz's life was running swiftly, too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time. The manager was very placid, he had no vital anxieties now, he took us both in with a comprehensive and satisfied glance: the 'affair' had come off as well as could be wished. I saw the time approaching when I would be left alone of the party of 'unsound method.' The pilgrims looked upon me with disfavor. I was, so to speak, numbered with the dead. It is strange how I accepted this unforeseen partnership, this choice of nightmares forced upon me in the tenebrous land invaded by these mean and greedy phantoms.

"Kurtz discoursed. A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart. Oh, he struggled! he struggled! The wastes of his weary brain were haunted by shadowy images now—images of wealth and fame revolving obsequiously round his unextinguishable gift of noble and lofty expression. My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas—these were the subjects for the occasional utterances of elevated sentiments. The shade

of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham, whose fate it was to be buried presently in the mold of primeval earth. But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power.

"Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things. 'You show them you have in you something that is really profitable, and then there will be no limits to the recognition of your ability,' he would say. 'Of course you must take care of the motives—right motives—always.' The long reaches that were like one and the same reach, monotonous bends that were exactly alike, slipped past the steamer, with their multitude of secular trees looking patiently after this grimy fragment of another world, the forerunner of change, of conquest, of trade, of massacres, of blessings. I looked ahead—piloting. 'Close the shutter,' said Kurtz suddenly one day; 'I can't bear to look at this.' I did so. There was a silence. 'Oh, but I will wring your heart yet!' he cried at the invisible wilderness.

"We broke down—as I had expected—and had to lie up for repairs at the head of an island. This delay was the first thing that shook Kurtz's confidence. One morning he gave me a packet of papers and a photograph—the lot tied together with a shoestring. 'Keep this for me,' he said. 'This noxious fool' (meaning the manager) 'is capable of prying into my boxes when I am not looking.' In the afternoon I saw him. He was lying on his back with closed eyes, and I withdrew quietly, but I heard him mutter, 'Live rightly, die, die. . . .' I listened. There was nothing more. Was he rehearsing some speech in his sleep, or was it a fragment of a phrase from some newspaper article? He had been writing for the papers and meant to do so again, 'for the furthering of my ideas. It's a duty.'

"His was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines. But I had not much time to give him, because I was helping the engine-driver to take to pieces the leaky cylinders, to straighten a bent connecting-rod, and in other such matters. I lived in an infernal mess of rust, filings, nuts, bolts, spanners, hammers, ratchet-drills—things I abominate, because I don't get on with them. I tended the little forge we fortunately had aboard; I toiled wearily in a wretched scrap-heap—unless I had the shakes too bad to stand.

"One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, 'I am lying here in the dark waiting for death.' The light

was within a foot of his eyes. I forced myself to murmur, 'Oh, nonsense!' and stood over him as if transfixed.

"Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. Oh, I wasn't touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror—of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath—

" 'The horror! The horror!'

"I blew the candle out and left the cabin. The pilgrims were dining in the mess-room, and I took my place opposite the manager, who lifted his eyes to give me a questioning glance, which I successfully ignored. He leaned back, serene, with that peculiar smile of his sealing the unexpressed depths of his meanness. A continuous shower of small flies streamed upon the lamp, upon the cloth, upon our hands and faces. Suddenly the manager's boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt—

" 'Mistah Kurtz—he dead.'

"All the pilgrims rushed out to see. I remained, and went on with my dinner. I believe I was considered brutally callous. However, I did not eat much. There was a lamp in there—light, don't you know—and outside it was so beastly, beastly dark. I went no more near the remarkable man who had pronounced a judgment upon the adventures of his soul on this earth. The voice was gone. What else had been there? But I am of course aware that next day the pilgrims buried something in a muddy hole.

"And then they very nearly buried me.

"However, as you see I did not go to join Kurtz there and then. I did not. I remained to dream the nightmare out to the end, and to show my loyalty to Kurtz once more. Destiny. My destiny! Droll thing life is—that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself—that comes too late—a crop of unextinguishable regrets. I have wrestled with death. It is the most unexciting contest you can imagine. It takes place in an impalpable grayness, with nothing underfoot, with nothing around, without spectators, without clamor, without glory, without the great desire of victory, without the great fear of defeat, in a sickly atmosphere of tepid skepticism, without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary. If such is the form of ultimate wisdom, then life is a greater riddle than some of us think it to be. I was within a hair's breadth of the last opportunity for pro-

nouncement, and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I had peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare, that could not see the flame of the candle, but was wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up—he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candor, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth—the strange commingling of desire and hate. And it is not my own extremity I remember best—a vision of grayness without form filled with physical pain, and a careless contempt for the evanescence of all things—even of this pain itself. No! It is his extremity that I seem to have lived through. True, he had made that last stride, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference; perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into the inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible. Perhaps! I like to think my summing-up would not have been a word of careless contempt. Better his cry—much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory! That is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last, and even beyond, when a long time after I heard once more, not his own choice, but the echo of his magnificent eloquence thrown to me from a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal.

"No, they did not bury me, though there is a period of time which I remember mistily, with a shuddering wonder, like a passage through some inconceivable world that had no hope in it and no desire. I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretense, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces, so full of stupid importance. I daresay I was not very well at that time. I tottered about the streets—there were

various affairs to settle—grinning bitterly at perfectly respectable persons. I admit my behavior was inexcusable, but then my temperature was seldom normal in these days. My dear aunt's endeavors to 'nurse up my strength' seemed altogether beside the mark. It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing. I kept the bundle of papers given me by Kurtz, not knowing exactly what to do with it. His mother had died lately, watched over, as I was told, by his Intended. A clean-shaved man, with an official manner and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, called on me one day and made inquiries, at first circuitous, afterwards suavely pressing, about what he was pleased to denominate certain 'documents.' I was not surprised, because I had had two rows with the manager on the subject out there. I had refused to give up the smallest scrap out of that package, and I took the same attitude with the spectacled man. He became darkly menacing at last, and with much heat argued that the Company had the right to every bit of information about its 'territories.' And said he, 'Mr. Kurtz's knowledge of unexplored regions must have been necessarily extensive and peculiar—owing to his great abilities and to the deplorable circumstances in which he had been placed: therefore—' I assured him Mr. Kurtz's knowledge, however extensive, did not bear upon the problems of commerce or administration. He invoked then the name of science. 'It would be an incalculable loss, if,' etc., etc. I offered him the report on the 'Suppression of Savage Customs,' with the postscriptum torn off. He took it up eagerly, but ended by sniffing at it with an air of contempt. 'This is not what we had a right to expect,' he remarked. 'Expect nothing else,' I said. 'There are only private letters.' He withdrew upon some threat of legal proceedings, and I saw him no more; but another fellow, calling himself Kurtz's cousin, appeared two days later, and was anxious to hear all the details about his dear relative's last moments. Incidentally he gave me to understand that Kurtz had been essentially a great musician. 'There was the making of an immense success,' said the man, who was an organist, I believe, with lank gray hair flowing over a greasy coat-collar. I had no reason to doubt his statement; and to this day I am unable to say what was Kurtz's profession, whether he ever had any—which was the greatest of his talents. I had taken him for a painter who wrote for the papers, or else for a journalist who could paint—but even the cousin (who took snuff during the interview) could not tell me what he had been—exactly. He was a universal genius—on that point I agreed with the old chap, who thereupon blew his nose noisily into a large cotton handkerchief and withdrew in senile agitation, bearing off some family letters and memoranda without importance. Ultimately a journalist anxious to know something of the fate of his 'dear colleague' turned up. This visitor informed me Kurtz's proper sphere ought

to have been politics 'on the popular side.' He had furry straight eyebrows, bristly hair cropped short, an eye-glass on a broad ribbon, and, becoming expansive, confessed his opinion that Kurtz really couldn't write a bit—'but heavens! how that man could talk. He electrified large meetings. He had faith—don't you see?—he had the faith. He could get himself to believe anything—anything. He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party.' 'What party?' I asked. 'Any party,' answered the other. 'He was an—an—extremist.' Did I not think so? I assented. Did I know, he asked, with a sudden flash of curiosity, 'what it was that had induced him to go out there?' 'Yes,' said I, and forthwith handed him the famous Report for publication, if he thought fit. He glanced through it hurriedly, mumbling all the time, judged 'it would do,' and took himself off with this plunder.

"Thus I was left at last with a slim packet of letters and the girl's portrait. She struck me as beautiful—I mean she had a beautiful expression. I know that the sunlight can be made to lie, too, yet one felt that no manipulation of light and pose could have conveyed the delicate shade of truthfulness upon those features. She seemed ready to listen without mental reservation, without suspicion, without a thought for herself. I concluded I would go and give her back her portrait and those letters myself. Curiosity? Yes; and also some other feeling perhaps. All that had been Kurtz's had passed out of my hands: his soul, his body, his station, his plans, his ivory, his career. There remained only his memory and his Intended—and I wanted to give that up, too, to the past, in a way—to surrender personally all that remained of him with me to that oblivion which is the last word of our common fate. I don't defend myself. I had no clear perception of what it was I really wanted. Perhaps it was an impulse of unconscious loyalty, or the fulfillment of one of those ironic necessities that lurk in the facts of human existence. I don't know. I can't tell. But I went.

"I thought his memory was like the other memories of the dead that accumulate in every man's life—a vague impress on the brain of shadows that had fallen on it in their swift and final passage; but before the high and ponderous door, between the tall houses of a street as still and decorous as a well-kept alley in a cemetery, I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived—a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence. The vision seemed to enter the house with me—the stretcher, the phantom-bearers, the wild crowd of obedient worshipers, the gloom of the forest, the glitter of the reach between the murky bends, the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like the beating of a heart—the

heart of a conquering darkness. It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush which, it seemed to me, I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul. And the memory of what I had heard him say afar there, with the horned shapes stirring at my back, in the glow of fires, within the patient woods, those broken phrases came back to me, were heard again in their ominous and terrifying simplicity. I remembered his abject pleading, his abject threats, the colossal scale of his vile desires, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul. And later on I seemed to see his collected languid manner, when he said one day, 'This lot of ivory now is really mine. The Company did not pay for it. I collected it myself at a very great personal risk. I am afraid they will try to claim it as theirs though. H'm. It is a difficult case. What do you think I ought to do—resist? Eh? I want no more than justice.' . . . He wanted no more than justice—no more than justice. I rang the bell before a mahogany door on the first floor, and while I waited he seemed to stare at me out of the glassy panel—stare with that wide and immense stare embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe. I seemed to hear the whispered cry, 'The horror! The horror!'

"The dusk was falling. I had to wait in a lofty drawing room with three long windows from floor to ceiling that were like three luminous and bedraped columns. The bent gilt legs and backs of the furniture shone in indistinct curves. The tall marble fireplace had a cold and monumental whiteness. A grand piano stood massively in a corner; with dark gleams on the flat surfaces like a somber and polished sarcophagus. A high door opened—closed. I rose.

"She came forward, all in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk. She was in mourning. It was more than a year since his death, more than a year since the news came; she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever. She took both my hands in hers and murmured, 'I had heard you were coming.' I noticed she was not very young—I mean not girlish. She had a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering. The room seemed to have grown darker, as if all the sad light of the cloudy evening had taken refuge on her forehead. This fair hair, this pale visage, this pure brow, seemed surrounded by an ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked out at me. Their glance was guileless, profound, confident, and trustful. She carried her sorrowful head as though she were proud of that sorrow, as though she would say, I—I alone know how to mourn him as he deserves. But while we were still shaking hands, such a look of awful desolation came upon her face that I perceived she was one of those creatures that are not the playthings of Time. For her he had died only yesterday. And, by Jove! the impression was so powerful that for me, too, he seemed to have died only yesterday—nay, this very minute. I saw

her and him in the same instant of time—his death and her sorrow—I saw her sorrow in the very moment of his death. Do you understand? I saw them together—I heard them together. She had said, with a deep catch of the breath, 'I have survived' while my strained ears seemed to hear distinctly, mingled with her tone of despairing regret, the summing up whisper of his eternal condemnation. I asked myself what I was doing there, with a sensation of panic in my heart as though I had blundered into a place of cruel and absurd mysteries not fit for a human being to behold. She motioned me to a chair. We sat down. I laid the packet gently on the little table, and she put her hand over it. . . . 'You knew him well,' she murmured, after a moment of mourning silence.

" 'Intimacy grows quickly out there,' I said. 'I knew him as well as it is possible for one man to know another.'

" 'And you admired him,' she said. 'It was impossible to know him and not to admire him. Was it?'

" 'He was a remarkable man,' I said, unsteadily. Then before the appealing fixity of her gaze, that seemed to watch for more words on my lips, I went on, 'It was impossible not to—'

" 'Love him,' she finished eagerly, silencing me into an appalled dumbness. 'How true! how true! But when you think that no one knew him so well as I! I had all his noble confidence. I knew him best.'

" 'You knew him best,' I repeated. And perhaps she did. But with every word spoken the room was growing darker, and only her forehead, smooth and white, remained illumined by the unextinguishable light of belief and love.

" 'You were his friend,' she went on. 'His friend,' she repeated, a little louder. 'You must have been, if he had given you this, and sent you to me. I feel I can speak to you—and oh! I must speak. I want you—you have heard his last words—to know I have been worthy of him. . . . It is not pride. . . . Yes! I am proud to know I understood him better than any one on earth—he told me so himself. And since his mother died I have had no one—no one—to —to—'

"I listened. The darkness deepened. I was not even sure he had given me the right bundle. I rather suspect he wanted me to take care of another batch of his papers which, after his death, I saw the manager examining under the lamp. And the girl talked, easing her pain in the certitude of my sympathy; she talked as thirsty men drink. I had heard that her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people. He wasn't rich enough or something. And indeed I don't know whether he had not been a pauper all his life. He had given me some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there.

" '. . . Who was not his friend who had heard him speak once?' she was

saying. 'He drew men towards him by what was best in them.' She looked at me with intensity. 'It is the gift of the great,' she went on, and the sound of her low voice seemed to have the accompaniment of all the other sounds, full of mystery, desolation, and sorrow, I had ever heard—the ripple of the river, the soughing of the trees swayed by the wind, the murmurs of the crowds, the faint ring of incomprehensible words cried from afar, the whisper of a voice speaking from beyond the threshold of an eternal darkness. 'But you have heard him! You know!' she cried.

" 'Yes, I know,' I said with something like despair in my heart, but bowing my head before the faith that was in her, before that great and saving illusion that shone with an unearthly glow in the darkness, in the triumphant darkness from which I could not have defended her—from which I could not even defend myself.

" 'What a loss to me—to us!'—she corrected herself with beautiful generosity; then added in a murmur, 'To the world.' By the last gleams of twilight I could see the glitter of her eyes, full of tears—of tears that would not fall.

" 'I have been very happy—very fortunate—very proud,' she went on. 'Too fortunate. Too happy for a little while. And now I am unhappy for—for life.'

"She stood up; her fair hair seemed to catch all the remaining light in a glimmer of gold. I rose, too.

" 'And of all this,' she went on, mournfully, 'of all his promise, and of all his greatness, of his generous mind, of his noble heart, nothing remains—nothing but a memory. You and I—'

" 'We shall always remember him,' I said, hastily.

" 'No!' she cried. 'It is impossible that all this should be lost—that such a life should be sacrificed to leave nothing—but sorrow. You know what vast plans he had. I knew of them, too—I could not perhaps understand—but others knew of them. Something must remain. His words, at least, have not died.'

" 'His words will remain,' I said.

" 'And his example,' she whispered to herself. 'Men looked up to him—his goodness shone in every act. His example—'

" 'True,' I said; 'his example, too. Yes, his example. I forgot that.'

" 'But I do not. I cannot—I cannot believe—not yet. I cannot believe that I shall never see him again, that nobody will see him again, never, never, never.'

"She put out her arms as if after a retreating figure, stretching them black and with clasped pale hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window. Never see him! I saw him clearly enough then. I shall see this eloquent phantom as long as I live, and I shall see her, too, a tragic and familiar Shade, resembling in this gesture another one, tragic also, and bedecked with powerless charms, stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal

stream, the stream of darkness. She said suddenly very low, 'He died as he lived.'

" 'His end,' said I, with dull anger stirring in me, 'was in every way worthy of his life.'

" 'And I was not with him,' she murmured. My anger subsided before a feeling of infinite pity.

" 'Everything that could be done—' I mumbled.

" 'Ah, but I believed in him more than any one on earth—more than his own mother, more than—himself. He needed me! Me! I would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance.'

"I felt like a chill grip on my chest. 'Don't,' I said, in a muffled voice.

" 'Forgive me. I—I—have mourned so long in silence—in silence. . . . You were with him—to the last? I think of his loneliness. Nobody near to understand him as I would have understood. Perhaps no one to hear. . . .'

" 'To the very end,' I said, shakily. 'I heard his very last words. . . .' I stopped in a fright.

" 'Repeat them,' she murmured in a heart-broken tone. 'I want—I want—something—something—to—live with.'

"I was on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them?' The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. 'The horror! The horror!'

" 'His last word—to live with,' she insisted. 'Don't you understand I loved him—I loved him—I loved him!'

"I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.

" 'The last word he pronounced was—your name.'

"I heard a light sigh and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. 'I knew it—I was sure!' . . . She knew. She was sure. I heard her weeping; she had hidden her face in her hands. It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn't he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark—too dark altogether. . . ."

Marlow ceased, and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha. Nobody moved for a time. "We have lost the first of the ebb," said the Director, suddenly. I raised my head. The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed somber under an overcast sky—seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness. (1903)

JAMES JOYCE Araby

NORTH RICHMOND STREET, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot,* by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant* and *The Memoirs of Vidocq.* I liked the last best, because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes, under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came, dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street, the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet, and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner, we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea, we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in, and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he

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obeyed, and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body, and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash, so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep, my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books, and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye, and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings, when my aunt went marketing, I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not, or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp, and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room, in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening, and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves, and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *'O love! O love!'* many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me, I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*. I forget whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar; she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke, she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in

her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps, and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there, and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life, which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall, I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw, and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner, my uncle had not yet been home. Still, it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time, and, when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct, and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings, and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again, I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table.

The meal was prolonged beyond an hour, and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock, and she did not like to be out late, as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone, I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the hall-door. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hall-stand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner, I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." He asked me where I was going, and, when I had told him a second time, he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed.* When I left the kitchen, he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance, and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Café Chantant* were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come, I went over to one of

the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a . . . fib!"

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness, I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger. (1914)

KATHERINE MANSFIELD Miss Brill

ALTHOUGH it was so brilliantly fine—the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the Jardins Publiques—Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting—from nowhere, from the sky. Miss Brill put up her hand and

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touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. "What has been happening to me?" said the sad little eyes. Oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again from the red eiderdown! . . . But the nose, which was of some black composition, wasn't at all firm. It must have had a knock, somehow. Never mind—a little dab of black sealing-wax when the time came—when it was absolutely necessary. . . . Little rogue! Yes, she really felt like that about it. Little rogue biting its tail just by her left ear. She could have taken it off and laid it on her lap and stroked it. She felt a tingling in her hands and arms, but that came from walking, she supposed. And when she breathed, something light and sad—no, not sad, exactly—something gentle seemed to move in her bosom.

There were a number of people out this afternoon, far more than last Sunday. And the band sounded louder and gayer. That was because the Season had begun. For although the band played all the year round on Sundays, out of season it was never the same. It was like some one playing with only the family to listen; it didn't care how it played if there weren't any strangers present. Wasn't the conductor wearing a new coat, too? She was sure it was new. He scraped with his foot and flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow, and the bandsmen sitting in the green rotunda blew out their cheeks and glared at the music. Now there came a little "flutey" bit—very pretty!—a little chain of bright drops. She was sure it would be repeated. It was; she lifted her head and smiled.

Only two people shared her "special" seat: a fine old man in a velvet coat, his hands clasped over a huge carved walking-stick, and a big old woman, sitting upright, with a roll of knitting on her embroidered apron. They did not speak. This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen, at sitting in other people's lives just for a minute while they talked round her.

She glanced, sideways, at the old couple. Perhaps they would go soon. Last Sunday, too, hadn't been as interesting as usual. An Englishman and his wife, he wearing a dreadful Panama hat and she button boots. And she'd gone on the whole time about how she ought to wear spectacles; she knew she needed them; but that it was no good getting any; they'd be sure to break and they'd never keep on. And he'd been so patient. He'd suggested everything—gold rims, the kind that curved round your ears, little pads inside the bridge. No, nothing would please her. "They'll always be sliding down my nose!" Miss Brill had wanted to shake her.

The old people sat on the bench, still as statues. Never mind, there was

always the crowd to watch. To and fro, in front of the flower-beds and the band rotunda, the couples and groups paraded, stopped to talk, to greet, to buy a handful of flowers from the old beggar who had his tray fixed to the railings. Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; little boys with big white silk bows under their chins, little girls, little French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace. And sometimes a tiny staggerer came suddenly rocking into the open from under the trees, stopped, stared, as suddenly sat down "flop," until its small high-stepping mother, like a young hen, rushed scolding to its rescue. Other people sat on the benches and green chairs, but they were nearly always the same, Sunday after Sunday, and—Miss Brill had often noticed—there was something funny about nearly all of them. They were odd, silent, nearly all old, and from the way they stared they looked as though they'd just come from dark little rooms or even—even cupboards!

Behind the rotunda the slender trees with yellow leaves down drooping, and through them just a line of sea, and beyond the blue sky with gold-veined clouds.

Tum-tum-tum tiddle-um! tiddle-um! tum tiddley-um tum ta! blew the band.

Two young girls in red came by and two young soldiers in blue met them, and they laughed and paired and went off arm-in-arm. Two peasant women with funny straw hats passed, gravely, leading beautiful smoke-colored donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurried by. A beautiful woman came along and dropped her bunch of violets, and a little boy ran after to hand them to her, and she took them and threw them away as if they'd been poisoned. Dear me! Miss Brill didn't know whether to admire that or not! And now an ermine toque and a gentleman in gray met just in front of her. He was tall, stiff, dignified, and she was wearing the ermine toque she'd bought when her hair was yellow. Now everything, her hair, her face, even her eyes, was the same color as the shabby ermine, and her hand, in its cleaned glove, lifted to dab her lips, was a tiny yellowish paw. Oh, she was so pleased to see him—delighted! She rather thought they were going to meet that afternoon. She described where she'd been—everywhere, here, there, along by the sea. The day was so charming—didn't he agree? And wouldn't he, perhaps? . . . But he shook his head, lighted a cigarette, slowly breathed a great deep puff into her face, and, even while she was still talking and laughing, flicked the match away and walked on. The ermine toque was alone; she smiled more brightly than ever. But even the band seemed to know what she was feeling and played more softly, played tenderly, and the drum beat, "The Brute! The Brute!" over and over. What would she do? What was going to happen now? But as Miss

Brill wondered, the ermine toque turned, raised her hand as though she'd seen some one else, much nicer, just over there, and pattered away. And the band changed again and played more quickly, more gayly than ever, and the old couple on Miss Brill's seat got up and marched away, and such a funny old man with long whiskers hobbled along in time to the music and was nearly knocked over by four girls walking abreast.

Oh, how fascinating it was! How she enjoyed it! How she loved sitting here, watching it all! It was like a play. It was exactly like a play. Who could believe the sky at the back wasn't painted? But it wasn't till a little brown dog trotted on solemn and then slowly trotted off, like a little "theater" dog, a little dog that had been drugged, that Miss Brill discovered what it was that made it so exciting. They were all on the stage. They weren't only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all. How strange she'd never thought of it like that before! And yet it explained why she made such a point of starting from home at just the same time each week—so as not to be late for the performance—and it also explained why she had quite a queer, shy feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons. No wonder! Miss Brill nearly laughed out loud. She was on the stage. She thought of the old invalid gentleman to whom she read the newspaper four afternoons a week while he slept in the garden. She had got quite used to the frail head on the cotton pillow, the hollowed eyes, the open mouth and the high pinched nose. If he'd been dead she mightn't have noticed for weeks; she wouldn't have minded. But suddenly he knew he was having the paper read to him by an actress! "An actress!" The old head lifted; two points of light quivered in the old eyes. "An actress—are ye?" And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently: "Yes, I have been an actress for a long time."

The band had been having a rest. Now they started again. And what they played was warm, sunny, yet there was just a faint chill—a something, what was it?—not sadness—no, not sadness—a something that made you want to sing. The tune lifted, lifted, the light shone; and it seemed to Miss Brill that in another moment all of them, all the whole company, would begin singing. The young ones, the laughing ones who were moving together, they would begin, and the men's voices, very resolute and brave, would join them. And then she too, she too, and the others on the benches—they would come in with a kind of accompaniment—something low, that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautiful—moving. . . . And Miss Brill's eyes filled with tears and she looked smiling at all the other members of the company. Yes,

we understand, we understand, she thought—though what they understood she didn't know.

Just at that moment a boy and a girl came and sat down where the old couple had been. They were beautifully dressed; they were in love. The hero and heroine, of course, just arrived from his father's yacht. And still soundlessly singing, still with that trembling smile, Miss Brill prepared to listen.

"No, not now," said the girl. "Not here, I can't."

"But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?" asked the boy. "Why does she come here at all—who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?"

"It's her fu-fur which is so funny," giggled the girl. "It's exactly like a fried whiting."

"Ah, be off with you!" said the boy in an angry whisper. Then: "Tell me, ma petite chère—"

"No, not here," said the girl. "Not *yet*."

. . . . . .

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honeycake at the baker's. It was her Sunday treat. Sometimes there was an almond in her slice, sometimes not. It made a great difference. If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present—a surprise—something that might very well not have been there. She hurried on the almond Sundays and struck the match for the kettle in quite a dashing way.

But to-day she passed the baker's by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room—her room like a cupboard—and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying. (1920)

ERNEST HEMINGWAY The killers

THE DOOR of Henry's lunch-room opened and two men came in. They sat down at the counter.

"What's yours?" George asked them.

"I don't know," one of the men said. "What do you want to eat, Al?"

"I don't know," said Al. "I don't know what I want to eat."

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Outside it was getting dark. The street-light came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other end of the counter Nick Adams watched them. He had been talking to George when they came in.

"I'll have a roast pork tenderloin with apple sauce and mashed potatoes," the first man said.

"It isn't ready yet."

"What the hell do you put it on the card for?"

"That's the dinner," George explained. "You can get that at six o'clock."

George looked at the clock on the wall behind the counter.

"It's five o'clock."

"The clock says twenty minutes past five," the second man said.

"It's twenty minutes fast."

"Oh, to hell with the clock," the first man said. "What have you got to eat?"

"I can give you any kind of sandwiches," George said. "You can have ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver and bacon, or a steak."

"Give me chicken croquettes with green peas and cream sauce and mashed potatoes."

"That's the dinner."

"Everything we want's the dinner, eh? That's the way you work it."

"I can give you ham and eggs, bacon and eggs, liver——"

"I'll take ham and eggs," the man called Al said. He wore a derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across the chest. His face was small and white and he had tight lips. He wore a silk muffler and gloves.

"Give me bacon and eggs," said the other man. He was about the same size as Al. Their faces were different but they were dressed like twins. Both wore overcoats too tight for them. They sat leaning forward, their elbows on the counter.

"Got anything to drink?" Al asked.

"Silver beer, bevo, ginger-ale," George said.

"I mean you got anything to *drink*?"

"Just those I said."

"This is a hot town," said the other. "What do they call it?"

"Summit."

"Ever hear of it?" Al asked his friend.

"No," said the friend.

"What do you do here nights?" Al asked.

"They eat the dinner," his friend said. "They all come here and eat the big dinner."

"That's right," George said.

"So you think that's right?" Al asked George.

"Sure."

"You're a pretty bright boy, aren't you?"

"Sure," said George.

"Well, you're not," said the other little man. "Is he, Al?"

"He's dumb," said Al. He turned to Nick. "What's your name?"

"Adams."

"Another bright boy," Al said. "Ain't he a bright boy, Max?"

"The town's full of bright boys," Max said.

George put the two platters, one of ham and eggs, the other of bacon and eggs, on the counter. He set down two side-dishes of fried potatoes and closed the wicket into the kitchen.

"Which is yours?" he asked Al.

"Don't you remember?"

"Ham and eggs."

"Just a bright boy," Max said. He leaned forward and took the ham and eggs. Both men ate with their gloves on. George watched them eat.

"What are *you* looking at?" Max looked at George.

"Nothing."

"The hell you were. You were looking at me."

"Maybe the boy meant it for a joke, Max," Al said.

George laughed.

"*You* don't have to laugh," Max said to him. "*You* don't have to laugh at all, see?"

"All right," said George.

"So he thinks it's all right." Max turned to Al. "He thinks it's all right. That's a good one."

"Oh, he's a thinker," Al said. They went on eating.

"What's the bright boy's name down the counter?" Al asked Max.

"Hey, bright boy," Max said to Nick. "You go around on the other side of the counter with your boy friend."

"What's the idea?" Nick asked.

"There isn't any idea."

"You better go around, bright boy," Al said. Nick went around behind the counter.

"What's the idea?" George asked.

"None of your damn business," Al said. "Who's out in the kitchen?"

"The nigger."

"What do you mean the nigger?"

"The nigger that cooks."

"Tell him to come in."

"What's the idea?"

"Tell him to come in."

"Where do you think you are?"

"We know damn well where we are," the man called Max said. "Do we look silly?"

"You talk silly," Al said to him. "What the hell do you argue with this kid for? Listen," he said to George, "tell the nigger to come out here."

"What are you going to do to him?"

"Nothing. Use your head, bright boy. What would we do to a nigger?"

George opened the slit that opened back into the kitchen. "Sam," he called. "Come in here a minute."

The door to the kitchen opened and the nigger came in. "What was it?" he asked. The two men at the counter took a look at him.

"All right, nigger. You stand right there," Al said.

Sam, the nigger, standing in his apron, looked at the two men sitting at the counter. "Yes, sir," he said. Al got down from his stool.

"I'm going back to the kitchen with the nigger and bright boy," he said. "Go on back to the kitchen, nigger. You go with him, bright boy." The little man walked after Nick and Sam, the cook, back into the kitchen. The door shut after them. The man called Max sat at the counter opposite George. He didn't look at George but looked in the mirror that ran along back of the counter. Henry's had been made over from a saloon into a lunch-counter.

"Well, bright boy," Max said, looking into the mirror, "why don't you say something?"

"What's it all about?"

"Hey, Al," Max called, "bright boy wants to know what it's all about."

"Why don't you tell him?" Al's voice came from the kitchen.

"What do you think it's all about?"

"I don't know."

"What do you think?"

Max looked into the mirror all the time he was talking.

"I wouldn't say."

"Hey, Al, bright boy says he wouldn't say what he thinks it's all about."

"I can hear you, all right," Al said from the kitchen. He had propped open the slit that dishes passed through into the kitchen with a catsup bottle. "Listen, bright boy," he said from the kitchen to George. "Stand a little further along the bar. You move a little to the left, Max." He was like a photographer arranging for a group picture.

"Talk to me, bright boy," Max said. "What do you think's going to happen?"

George did not say anything.

"I'll tell you," Max said. "We're going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Andreson?"

"Yes."

"He comes here to eat every night, don't he?"

"Sometimes he comes here."

"He comes here at six o'clock, don't he?"

"If he comes."

"We know all that, bright boy," Max said. "Talk about something else. Ever go to the movies?"

"Once in a while."

"You ought to go to the movies more. The movies are fine for a bright boy like you."

"What are you going to kill Ole Andreson for? What did he ever do to you?"

"He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us."

"And he's only going to see us once," Al said from the kitchen.

"What are you going to kill him for, then?" George asked.

"We're killing him for a friend. Just to oblige a friend, bright boy."

"Shut up," said Al from the kitchen. "You talk too goddam much."

"Well, I got to keep bright boy amused. Don't I, bright boy?"

"You talk too damn much," Al said. "The nigger and my bright boy are amused by themselves. I got them tied up like a couple of girl friends in the convent."

"I suppose you were in a convent?"

"You never know."

"You were in a kosher convent. That's where you were."

George looked up at the clock.

"If anybody comes in you tell them the cook is off, and if they keep after it, you tell them you'll go back and cook yourself. Do you get that, bright boy?"

"All right," George said. "What you going to do with us afterward?"

"That'll depend," Max said. "That's one of those things you never know at the time."

George looked up at the clock. It was a quarter past six. The door from the street opened. A street-car motorman came in.

"Hello, George," he said. "Can I get supper?"

"Sam's gone out," George said. "He'll be back in about half an hour."

"I'd better go up the street," the motorman said. George looked at the clock. It was twenty minutes past six.

"That was nice, bright boy," Max said. "You're a regular little gentleman."

"He knew I'd blow his head off," Al said from the kitchen.

"No," said Max. "It ain't that. Bright boy is nice. He's a nice boy. I like him."

At six-fifty-five George said: "He's not coming."

Two other people had been in the lunch-room. Once George had gone out to the kitchen and made a ham-and-egg sandwich "to go" that a man wanted to take with him. Inside the kitchen he saw Al, his derby hat tipped back, sitting on a stool beside the wicket with the muzzle of a sawed off shotgun resting on the ledge. Nick and the cook were back to back in the corner, a towel tied in each of their mouths. George had cooked the sandwich, wrapped it up in oiled paper, put it in a bag, brought it in, and the man had paid for it and gone out.

"Bright boy can do everything," Max said. "He can cook and everything. You'd make some girl a nice wife, bright boy."

"Yes?" George said. "Your friend, Ole Andreson, isn't going to come."

"We'll give him ten minutes," Max said.

Max watched the mirror and the clock. The hands of the clock marked seven o'clock, and then five minutes past seven.

"Come on, Al," said Max. "We better go. He's not coming."

"Better give him five minutes," Al said from the kitchen.

In the five minutes a man came in, and George explained that the cook was sick.

"Why the hell don't you get another cook?" the man asked. "Aren't you running a lunch-counter?" He went out.

"Come on, Al," Max said.

"What about the two bright boys and the nigger?"

"They're all right."

"You think so?"

"Sure. We're through with it."

"I don't like it," said Al. "It's sloppy. You talk too much."

"Oh, what the hell," said Max. "We got to keep amused, haven't we?"

"You talk too much, all the same," Al said. He came out from the kitchen. The cut-off barrels of the shotgun made a slight bulge under the waist of his too tight-fitting overcoat. He straightened his coat with his gloved hands.

"So long, bright boy," he said to George. "You got a lot of luck."

"That's the truth," Max said. "You ought to play the races, bright boy."

The two of them went out the door. George watched them, through the window, pass under the arc-light and cross the street. In their tight overcoats and derby hats they looked like a vaudeville team. George went back through the swinging-door into the kitchen and untied Nick and the cook.

"I don't want any more of that," said Sam, the cook. "I don't want any more of that."

Nick stood up. He had never had a towel in his mouth before.

"Say," he said. "What the hell?" He was trying to swagger it off.

"They were going to kill Ole Andreson," George said. "They were going to shoot him when he came in to eat."

"Ole Andreson?"

"Sure."

The cook felt the corners of his mouth with his thumbs.

"They all gone?" he asked.

"Yeah," said George. "They're gone now."

"I don't like it," said the cook. "I don't like any of it at all."

"Listen," George said to Nick. "You better go see Ole Andreson."

"All right."

"You better not have anything to do with it at all," Sam, the cook, said. "You better stay way out of it."

"Don't go if you don't want to," George said.

"Mixing up in this ain't going to get you anywhere," the cook said. "You stay out of it."

"I'll go see him," Nick said to George. "Where does he live?"

The cook turned away.

"Little boys always know what they want to do," he said.

"He lives up at Hirsch's rooming-house," George said to Nick.

"I'll go up there."

Outside the arc-light shone through the bare branches of a tree. Nick walked up the street beside the car-tracks and turned at the next arc-light down a side-street. Three houses up the street was Hirsch's rooming-house. Nick walked up the two steps and pushed the bell. A woman came to the door.

"Is Ole Andreson here?"

"Do you want to see him?"

"Yes, if he's in."

Nick followed the woman up a flight of stairs and back to the end of a corridor. She knocked on the door.

"Who is it?"

"It's somebody to see you, Mr. Andreson," the woman said.

"It's Nick Adams."

"Come in."

Nick opened the door and went into the room. Ole Andreson was lying on the bed with all his clothes on. He had been a heavyweight prizefighter and he was too long for the bed. He lay with his head on two pillows. He did not look at Nick.

"What was it?" he asked.

"I was up at Henry's," Nick said, "and two fellows came in and tied up me and the cook, and they said they were going to kill you."

It sounded silly when he said it. Ole Andreson said nothing.

"They put us out in the kitchen," Nick went on. "They were going to shoot you when you came to supper."

Ole Andreson looked at the wall and did not say anything.

"George thought I better come and tell you about it."

"There isn't anything I can do about it," Ole Andreson said.

"I'll tell you what they were like."

"I don't want to know what they were like," Ole Andreson said. He looked at the wall. "Thanks for coming to tell me about it."

"That's all right."

Nick looked at the big man lying on the bed.

"Don't you want me to go and see the police?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."

"Isn't there something I could do?"

"No. There isn't anything to do."

"Maybe it was just a bluff."

"No. It ain't just a bluff."

Ole Andreson rolled over toward the wall.

"The only thing is," he said, talking toward the wall, "I just can't make up my mind to go out. I been in here all day."

"Couldn't you get out of town?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "I'm through with all that running around."

He looked at the wall.

"There ain't anything to do now."

"Couldn't you fix it up some way?"

"No. I got in wrong." He talked in the same flat voice. "There ain't anything to do. After a while I'll make up my mind to go out."

"I better go back and see George," Nick said.

"So long," said Ole Andreson. He did not look toward Nick. "Thanks for coming around."

Nick went out. As he shut the door he saw Ole Andreson with all his clothes on, lying on the bed looking at the wall.

"He's been in his room all day," the landlady said down-stairs. "I guess he don't feel well. I said to him: 'Mr. Andreson, you ought to go out and take a walk on a nice fall day like this,' but he didn't feel like it."

"He doesn't want to go out."

"I'm sorry he don't feel well," the woman said. "He's an awfully nice man. He was in the ring, you know."

"I know it."

"You'd never know it except from the way his face is," the woman said. They stood talking just inside the street door. "He's just as gentle."

"Well, good-night, Mrs. Hirsch," Nick said.

"I'm not Mrs. Hirsch," the woman said. "She owns the place. I just look after it for her. I'm Mrs. Bell."

"Well, good-night, Mrs. Bell," Nick said.

"Good-night," the woman said.

Nick walked up the dark street to the corner under the arc-light, and then along the car-tracks to Henry's eating-house. George was inside, back of the counter.

"Did you see Ole?"

"Yes," said Nick. "He's in his room and he won't go out."

The cook opened the door from the kitchen when he heard Nick's voice.

"I don't even listen to it," he said and shut the door.

"Did you tell him about it?" George asked.

"Sure. I told him but he knows what it's all about."

"What's he going to do?"

"Nothing."

"They'll kill him."

"I guess they will."

"He must have got mixed up in something in Chicago."

"I guess so," said Nick.

"It's a hell of a thing."

"It's an awful thing," Nick said.

They did not say anything. George reached down for a towel and wiped the counter.

"I wonder what he did?" Nick said.

"Double-crossed somebody. That's what they kill them for."

"I'm going to get out of this town," Nick said.

"Yes," said George. "That's a good thing to do."

"I can't stand to think about him waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it. It's too damned awful."

"Well," said George, "you better not think about it." (1927)

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

Flowering Judas

BRAGGIONI sits heaped upon the edge of a straightbacked chair much too small for him, and sings to Laura in a furry, mournful voice. Laura has begun to find reasons for avoiding her own house until the latest possible moment, for Braggioni is there almost every night. No matter how late she is, he will be sitting there with a surly, waiting expression, pulling at his kinky yellow hair, thumbing the strings of his guitar, snarling a tune under his breath. Lupe the Indian maid meets Laura at the door, and says with a flicker of a glance towards the upper room, "He waits."

Laura wishes to lie down, she is tired of her hairpins and the feel of her long tight sleeves, but she says to him, "Have you a new song for me this evening?" If he says yes, she asks him to sing it. If he says no, she remembers his favorite one, and asks him to sing it again. Lupe brings her a cup of chocolate and a plate of rice, and Laura eats at the small table under the lamp, first inviting Braggioni, whose answer is always the same: "I have eaten, and besides, chocolate thickens the voice."

Laura says, "Sing, then," and Braggioni heaves himself into song. He scratches the guitar familiarly as though it were a pet animal, and sings passionately off key, taking the high notes in a prolonged painful squeal. Laura, who haunts the markets listening to the ballad singers, and stops every day to hear the blind boy playing his reed-flute in Sixteenth of September Street, listens to Braggioni with pitiless courtesy, because she dares not smile at his miserable performance. Nobody dares to smile at him. Braggioni is cruel to everyone, with a kind of specialized insolence, but he is so vain of his talents, and so sensitive to slights, it would require a cruelty and vanity greater than his own to lay a finger on the vast cureless wound of his self-esteem. It would require courage, too, for it is dangerous to offend him, and nobody has this courage.

Braggioni loves himself with such tenderness and amplitude and eternal charity that his followers—for he is a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist, and his skin has been punctured in honorable warfare—warm themselves in the reflected glow, and say to each other: "He has a real nobility, a love of humanity raised above mere personal affections." The excess of this self-love has flowed out, inconveniently for her, over Laura, who, with so many others, owes her comfortable situation and her salary to him. When he is in

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a very good humor, he tells her, "I am tempted to forgive you for being a *gringa. Gringita!*" and Laura, burning, imagines herself leaning forward suddenly, and with a sound back-handed slap wiping the suety smile from his face. If he notices her eyes at these moments he gives no sign.

She knows what Braggioni would offer her, and she must resist tenaciously without appearing to resist, and if she could avoid it she would not admit even to herself the slow drift of his intention. During these long evenings which have spoiled a long month for her, she sits in her deep chair with an open book on her knees, resting her eyes on the consoling rigidity of the printed page when the sight and sound of Braggioni singing threaten to identify themselves with all her remembered afflictions and to add their weight to her uneasy premonitions of the future. The gluttonous bulk of Braggioni has become a symbol of her many disillusions, for a revolutionist should be lean, animated by heroic faith, a vessel of abstract virtues. This is nonsense, she knows it now and is ashamed of it. Revolution must have leaders, and leadership is a career for energetic men. She is, her comrades tell her, full of romantic error, for what she defines as cynicism in them is merely "a developed sense of reality." She is almost too willing to say, "I am wrong, I suppose I don't really understand the principles," and afterward she makes a secret truce with herself, determined not to surrender her will to such expedient logic. But she cannot help feeling that she has been betrayed irreparably by the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be, and at times she is almost contented to rest in this sense of grievance as a private store of consolation. Sometimes she wishes to run away, but she stays. Now she longs to fly out of this room, down the narrow stairs, and into the street where the houses lean together like conspirators under a single mottled lamp, and leave Braggioni singing to himself.

Instead she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior. Her knees cling together under sound blue serge, and her round white collar is not purposely nun-like. She wears the uniform of an idea, and has renounced vanities. She was born Roman Catholic, and in spite of her fear of being seen by someone who might make a scandal of it, she slips now and again into some crumbling little church, kneels on the chilly stone, and says a Hail Mary on the gold rosary she bought in Tehuantepec. It is no good and she ends by examining the altar with its tinsel flowers and ragged brocades, and feels tender about the battered doll-shape of some male saint whose white, lace-trimmed drawers hang limply around his ankles below the hieratic dignity of his velvet robe. She has encased herself in a set of principles derived from her early training, leaving no detail of gesture or of personal taste untouched,

and for this reason she will not wear lace made on machines. This is her private heresy, for in her special group the machine is sacred, and will be the salvation of the workers. She loves fine lace, and there is a tiny edge of fluted cobweb on this collar, which is one of twenty precisely alike, folded in blue tissue paper in the upper drawer of her clothes chest.

Braggioni catches her glance solidly as if he had been waiting for it, leans forward, balancing his paunch between his spread knees, and sings with tremendous emphasis, weighing his words. He has, the song relates, no father and no mother, nor even a friend to console him; lonely as a wave of the sea he comes and goes, lonely as a wave. His mouth opens round and yearns sideways, his balloon cheeks grow oily with the labor of song. He bulges marvelously in his expensive garments. Over his lavender collar, crushed upon a purple necktie, held by a diamond hoop: over his ammunition belt of tooled leather worked in silver, buckled cruelly around his gasping middle: over the tops of his glossy yellow shoes Braggioni swells with ominous ripeness, his mauve silk hose stretched taut, his ankles bound with the stout leather thongs of his shoes.

When he stretches his eyelids at Laura she notes again that his eyes are the true tawny yellow cat's eyes. He is rich, not in money, he tells her, but in power, and this power brings with it the blameless ownership of things, and the right to indulge his love of small luxuries. "I have a taste for the elegant refinements," he said once, flourishing a yellow silk handkerchief before her nose. "Smell that? It is Jockey Club, imported from New York." Nonetheless he is wounded by life. He will say so presently. "It is true everything turns to dust in the hand, to gall on the tongue." He sighs and his leather belt creaks like a saddle girth. "I am disappointed in everything as it comes. Everything." He shakes his head. "You, poor thing, you will be disappointed too. You are born for it. We are more alike than you realize in some things. Wait and see. Some day you will remember what I have told you, you will know that Braggioni was your friend."

Laura feels a slow chill, a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience. She has translated this fear into something homely, immediate, and sometimes hesitates before crossing the street. "My personal fate is nothing, except as the testimony of a mental attitude," she reminds herself, quoting from some forgotten philosophic primer, and is sensible enough to add, "Anyhow, I shall not be killed by an automobile if I can help it."

"It may be true I am as corrupt, in another way, as Braggioni," she thinks in spite of herself, "as callous, as incomplete," and if this is so, any kind of death seems preferable. Still she sits quietly, she does not run. Where could

she go? Uninvited she has promised herself to this place; she can no longer imagine herself as living in another country, and there is no pleasure in remembering her life before she came here.

Precisely what is the nature of this devotion, its true motives, and what are its obligations? Laura cannot say. She spends part of her days in Xochimilco, near by, teaching Indian children to say in English, "The cat is on the mat." When she appears in the classroom they crowd about her with smiles on their wise, innocent, clay-colored faces, crying, "Good morning, my titcher!" in immaculate voices, and they make of her desk a fresh garden of flowers every day.

During her leisure she goes to union meetings and listens to busy important voices quarreling over tactics, methods, internal politics. She visits the prisoners of her own political faith in their cells, where they entertain themselves with counting cockroaches, repenting of their indiscretions, composing their memoirs, writing out manifestoes and plans for their comrades who are still walking about free, hands in pockets, sniffing fresh air. Laura brings them food and cigarettes and a little money, and she brings messages disguised in equivocal phrases from the men outside who dare not set foot in the prison for fear of disappearing into the cells kept empty for them. If the prisoners confuse night and day, and complain, "Dear little Laura, time doesn't pass in this infernal hole, and I won't know when it is time to sleep unless I have a reminder," she brings them their favorite narcotics, and says in a tone that does not wound them with pity, "Tonight will really be night for you," and though her Spanish amuses them, they find her comforting, useful. If they lose patience and all faith, and curse the slowness of their friends in coming to their rescue with money and influence, they trust her not to repeat everything, and if she inquires, "Where do you think we can find money, or influence?" they are certain to answer, "Well, there is Braggioni, why doesn't he do something?"

She smuggles letters from headquarters to men hiding from firing squads in back streets in mildewed houses, where they sit in tumbled beds and talk bitterly as if all Mexico were at their heels, when Laura knows positively they might appear at the band concert in the Alameda on Sunday morning, and no one would notice them. But Braggioni says, "Let them sweat a little. The next time they may be careful. It is very restful to have them out of the way for a while." She is not afraid to knock on any door in any street after midnight, and enter in the darkness, and say to one of these men who is really in danger: "They will be looking for you—seriously—tomorrow morning after six. Here is some money from Vicente. Go to Vera Cruz and wait."

She borrows money from the Roumanian agitator to give to his bitter enemy the Polish agitator. The favor of Braggioni is their disputed territory,

and Braggioni holds the balance nicely, for he can use them both. The Polish agitator talks love to her over café tables, hoping to exploit what he believes is her secret sentimental preference for him, and he gives her misinformation which he begs her to repeat as the solemn truth to certain persons. The Roumanian is more adroit. He is generous with his money in all good causes, and lies to her with an air of ingenuous candor, as if he were her good friend and confidant. She never repeats anything they may say. Braggioni never asks questions. He has other ways to discover all that he wishes to know about them.

Nobody touches her, but all praise her gray eyes, and the soft, round under lip which promises gayety, yet is always grave, nearly always firmly closed: and they cannot understand why she is in Mexico. She walks back and forth on her errands, with puzzled eyebrows, carrying her little folder of drawings and music and school papers. No dancer dances more beautifully than Laura walks, and she inspires some amusing, unexpected ardors, which cause little gossip, because nothing comes of them. A young captain who had been a soldier in Zapata's army attempted, during a horseback ride near Cuernavaca, to express his desire for her with the noble simplicity befitting a rude folk-hero: but gently, because he was gentle. This gentleness was his defeat, for when he alighted, and removed her foot from the stirrup, and essayed to draw her down into his arms, her horse, ordinarily a tame one, shied fiercely, reared and plunged away. The young hero's horse careered blindly after his stable-mate, and the hero did not return to the hotel until rather late that evening. At breakfast he came to her table in full charro dress, gray buckskin jacket and trousers with strings of silver buttons down the leg, and he was in a humorous, careless mood. "May I sit with you?" and "You are a wonderful rider. I was terrified that you might be thrown and dragged. I should never have forgiven myself. But I cannot admire you enough for your riding!"

"I learned to ride in Arizona," said Laura.

"If you will ride with me again this morning, I promise you a horse that will not shy with you," he said. But Laura remembered that she must return to Mexico City at noon.

Next morning the children made a celebration and spent their playtime writing on the blackboard, "We lov ar ticher," and with tinted chalks they drew wreaths of flowers around the words. The young hero wrote her a letter: "I am a very foolish, wasteful, impulsive man. I should have first said I love you, and then you would not have run away. But you shall see me again." Laura thought, "I must send him a box of colored crayons," but she was trying to forgive herself for having spurred her horse at the wrong moment.

A brown, shock-haired youth came and stood in her patio one night and

sang like a lost soul for two hours, but Laura could think of nothing to do about it. The moonlight spread a wash of gauzy silver over the clear spaces of the garden, and the shadows were cobalt blue. The scarlet blossoms of the Judas tree were dull purple, and the names of the colors repeated themselves automatically in her mind, while she watched not the boy, but his shadow, fallen like a dark garment across the fountain rim, trailing in the water. Lupe came silently and whispered expert counsel in her ear: "If you will throw him one little flower, he will sing another song or two and go away." Laura threw the flower, and he sang a last song and went away with the flower tucked in the band of his hat. Lupe said, "He is one of the organizers of the Typographers Union, and before that he sold corridos in the Merced market, and before that, he came from Guanajuato, where I was born. I would not trust any man, but I trust least those from Guanajuato."

She did not tell Laura that he would be back again the next night, and the next, nor that he would follow her at a certain fixed distance around the Merced market, through the Zócolo, up Francisco I. Madero Avenue, and so along the Paseo de la Reforma to Chapultepec Park, and into the Philosopher's Footpath, still with that flower withering in his hat, and an indivisible attention in his eyes.

Now Laura is accustomed to him, it means nothing except that he is nineteen years old and is observing a convention with all propriety, as though it were founded on a law of nature, which in the end it might well prove to be. He is beginning to write poems which he prints on a wooden press, and he leaves them stuck like handbills in her door. She is pleasantly disturbed by the abstract, unhurried watchfulness of his black eyes which will in time turn easily towards another object. She tells herself that throwing the flower was a mistake, for she is twenty-two years old and knows better; but she refuses to regret it, and persuades herself that her negation of all external events as they occur is a sign that she is gradually perfecting herself in the stoicism she strives to cultivate against that disaster she fears, though she cannot name it.

She is not at home in the world. Every day she teaches children who remain strangers to her, though she loves their tender round hands and their charming opportunist savagery. She knocks at unfamiliar doors not knowing whether a friend or a stranger shall answer, and even if a known face emerges from the sour gloom of that unknown interior, still it is the face of a stranger. No matter what this stranger says to her, nor what her message to him, the very cells of her flesh reject knowledge and kinship in one monotonous word. No. No. No. She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying

everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement.

No, repeats this firm unchanging voice of her blood; and she looks at Braggioni without amazement. He is a great man, he wishes to impress this simple girl who covers her great round breasts with thick dark cloth, and who hides long, invaluably beautiful legs under a heavy skirt. She is almost thin except for the incomprehensible fullness of her breasts, like a nursing mother's, and Braggioni, who considers himself a judge of women, speculates again on the puzzle of her notorious virginity, and takes the liberty of speech which she permits without a sign of modesty, indeed, without any sort of sign, which is disconcerting.

"You think you are so cold, *gringita!* Wait and see. You will surprise yourself some day! May I be there to advise you!" He stretches his eyelids at her, and his ill-humored cat's eyes waver in a separate glance for the two points of light marking the opposite ends of a smoothly drawn path between the swollen curve of her breasts. He is not put off by that blue serge, nor by her resolutely fixed gaze. There is all the time in the world. His cheeks are bellying with the wind of song. "O girl with the dark eyes," he sings, and reconsiders. "But yours are not dark. I can change all that. O girl with the green eyes, you have stolen my heart away!" then his mind wanders to the song, and Laura feels the weight of his attention being shifted elsewhere. Singing thus, he seems harmless, he is quite harmless, there is nothing to do but sit patiently and say "No," when the moment comes. She draws a full breath, and her mind wanders also, but not far. She dares not wander too far.

Not for nothing has Braggioni taken pains to be a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity. He will never die of it. He has the malice, the cleverness, the wickedness, the sharpness of wit, the hardness of heart, stipulated for loving the world profitably. *He will never die of it.* He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviors. Traditionally he must sing in spite of his life which drives him to bloodshed, he tells Laura, for his father was a Tuscany peasant who drifted to Yucatan and married a Maya woman: a woman of race, an aristocrat. They gave him the love and knowledge of music, thus: and under the tip of his thumbnail, the strings of the instrument complain like exposed nerves.

Once he was called Delgadito by all the girls and married women who ran after him; he was so scrawny all his bones showed under his thin cotton clothing, and he could squeeze his emptiness to the very backbone with his two hands. He was a poet and the revolution was only a dream then; too many women loved him and sapped away his youth, and he could never

find enough to eat anywhere, anywhere! Now he is a leader of men, crafty men who whisper in his ear, hungry men who wait for hours outside his office for a word with him, emaciated men with wild faces who waylay him at the street gate with a timid, "Comrade, let me tell you . . ." and they blow the foul breath from their empty stomachs in his face.

He is always sympathetic. He gives them handfuls of small coins from his own pocket, he promises them work, there will be demonstrations, they must join the unions and attend the meetings, above all they must be on the watch for spies. They are closer to him than his own brothers, without them he can do nothing—until tomorrow, comrade!

Until tomorrow. "They are stupid, they are lazy, they are treacherous, they would cut my throat for nothing," he says to Laura. He has good food and abundant drink, he hires an automobile and drives in the Paseo on Sunday morning, and enjoys plenty of sleep in a soft bed beside a wife who dares not disturb him, and he sits pampering his bones in easy billows of fat, singing to Laura, who knows and thinks these things about him. When he was fifteen, he tried to drown himself because he loved a girl, his first love, and she laughed at him. "A thousand women have paid for that," and his tight little mouth turns down at the corners. Now he perfumes his hair with Jockey Club, and confides to Laura: "One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark. I prefer them all."

His wife organizes unions among the girls in the cigarette factories, and walks in picket lines, and even speaks at meetings in the evening. But she cannot be brought to acknowledge the benefits of true liberty. "I tell her I must have my freedom, net. She does not understand my point of view." Laura has heard this many times. Braggioni scratches the guitar and meditates. "She is an instinctively virtuous woman, pure gold, no doubt of that. If she were not, I should lock her up, and she knows it."

His wife, who works so hard for the good of the factory girls, employs part of her leisure lying on the floor weeping because there are so many women in the world, and only one husband for her, and she never knows where nor when to look for him. He told her: "Unless you can learn to cry when I am not here, I must go away for good." That day he went away and took a room at the Hotel Madrid.

It is this month of separation for the sake of higher principles that has been spoiled not only for Mrs. Braggioni, whose sense of reality is beyond criticism, but for Laura, who feels herself bogged in a nightmare. Tonight Laura envies Mrs. Braggioni, who is alone, and free to weep as much as she pleases about a concrete wrong. Laura has just come from a visit to the prison, and she is waiting for tomorrow with a bitter anxiety as if tomorrow may not come, but time may be caught immovably in this hour, with her-

self transfixed, Braggioni singing on forever, and Eugenio's body not yet discovered by the guard.

Braggioni says: "Are you going to sleep?" Almost before she can shake her head, he begins telling her about the May-day disturbances coming on in Morelia, for the Catholics hold a festival in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Socialists celebrate their martyrs on that day. "There will be two independent processions, starting from either end of town, and they will march until they meet, and the rest depends . . ." He asks her to oil and load his pistols. Standing up, he unbuckles his ammunition belt, and spreads it laden across her knees. Laura sits with the shells slipping through the cleaning cloth dipped in oil, and he says again he cannot understand why she works so hard for the revolutionary idea unless she loves some man who is in it. "Are you not in love with someone?" "No," says Laura. "And no one is in love with you?" "No." "Then it is your own fault. No woman need go begging. Why, what is the matter with you? The legless beggar woman in the Alameda has a perfectly faithful lover. Did you know that?"

Laura peers down the pistol barrel and says nothing, but a long, slow faintness rises and subsides in her; Braggioni curves his swollen fingers around the throat of the guitar and softly smothers the music out of it, and when she hears him again he seems to have forgotten her, and is speaking in the hypnotic voice he uses when talking in small rooms to a listening, close-gathered crowd. Some day this world, now seemingly so composed and eternal, to the edges of every sea shall be merely a tangle of gaping trenches, of crashing walls and broken bodies. Everything must be torn from its accustomed place where it has rotted for centuries, hurled skyward and distributed, cast down again clean as rain, without separate identity. Nothing shall survive that the stiffened hands of poverty have created for the rich and no one shall be left alive except the elect spirits destined to procreate a new world cleansed of cruelty and injustice, ruled by benevolent anarchy: "Pistols are good, I love them, cannon are even better, but in the end I pin my faith to good dynamite," he concludes, and strokes the pistol lying in her hands. "Once I dreamed of destroying this city, in case it offered resistance to General Ortíz, but it fell into his hands like an overripe pear."

He is made restless by his own words, rises and stands waiting. Laura holds up the belt to him: "Put that on, and go kill somebody in Morelia, and you will be happier," she says softly. The presence of death in the room makes her bold. "Today, I found Eugenio going into a stupor. He refused to allow me to call the prison doctor. He had taken all the tablets I brought him yesterday. He said he took them because he was bored."

"He is a fool, and his death is his own business," says Braggioni, fastening his belt carefully.

"I told him if he had waited only a little while longer, you would have got him set free," says Laura. "He said he did not want to wait."

"He is a fool and we are well rid of him," says Braggioni, reaching for his hat.

He goes away. Laura knows his mood has changed, she will not see him any more for a while. He will send word when he needs her to go on errands into strange streets, to speak to the strange faces that will appear, like clay masks with the power of human speech, to mutter their thanks to Braggioni for his help. Now she is free, and she thinks, I must run while there is time. But she does not go.

Braggioni enters his own house where for a month his wife has spent many hours every night weeping and tangling her hair upon her pillow. She is weeping now, and she weeps more at the sight of him, the cause of all her sorrows. He looks about the room. Nothing is changed, the smells are good and familiar, he is well acquainted with the woman who comes toward him with no reproach except grief on her face. He says to her tenderly: "You are so good, please don't cry any more, you dear good creature." She says, "Are you tired, my angel? Sit here and I will wash your feet." She brings a bowl of water, and kneeling, unlaces his shoes, and when from her knees she raises her sad eyes under her blackened lids, he is sorry for everything, and bursts into tears. "Ah, yes, I am hungry, I am tired, let us eat something together," he says, between sobs. His wife leans her head on his arm and says, "Forgive me!" and this time he is refreshed by the solemn, endless rain of her tears.

Laura takes off her serge dress and puts on a white linen nightgown and goes to bed. She turns her head a little to one side, and lying still, reminds herself that it is time to sleep. Numbers tick in her brain like little clocks, soundless doors close of themselves around her. If you would sleep, you must not remember anything, the children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor. 1-2-3-4-5 it is monstrous to confuse love with revolution, night with day, life with death—ah, Eugenio!

The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, you shall see—Murderer, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the Judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to

the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the Judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Murderer! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is my body and my blood. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again. (1930)

WILLIAM FAULKNER The bear

He was ten. But it had already begun, long before that day when at last he wrote his age in two figures and he saw for the first time the camp where his father and Major de Spain and old General Compson and the others spent two weeks each November and two weeks again each June. He had already inherited then, without ever having seen it, the tremendous bear with one trap-ruined foot which, in an area almost a hundred miles deep, had earned itself a name, a definite designation like a living man.

He had listened to it for years: the long legend of corncribs rifled, of shotes and grown pigs and even calves carried bodily into the woods and devoured, of traps and deadfalls overthrown and dogs mangled and slain, and shotgun and even rifle charges delivered at point-blank range and with no more effect than so many peas blown through a tube by a boy—a corridor of wreckage and destruction beginning back before he was born, through which sped, not fast but rather with the ruthless and irresistible deliberation of a locomotive, the shaggy tremendous shape.

It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It looked and towered in his dreams before he even saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, huge, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big—too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and the bullets they fired into it, too big for the very country

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which was its constricting scope. He seemed to see it entire with a child's complete divination before he ever laid eyes on either—the doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with axes and plows who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, through which ran not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life at which the puny humans swarmed and hacked in a fury of abhorrence and fear, like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant: the old bear solitary, indomitable and alone, widowered, childless, and absolved of mortality—old Priam reft of his old wife and having outlived all his sons.

Until he was ten, each November he would watch the wagon containing the dogs and the bedding and food and guns and his father and Tennie's Jim, the Negro, and Sam Fathers, the Indian, son of a slave woman and a Chickasaw chief, depart on the road to town, to Jefferson, where Major de Spain and the others would join them. To the boy, at seven, eight, and nine, they were not going into the Big Bottom to hunt bear and deer, but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill. Two weeks later they would return, with no trophy, no head and skin. He had not expected it. He had not even been afraid it would be in the wagon. He believed that even after he was ten and his father would let him go too, for those two weeks in November, he would merely make another one, along with his father and Major de Spain and General Compson and the others, the dogs which feared to bay at it and the rifles and shotguns which failed even to bleed it, in the yearly pageant of the old bear's furious immortality.

Then he heard the dogs. It was in the second week of his first time in the camp. He stood with Sam Fathers against a big oak beside the faint crossing where they had stood each dawn for nine days now, hearing the dogs. He had heard them once before, one morning last week—a murmur, sourceless, echoing through the wet woods, swelling presently into separate voices which he could recognize and call by name. He had raised and cocked the gun as Sam told him and stood motionless again while the uproar, the invisible course, swept up and past and faded; it seemed to him that he could actually see the deer, the buck, blond, smoke-colored, elongated with speed, fleeing, vanishing, the woods, the gray solitude, still ringing even when the cries of the dogs had died away.

"Now let the hammers down," Sam said.

"You knew they were not coming here too," he said.

"Yes," Sam said. "I want you to learn how to do when you didn't shoot.

It's after the chance for the bear or the deer has done already come and gone that men and dogs get killed."

"Anyway," he said, "it was just a deer."

Then on the tenth morning he heard the dogs again. And he readied the too-long, too-heavy gun as Sam had taught him, before Sam even spoke. But this time it was no deer, no ringing chorus of dogs running strong on a free scent, but a moiling yapping an octave too high, with something more than indecision and even abjectness in it, not even moving very fast, taking a long time to pass completely out of hearing, leaving then somewhere in the air that echo, thin, slightly hysterical, abject, almost grieving, with no sense of a fleeing, unseen, smoke-colored, grass-eating shape ahead of it, and Sam, who had taught him first of all to cock the gun and take position where he could see everywhere and then never move again, had himself moved up beside him; he could hear Sam breathing at his shoulder, and he could see the arched curve of the old man's inhaling nostrils.

"Hah," Sam said. "Not even running. Walking."

"Old Ben!" the boy said. "But up here!" he cried. "Way up here!"

"He do it every year," Sam said. "Once. Maybe to see who in camp this time, if he can shoot or not. Whether we got the dog yet that can bay and hold him. He'll take them to the river, then he'll send them back home. We may as well go back too; see how they look when they come back to camp."

When they reached the camp the hounds were already there, ten of them crouching back under the kitchen, the boy and Sam squatting to peer back into the obscurity where they had huddled, quiet, the eyes luminous, glowing at them and vanishing, and no sound, only that effluvium of something more than dog, stronger than dog and not just animal, just beast, because still there had been nothing in front of that abject and almost painful yapping save the solitude, the wilderness, so that when the eleventh hound came in at noon and with all the others watching—even old Uncle Ash, who called himself first a cook—Sam daubed the tattered ear and the raked shoulder with turpentine and axle grease, to the boy it was still no living creature, but the wilderness which, leaning for the moment down, had patted lightly once the hound's temerity.

"Just like a man," Sam said. "Just like folks. Put off as long as she could having to be brave, knowing all the time that sooner or later she would have to be brave to keep on living with herself, and knowing all the time beforehand what was going to happen to her when she done it."

That afternoon, himself on the one-eyed wagon mule which did not mind the smell of blood nor, as they told him, of bear, and with Sam on the other one, they rode for more than three hours through the rapid,

shortening winter day. They followed no path, no trail even that he could see; almost at once they were in a country which he had never seen before. Then he knew why Sam had made him ride the mule which would not spook. The sound one stopped short and tried to whirl and bolt even as Sam got down, blowing its breath, jerking and wrenching at the rein, while Sam held it, coaxing it forward with his voice, since he could not risk tying it, drawing it forward while the boy got down from the marred one.

Then, standing beside Sam in the gloom of the dying afternoon, he looked down at the rotted over-turned log, gutted and scored with claw marks and, in the wet earth beside it, the print of the enormous warped two-toed foot. He knew now what he had smelled when he peered under the kitchen where the dogs huddled. He realized for the first time that the bear which had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember to the contrary, and which, therefore, must have existed in the listening and dreams of his father and Major de Spain and even old General Compson, too, before they began to remember in their turn, was a mortal animal, and that if they had departed for the camp each November without any actual hope of bringing its trophy back, it was not because it could not be slain, but because so far they had had no actual hope to.

"Tomorrow," he said.

"We'll try tomorrow," Sam said. "We ain't got the dog yet."

"We've got eleven. They ran him this morning."

"It won't need but one," Sam said. "He ain't here. Maybe he ain't nowhere. The only other way will be for him to run by accident over somebody that has a gun."

"That wouldn't be me," the boy said. "It will be Walter or Major or—"

"It might," Sam said. "You watch close in the morning. Because he's smart. That's how come he has lived this long. If he gets hemmed up and has to pick out somebody to run over, he will pick out you."

"How?" the boy said. "How will he know—" He ceased. "You mean he already knows me, that I ain't never been here before, ain't had time to find out yet whether I—" He ceased again, looking at Sam, the old man whose face revealed nothing until it smiled. He said humbly, not even amazed, "It was me he was watching. I don't reckon he did need to come but once."

The next morning they left the camp three hours before daylight. They rode this time because it was too far to walk, even the dogs in the wagon; again the first gray light found him in a place which he had never seen before, where Sam had placed him and told him to stay and then departed. With the gun which was too big for him, which did not even belong to him,

but to Major de Spain, and which he had fired only once—at a stump on the first day, to learn the recoil and how to reload it—he stood against a gum tree beside a little bayou whose black still water crept without movement out of a canebrake and crossed a small clearing and into cane again, where, invisible, a bird—the big woodpecker called Lord-to-God by Negroes—clattered at a dead limb.

It was a stand like any other, dissimilar only in incidentals to the one where he had stood each morning for ten days; a territory new to him, yet no less familiar than that other one which, after almost two weeks, he had come to believe he knew a little—the same solitude, the same loneliness through which human beings had merely passed without altering it, leaving no mark, no scar, which looked exactly as it must have looked when the first ancestor of Sam Fathers' Chickasaw predecessors crept into it and looked about, club or stone ax or bone arrow drawn and poised; different only because, squatting at the edge of the kitchen, he smelled the hounds huddled and cringing beneath it and saw the raked ear and shoulder of the one who, Sam said, had had to be brave once in order to live with herself, and saw yesterday in the earth beside the gutted log the print of the living foot.

He heard no dogs at all. He never did hear them. He only heard the drumming of the woodpecker stop short off and knew that the bear was looking at him. He never saw it. He did not know whether it was in front of him or behind him. He did not move, holding the useless gun, which he had not even had warning to cock and which even now he did not cock, tasting in his saliva that taint as of brass which he knew now because he had smelled it when he peered under the kitchen at the huddled dogs.

Then it was gone. As abruptly as it had ceased, the woodpecker's dry, monotonous clatter set up again, and after a while he even believed he could hear the dogs—a murmur, scarce a sound even, which he had probably been hearing for some time before he even remarked it, drifting into hearing and then out again, dying away. They came nowhere near him. If it was a bear they ran, it was another bear. It was Sam himself who came out of the cane and crossed the bayou, followed by the injured bitch of yesterday. She was almost at heel, like a bird dog, making no sound. She came and crouched against his leg, trembling, staring off into the cane.

"I didn't see him," he said. "I didn't, Sam!"

"I know it," Sam said. "He done the looking. You didn't hear him neither, did you?"

"No," the boy said. "I—"

"He's smart," Sam said. "Too smart." He looked down at the hound, trem-

bling faintly and steadily against the boy's knee. From the raked shoulder a few drops of fresh blood oozed and clung. "Too big. We ain't got the dog yet. But maybe someday. Maybe not next time. But someday."

So I must see him, he thought. *I must look at him.* Otherwise, it seemed to him that it would go on like this forever, as it had gone on with his father and Major de Spain, who was older than his father, and even with old General Compson, who had been old enough to be a brigade commander in 1865. Otherwise, it would go on so forever, next time and next time, after and after and after. It seemed to him that he could never see the two of them, himself and the bear, shadowy in the limbo from which time emerged, becoming time; the old bear absolved of mortality and himself partaking, sharing a little of it, enough of it. And he knew now what he had smelled in the huddled dogs and tasted in his saliva. He recognized fear. *So I will have to see him,* he thought, without dread or even hope. *I will have to look at him.*

It was in June of the next year. He was eleven. They were in camp again, celebrating Major de Spain's and General Compson's birthdays. Although the one had been born in September and the other in the depth of winter and in another decade, they had met for two weeks to fish and shoot squirrels and turkey and run coons and wildcats with the dogs at night. That is, he and Boon Hoggenback and the Negroes fished and shot squirrels and ran the coons and cats, because the proved hunters, not only Major de Spain and old General Compson, who spent those two weeks sitting in a rocking chair before a tremendous iron pot of Brunswick stew, stirring and tasting, with old Ash to quarrel with about how he was making it and Tennie's Jim to pour whiskey from the demijohn into the tin dipper from which he drank it, but even the boy's father and Walter Ewell, who were still young enough, scorned such, other than shooting the wild gobblers with pistols for wagers on their marksmanship.

Or, that is, his father and the others believed he was hunting squirrels. Until the third day, he thought that Sam Fathers believed that too. Each morning he would leave the camp right after breakfast. He had his own gun now, a Christmas present. He went back to the tree beside the bayou where he had stood that morning. Using the compass which old General Compson had given him, he ranged from that point; he was teaching himself to be a better-than-fair woodsman without knowing he was doing it. On the second day he even found the gutted log where he had first seen the crooked print. It was almost completely crumbled now, healing with unbelievable speed, a passionate and almost visible relinquishment, back into the earth from which the tree had grown.

He ranged the summer woods now, green with gloom; if anything, actually dimmer than in November's gray dissolution, where, even at noon, the sun fell only in intermittent dappling upon the earth, which never completely dried out and which crawled with snakes—moccasins and water snakes and rattlers, themselves the color of the dappling gloom, so that he would not always see them until they moved, returning later and later, first day, second day, passing in the twilight of the third evening the little log pen enclosing the log stable where Sam was putting up the horses for the night.

"You ain't looked right yet," Sam said.

He stopped. For a moment he didn't answer. Then he said peacefully, in a peaceful rushing burst as when a boy's miniature dam in a little brook gives way, "All right. But how? I went to the bayou. I even found that log again. I—"

"I reckon that was all right. Likely he's been watching you. You never saw his foot?"

"I," the boy said—"I didn't—I never thought—"

"It's the gun," Sam said. He stood beside the fence, motionless—the old man, the Indian, in the battered faded overalls and the five-cent straw hat which in the Negro's race had been the badge of his enslavement and was now the regalia of his freedom. The camp—the clearing, the house, the barn and its tiny lot with which Major de Spain in his turn had scratched punily and evanescently at the wilderness—faded in the dusk, back into the immemorial darkness of the woods. *The gun,* the boy thought. *The gun.*

"Be scared," Sam said. "You can't help that. But don't be afraid. Ain't nothing in the woods going to hurt you unless you corner it, or it smells that you are afraid. A bear or a deer, too, has got to be scared of a coward the same as a brave man has got to be."

The gun, the boy thought.

"You will have to choose," Sam said.

He left the camp before daylight, long before Uncle Ash would wake in his quilts on the kitchen floor and start the fire for breakfast. He had only the compass and a stick for snakes. He could go almost a mile before he would begin to need the compass. He sat on a log, the invisible compass in his invisible hand, while the secret night sounds, fallen still at his movements, scurried again and then ceased for good, and the owls ceased and gave over to the waking of day birds, and he could see the compass. Then he went fast yet still quietly; he was becoming better and better as a woodsman, still without having yet realized it.

He jumped a doe and a fawn at sunrise, walked them out of the bed, close enough to see them—the crash of undergrowth, the white scut, the fawn scudding behind her faster than he had believed it could run. He was hunt-

ing right, upwind, as Sam had taught him; not that it mattered now. He had left the gun; of his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the old rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. He would not even be afraid, not even in the moment when the fear would take him completely—blood, skin, bowels, bones, memory from the long time before it became his memory—all save that thin, clear, immortal lucidity which alone differed him from this bear and from all the other bear and deer he would ever kill in the humility and pride of his skill and endurance, to which Sam had spoken when he leaned in the twilight on the lot fence yesterday.

By noon he was far beyond the little bayou, farther into the new and alien country than he had ever been. He was traveling now not only by the old, heavy, biscuit-thick silver watch which had belonged to his grandfather. When he stopped at last, it was for the first time since he had risen from the log at dawn when he could see the compass. It was far enough. He had left the camp nine hours ago; nine hours from now, dark would have already been an hour old. But he didn't think that. He thought, *All right. Yes. But what?* and stood for a moment, alien and small in the green and topless solitude, answering his own question before it had formed and ceased. It was the watch, the compass, the stick—the three lifeless mechanicals with which for nine hours he had fended the wilderness off; he hung the watch and compass carefully on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and relinquished completely to it.

He had not been going very fast for the last two or three hours. He went no faster now, since distance would not matter even if he could have gone fast. And he was trying to keep a bearing on the tree where he had left the compass, trying to complete a circle which would bring him back to it or at least intersect itself, since direction would not matter now either. But the tree was not there, and he did as Sam had schooled him—made the next circle in the opposite direction, so that the two patterns would bisect somewhere, but crossing no print of his own feet, finding the tree at last, but in the wrong place—no bush, no compass, no watch—and the tree not even the tree, because there was a down log beside it and he did what Sam Fathers had told him was the next thing and the last.

As he sat down on the log he saw the crooked print—the warped, tremendous, two-toed indentation which, even as he watched it, filled with water. As he looked up, the wilderness coalesced, solidified—the glade, the tree he sought, the bush, the watch and the compass glinting where a ray of sunshine touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and wind-

less noon, not as big as he had dreamed it, but as big as he had expected it, bigger, dimensionless, against the dappled obscurity, looking at him where he sat quietly on the log and looked back at it.

Then it moved. It made no sound. It did not hurry. It crossed the glade, walking for an instant into the full glare of the sun; when it reached the other side it stopped again and looked back at him across one shoulder while his quiet breathing inhaled and exhaled three times.

Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods, the undergrowth. It faded, sank back into the wilderness as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink and vanish into the dark depths of its pool without even any movement of its fins.

He thought, *It will be next fall.* But it was not next fall, nor the next nor the next. He was fourteen then. He had killed his buck, and Sam Fathers had marked his face with the hot blood, and in the next year he killed a bear. But even before that accolade he had become as competent in the woods as many grown men with the same experience; by his fourteenth year he was a better woodsman than most grown men with more. There was no territory within thirty miles of the camp that he did not know—bayou, ridge, brake, landmark, tree and path. He could have led anyone to any point in it without deviation, and brought them out again. He knew the game trails that even Sam Fathers did not know; in his thirteenth year he found a buck's bedding place, and unbeknown to his father he borrowed Walter Ewell's rifle and lay in wait at dawn and killed the buck when it walked back to the bed, as Sam had told him how the old Chickasaw fathers did.

But not the old bear, although by now he knew its footprints better than he did his own, and not only the crooked one. He could see any one of the three sound ones and distinguish it from any other, and not only by its size. There were other bears within these thirty miles which left tracks almost as large, but this was more than that. If Sam Fathers had been his mentor and the back-yard rabbits and squirrels at home his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college, the old male bear itself, so long unwifed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater. But he never saw it.

He could find the crooked print now almost whenever he liked, fifteen or ten or five miles, or sometimes nearer the camp than that. Twice while on stand during the three years he heard the dogs strike its trail by accident; on the second time they jumped it seemingly, the voices high, abject, almost human in hysteria, as on that first morning two years ago. But not the bear itself. He would remember that noon three years ago, the glade, himself and the bear fixed during that moment in the windless and dappled blaze,

and it would seem to him that it had never happened, that he had dreamed that too. But it had happened. They had looked at each other, they had emerged from the wilderness old as earth, synchronized to the instant by something more than the blood that moved the flesh and bones which bore them, and touched, pledged something, affirmed, something more lasting than the frail web of bones and flesh which any accident could obliterate.

Then he saw it again. Because of the very fact that he thought of nothing else, he had forgotten to look for it. He was still hunting with Walter Ewell's rifle. He saw it cross the end of a long blow-down, a corridor where a tornado had swept, rushing through rather than over the tangle of trunks and branches as a locomotive would have, faster than he had ever believed it could move, almost as fast as a deer even, because a deer would have spent most of that time in the air, faster than he could bring the rifle sights up with it. And now he knew what had been wrong during all the three years. He sat on a log, shaking and trembling as if he had never seen the woods before nor anything that ran them, wondering with incredulous amazement how he could have forgotten the very thing which Sam Fathers had told him and which the bear itself had proved the next day and had now returned after three years to reaffirm.

And now he knew what Sam Fathers had meant about the right dog, a dog in which size would mean less than nothing. So when he returned alone in April—school was out then, so that the sons of farmers could help with the land's planting, and at last his father had granted him permission, on his promise to be back in four days—he had the dog. It was his own, a mongrel of the sort called by Negroes a fyce, a ratter, itself not much bigger than a rat and possessing that bravery which had long since stopped being courage and had become foolhardiness.

It did not take four days. Alone again, he found the trail on the first morning. It was not a stalk; it was an ambush. He timed the meeting almost as if it were an appointment with a human being. Himself holding the fyce muffled in a feed sack and Sam Fathers with two of the hounds on a piece of a plowline rope, they lay down wind of the trail at dawn of the second morning. They were so close that the bear turned without even running, as if in surprised amazement at the shrill and frantic uproar of the released fyce, turning at bay against the trunk of a tree, on its hind feet; it seemed to the boy that it would never stop rising, taller and taller, and even the two hounds seemed to take a desperate and despairing courage from the fyce, following it as it went in.

Then he realized that the fyce was actually not going to stop. He flung, threw the gun away, and ran; when he overtook and grasped the frantically

pin-wheeling little dog, it seemed to him that he was directly under the bear.

He could smell it, strong and hot and rank. Sprawling, he looked up to where it loomed and towered over him like a cloudburst and colored like a thunderclap, quite familiar, peacefully and even lucidly familiar, until he remembered: This was the way he had used to dream about it. Then it was gone. He didn't see it go. He knelt, holding the frantic fyce with both hands, hearing the abashed wailing of the hounds drawing farther and farther away, until Sam came up. He carried the gun. He laid it down quietly beside the boy and stood looking down at him.

"You've done seed him twice now with a gun in your hands," he said. "This time you couldn't have missed him."

The boy rose. He still held the fyce. Even in his arms and clear of the ground, it yapped frantically, straining and surging after the fading uproar of the two hounds like a tangle of wire springs. He was panting a little, but he was neither shaking nor trembling now.

"Neither could you!" he said. "You had the gun! Neither did you!"

"And you didn't shoot," his father said. "How close were you?"

"I don't know, sir," he said. "There was a big wood tick inside his right hind leg. I saw that. But I didn't have the gun then."

"But you didn't shoot when you had the gun," his father said. "Why?"

But he didn't answer, and his father didn't wait for him to, rising and crossing the room, across the pelt of the bear which the boy had killed two years ago and the larger one which his father had killed before he was born, to the bookcase beneath the mounted head of the boy's first buck. It was the room which his father called the office, from which all the plantation business was transacted; in it for the fourteen years of his life he had heard the best of all talking. Major de Spain would be there and sometimes old General Compson, and Walter Ewell and Boon Hoggenback and Sam Fathers and Tennie's Jim, too, were hunters, knew the woods and what ran them.

He would hear it, not talking himself but listening—the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it or Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey. It was of the men, not white nor black nor red, but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and reliefed against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest by the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exact remembering, while he squatted in the blazing fire-

light as Tennie's Jim squatted, who stirred only to put more wood on the fire and to pass the bottle from one glass to another. Because the bottle was always present, so that after a while it seemed to him that those fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they had spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base hope of acquiring the virtues of cunning and strength and speed, but in salute to them.

His father returned with the book and sat down again and opened it. "Listen," he said. He read the five stanzas aloud, his voice quiet and deliberate in the room where there was no fire now because it was already spring. Then he looked up. The boy watched him. "All right," his father said. "Listen." He read again, but only the second stanza this time, to the end of it, the last two lines, and closed the book and put it on the table beside him. "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair," he said.

"He's talking about a girl," the boy said.

"He had to talk about something," his father said. Then he said, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. Truth is one thing. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?"

He didn't know. Somehow it was simpler than that. There was an old bear, fierce and ruthless, not merely just to stay alive, but with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, proud enough of the liberty and freedom to see it threatened without fear or even alarm; nay, who at times even seemed deliberately to put that freedom and liberty in jeopardy in order to savor them, to remind his old strong bones and flesh to keep supple and quick to defend and preserve them. There was an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one side of the long chronicle of a people who had learned humility through suffering, and pride through the endurance which survived the suffering and injustice, and on the other side, the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who no longer existed in the land at all save in the solitary brotherhood of an old Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear. There was a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods, who suddenly found himself becoming so skillful so rapidly that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride, although he had tried to, until one day and as suddenly he discovered that an old man who could not have defined either had led him, as though by the hand, to that point where an old bear and a

little mongrel of a dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both.

And a little dog, nameless and mongrel and many-fathered, grown, yet weighing less than six pounds, saying as if to itself, "I can't be dangerous, because there's nothing much smaller than I am; I can't be fierce, because they would call it just a noise; I can't be humble, because I'm already too close to the ground to genuflect; I can't be proud, because I wouldn't be near enough to it for anyone to know who was casting the shadow, and I don't even know that I'm not going to heaven, because they have already decided that I don't possess an immortal soul. So all I can be is brave. But it's all right. I can be that, even if they still call it just noise."

That was all. It was simple, much simpler than somebody talking in a book about youth and a girl he would never need to grieve over, because he could never approach any nearer her and would never have to get any farther away. He had heard about a bear, and finally got big enough to trail it, and he trailed it four years and at last met it with a gun in his hands and he didn't shoot. Because a little dog—But he could have shot long before the little dog covered the twenty yards to where the bear waited, and Sam Fathers could have shot at any time during that interminable minute while Old Ben stood on his hind feet over them. He stopped. His father was watching him gravely across the spring-rife twilight of the room; when he spoke, his words were as quiet as the twilight, too, not loud, because they did not need to be because they would last, "Courage, and honor, and pride," his father said, "and pity, and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know the truth. Do you see now?"

Sam, and Old Ben, and Nip, he thought. And himself too. He had been all right too. His father had said so. "Yes, sir," he said. (1942)

The drama

Your study of literary craftsmanship in general and of the short story in particular has given you a good start toward understanding and appreciating dramas. Plots in dramas are in many respects like those in short stories: the overall patterns are similar, and the relationships between happening and happening, or between characters and actions, are similar. Moreover, much of what you have learned about setting, language, tone, meanings, and evaluations applies to the reading of plays.

Yet dramatic writing has peculiarities which you must keep in mind if you are to read it well. The unique purpose for which a play is written naturally influences its substance and form. Always you will find it useful to remember that a dramatic work—unless it is that rare thing, a "closet drama"—is a narrative form designed to be interpreted by actors on a stage in a theater. Dramatists as a result write primarily not for the general reader but for people of the theater likely to be concerned with stage presentations — producers, scene designers, directors, actors, and the like. The playwright sets down only what such specialists need—ordinarily mere hints about the scenery, about the appearance of characters, about the actors, plus everything the characters are to say.

When theatrical folk read dramas, they try to imagine exactly how such notations may be translated into an actual production. When we read a play, we should, to the best of our ability, do the same thing. As Schlegel, a famed critic of drama, says, "In reading dramatic works, our habitual practice is to supply the representation." Like a producer or an actor, in other words, we try to see what is implied by every detail which the author has given us. We form mental images of the theater and of the stage settings, and of the actors—their appearance, the quality of their voices and intonations, the nature of their gestures and movements. Furthermore, we note the nature of the motivation, of the plot, and of the tone, in ways appropriate for the reading of plays.

This means that we ask and answer —as well as we can—these questions: (1) How has the nature of the theater and of the audience shaped this play? (2) What are the implied thoughts, the feelings, and the motives of the characters in each scene? (3) How are the parts—the acts and scenes—important in the development of the whole play? (4) Is the tone that of tragedy, that of comedy, that of melodrama, that of farce, or a combination?

Theater and audience

How has *the nature of the theater and of the audience shaped this play?*

Every drama is designed for performance at a certain time and in a certain place. The limitations and the possibilities of the theater to a large degree determine the substance of a play and shape its form. Clearly, for instance, the dramas presented under the open sky in the orchestral space of a Greek

amphitheater (see p. 425) will differ greatly from those produced on the curtained and lighted stage of the modern playhouse. The scenic representation in Greek dramas, for one thing, was very different from scenic representation in modern productions. In the Greek dramas, it was simple and inflexible; in modern plays, it may be as elaborate as is necessary, and it may be completely changed one or more times in a play.

The audience, too, wields its influence. The physical position of the audience in relationship to the stage is bound to be important. In early theaters, down through the time of Shakespeare, the stage was in the midst of the audience or it at least projected into the audience. From that position, as time passed, it gradually receded until it came to be on the rim of a half circle occupied by the spectators. The result, naturally, was a decrease in the intimacy of the relationship between actor and spectator, and consequent changes in the dramas. In addition, audiences have varied from period to period in their make-up: sometimes they have been a cross section of a whole population, again they have been drawn from only one or two social classes. Since every dramatist wrote to please a particular audience, your knowledge of the education, the beliefs, and the psychology of the audience for which any play was written will help you understand the nature of the appeals of the play.

J. Dover Wilson affords an example of the importance of considering the audience. In his interesting study, *What Happens in Hamlet,* he suggests that it was natural for Elizabethans to interpret what happened in ancient Denmark into Elizabethan terms. "A trivial point, it may be said," he remarks, "yet it is one of far-reaching importance. For if Shakespeare and his audience thought of the constitution of Denmark in English terms, then Hamlet was rightful heir to the throne and Claudius a usurper." Understanding this point is vital to the understanding of the whole play. "The usurpation," as Wilson says, "is one of the main factors in the plot of *Hamlet.* . . ."

Thoughts, feelings, motives

WHAT ARE *the implied thoughts, the feelings, and the motives of the characters in each scene?*

Because his work is designed not to be told but to be acted, the playwright, perforce, ordinarily uses the objective point of view (see p. 209). In some periods, conventions of the stage—understandings, as it were, between the playwright and the audience—allow the actors to speak their thoughts to the spectators in soliloquies and asides. In most periods, however, these are used sparingly, and in modern times they have almost entirely disappeared. Since the playwright cannot open the heads and breasts of living men and women to permit us to peer into their minds and hearts, he is forced to show motives indirectly by means of speeches and actions.

Such speeches and actions must be examined by the alert reader for implications. What, you must ask yourself, lies behind that speech, that deed? Granted that this is what the character says and does, what is he really thinking and feeling? To answer these questions, you need, obviously, to have a clear idea about the nature of the character: you need to know what his traits are, why he is likely to act as he does, how likely he is to unfold his true thoughts, how articulate he will be in

analyzing his motives. But the method of showing characters makes this fairly difficult: you come to know the characters in a play only gradually—speech by speech, happening by happening. This means that you should make an effort from the first scene to draw every possible inference about each character, and that you should keep in mind your deductions and modify them or supplement them when you can. Thus only may you prepare to formulate as precisely as possible the thoughts, the feelings, and the motivations of each character in every scene throughout the drama.

In reading *Hamlet,* for instance, you first encounter Claudius, the usurping king, as he holds a Council Meeting in Act I, Scene ii. You read his words as he takes up a series of problems. You notice his way of talking to various people. You weigh each speech. And if you are as discerning as possible, you note, with Granville Barker, that "his tactless tact, the mellifluous excess of speech, the smiling kindness over done—such falseness shows that he feels his position to be false." Such an initial perception is supplemented by others as you read on in the play, and when, later, Claudius tries to arrange for Hamlet's execution, you understand the reason.

Scenes related to the play

HOW ARE *the parts—the acts and scenes—important in the development of the whole play?*

You recall how important it was, in reading the short story, to become aware of the nature of the whole work. Similarly, in reading a drama, you should become aware of the general pattern of the happenings, and of the relationship to this pattern of all other elements. After reading a drama, you should be able to see whatever foreshadowings there are of the events, and to comprehend the general course of all the happenings from the beginning to the conclusion.

Not only should you notice the course of the whole play; you should also notice the relationship of the parts—the acts and scenes—to the whole work. The dramatist, as a rule, is forced to divide his story into acts and scenes. A continuous narrative such as you find in some short stories is impossible, and summaries of action are for the most part impractical. This means that the dramatist must leave out many scenes which a fiction writer might portray, that he must be content with brief references to others, and that he must select and fully develop only those scenes which will best set forth the pattern of happenings which makes up the plot of his drama. Therefore, you will learn much by considering the artistic justification for certain omissions and certain summaries, and, above all, for the complete working out of the chosen scenes. You will find it useful to notice exactly what each scene accomplishes —how, for instance, the opening scene or scenes offer an exposition (i.e., the details the audience needs to understand the initial situation), and how scenes and acts, in order, mark stages in the advancement of the plot to climactic developments, conflicts, or changes. To notice how the play progresses from scene to scene is an important step toward understanding and appreciating the whole work.

Tone in drama

IS THE TONE *that of tragedy, that of comedy, that of melodrama, that of farce, or a combination?*

The playwright, unlike other narra-

tive writers, cannot lift his own voice to interpret the meanings of what he sets before you: the drama is a form in which the intrusive author is an impossibility. The playwright cannot state directly his judgments of the characters and their deeds; nor can he tell you what he wants his play to signify. However, he probably will choose a dramatic form which will give you important clues concerning his attitude toward his material and the way he wants you to interpret his work. Over the years, dramatists in general have found four chief forms satisfactory for this purpose—tragedy, comedy, melodrama, and farce.[1] When you discover what choice among these forms an author has made, you define the general tone of his play.

The concepts of *tragedy* differ from period to period, as you will see when you read *Oedipus*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *Anna Christie*. However, certain qualities of tragedy have been fairly constant. One thing often said of tragedies is that they end unhappily, with the death, as a rule, of the hero or the heroine. Although there are some exceptions, tragedies usually do end disastrously. A playwright, however, cannot make a tragedy simply by tacking on an unhappy conclusion. Other things are important, indeed more important, notably a preparation for the ending which indicates its inevitability and a treatment of a subject which in the minds of the immediate audience is highly serious. The conclusion of a tragedy, in other words, must be the logical outcome of the struggle of the protagonist against his opponents or against himself in a given situation. And the central conflict must be a struggle which the audience believes is significant—man against the gods, say, or against fate, or against the promptings of his own character. Furthermore, such a conflict must be treated, not frivolously or playfully, but seriously and sincerely.

Since it treats a vital conflict seriously, a tragedy as a rule is found to have universal significance. You, the reader, note that the plight of the protagonist is similar to a plight in which you may find yourself—that the problems of the play, whether ancient or modern, are in a sense your problems, too. As a result, you find a meaning for yourself in the inevitable outcome. Furthermore, you probably find that not only the meaning but also the emotional effect is universal: you pity the suffering protagonist and share his terror of the inescapable catastrophe.

Although, like tragedy, *comedy* has taken many forms during the ages, ordinarily it does not so deeply engage the sympathies of the audience or the reader as does tragedy. Some comedies, as a matter of fact, do not arouse much sympathy or much dislike for the characters: they ridicule or satirize their traits, their manners, and their foibles. Therefore, the appeal of these plays is largely an intellectual one—an appeal to the audience's or the reader's sense of the incongruous. Other comedies do, it is true, arouse sympathy for some characters, dislike for others; and their author hopes that after sharing the troubles of the attractive characters, the audience will share their delight in a

[1]At one time and another, dramatists have used other forms—miracle plays, medieval mysteries, tragicomedies, chronicle plays, heroic plays, and so forth. Each type was written during a period or series of periods during which it appealed to contemporary audiences. The four forms which we have listed are more enduring. Furthermore, they will suffice for our present purposes.

happy ending. Even in such comedies, though, there will be no life and death struggles such as tragedies portray. The ending, as a matter of fact, will often show that the difficulties after all were not nearly so serious as the characters took them to be. The mood will not be desperate and grim but easy-going and good-natured. Most comedies will not, however, be exclusively intellectual or emotional in appeal: they will be a combination in which one appeal predominates. Thus the intellectual element predominates in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* or Noel Coward's *Private Lives,* but there are some emotional elements in each; and the emotional element predominates in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and in Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story,* though not to the complete exclusion of satire.

Regardless of the proportions of intellectual and emotional appeal, a comedy (if the author succeeds) will not very deeply stir the audience which views it. The audience will not be moved to pity and terror but—at most—to sympathy mingled with amusement. It will be amiable and tolerant of the sympathetic characters, rather than violently partisan. Nevertheless, you will find that the best comedies have their universal qualities. You will see that, like tragedies, they reveal human nature and comment upon human philosophy, human values. Although they portray man in his lighter moments, they often say very important things about him.

Melodrama and *farce* are counterparts, respectively, of tragedy and comedy—counterparts, however, on a lower level. The lowness of the level is evident in the nature of the conflicts they portray, the emphasis they place upon action, their lack of significant commentary, and their appeal. The conflicts they portray are external rather than internal, trivial rather than important, temporary rather than universal. Melodramas and farces are crammed with action, action, however, which is often developed at the expense of characterization. Therefore, they contain little serious consideration of life and its problems, and they appeal in rather obvious ways to the heart and to the mind of the audience and of the reader.

Melodrama does deal, to be sure, with some situations which at the time appear to be serious or painful—passion, danger of death, even bad fortune. But the characters involved tend to be types who may be quickly classified as black-hearted and white-souled, and if you are familiar with melodrama, once you have so classified them, you will have little trouble guessing what will happen to them. These figures—the brave hero, the true-blue heroine, the scheming villain, his brutish henchmen, and others—will clash in scenes which are chiefly designed to deliver a series of thrills and (as a rule) to straighten out all difficulties in a final scene. If the characters have to be made inconsistent to make some of these thrills possible, the playwright makes them inconsistent. The plot is episodic rather than unified—with each episode delivering a punch. It lacks the inevitability one finds in tragedy: if a wrenching of logic is needed to provide the thrill of a happy ending, the author wrenches away without flinching. Thus, really, the author takes neither the characters nor the happenings very seriously. His chief aim is to provide thrill after thrill for the paying customers.

Farce, by contrast, is built not for a series of thrills but for frequent and hi-

CHARACTERS

OEDIPUS the King
PRIEST
CREON, the brother-in-law of OEDIPUS
TEIRESIAS
JOCASTA, the wife of OEDIPUS
HERDSMAN
MESSENGER
SECOND MESSENGER
ANTIGONE, ISMENE } daughters of OEDIPUS
CHORUS

Scene: In front of the palace of OEDIPUS *at Thebes. To the right of the stage near the altar stands the* PRIEST *with a crowd of children.* OEDIPUS *emerges from the central door.*

OEDIPUS. Children, young sons and daughters of old Cadmus,
why do you sit here with your suppliant crowns?
The town is heavy with a mingled burden
of sounds and smells, of groans and hymns and incense;
I did not think it fit that I should hear
of this from messengers but came myself,—
I Oedipus whom all men call the Great. *(He turns to the* PRIEST)
You're old and they are young; come, speak for them.
What do you fear or want, that you sit here
suppliant? Indeed I'm willing to give all
that you may need; I would be very hard
should I not pity suppliants like these.

PRIEST. O ruler of my country, Oedipus,
you see our company around the altar;
you see our ages; some of us, like these,
who cannot yet fly far, and some of us
heavy with age; these children are the chosen
among the young, and I the priest of Zeus.
Within the market place sit others crowned
with suppliant garlands, at the double shrine

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of Pallas and the temple where Ismenus
gives oracles by fire. King, you yourself
have seen our city reeling like a wreck
already; it can scarcely lift its prow
out of the depths, out of the bloody surf.
A blight is on the fruitful plants of the earth,
a blight is on the cattle in the fields,
a blight is on our women that no children
are born to them; a God that carries fire,
a deadly pestilence, is on our town,
strikes us and spares not, and the house of Cadmus
is emptied of its people while black Death
grows rich in groaning and in lamentation.
We have not come as suppliants to this altar
because we thought of you as of a God,
but rather judging you the first of men
in all the chances of this life and when
we mortals have to do with more than man.
You came and by your coming saved our city,
freed us from tribute which we paid of old
to the Sphinx, cruel singer. This you did
in virtue of no knowledge we could give you,
in virtue of no teaching; it was God
that aided you, men say, and you are held
with God's assistance to have saved our lives.
Now, Oedipus, whom all men call the Greatest,
here falling at your feet we all entreat you,
find us some strength for rescue.
Perhaps you'll hear a wise word from some God,
perhaps you will learn something from a man
(for I have seen that for the skilled of practice
the outcome of their counsels live the most).
Noblest of men, go, and raise up our city,
go,—and give heed. For now this land of ours
calls you its savior since you saved it once.
So, let us never speak about your reign
as of a time when first our feet were set
secure on high, but later fell to ruin.
Raise up our city, save it and raise it up.
Once you have brought us luck with happy omen;
be no less now in fortune.

If you will rule this land, as now you rule it,
better to rule it full of men than empty.
For neither town nor ship is anything
when empty, and none live in it together.

OEDIPUS. Poor children! You have come to me entreating,
but I have known the story before you told it
only too well. I know you are all sick,
yet there is not one of you, sick though you are,
that is as sick as I myself.
Your several sorrows each have single scope
and touch but one of you. My spirit groans
for city and myself and you at once.
You have not roused me like a man from sleep;
know that I have given many tears to this,
gone many ways wandering in thought,
but as I thought I found only one remedy
and that I took. I sent Menoeceus' son
Creon, Jocasta's brother, to Apollo,
to his Pythian temple,
that he might learn there by what act or word
I could save this city. As I count the days,
it vexes me what ails him; he is gone
far longer than he needed for the journey.
But when he comes, then, may I prove a villain,
if I shall not do all the God commands.

PRIEST. Thanks for your gracious words. Your servants here
signal that Creon is this moment coming.

OEDIPUS. His face is bright. O holy Lord Apollo,
grant that his news too may be bright for us
and bring us safety.

PRIEST. It is happy news,
I think, for else his head would not be crowned
with sprigs of fruitful laurel.

OEDIPUS. We will know soon,
he's within hail. Lord Creon, my good brother,
what is the word you bring us from the God?

(CREON *enters*)

CREON. A good word,—for things hard to bear themselves
if in the final issue all is well
I count complete good fortune.

OEDIPUS. What do you mean?

What you have said so far
leaves me uncertain whether to trust or fear.
CREON. If you will hear my news before these others
I am ready to speak, or else to go within.
OEDIPUS. Speak it to all;
the grief I bear, I bear it more for these
than for my own heart.
CREON. I will tell you, then,
what I heard from the God.
King Phoebus in plain words commanded us
to drive out a pollution from our land,
pollution grown ingrained within the land;
drive it out, said the God, not cherish it,
till it's past cure.
OEDIPUS. What is the rite
of purification? How shall it be done?
CREON. By banishing a man, or expiation
of blood by blood, since it is murder guilt
which holds our city in this storm of death.
OEDIPUS. Who is this man whose fate the God pronounces?
CREON. My Lord, before you piloted the state
we had a king called Laius.
OEDIPUS. I know of him by hearsay. I have not seen him.
CREON. The God commanded clearly: let some one
punish with force this dead man's murderers.
OEDIPUS. Where are they in the world? Where would a trace
of this old crime be found? It would be hard
to guess where.
CREON. The clue is in this land;
that which is sought is found;
the unheeded thing escapes:
so said the God.
OEDIPUS. Was it at home,
or in the country that death came upon him,
or in another country travelling?
CREON. He went, he said himself, upon an embassy,
but never returned when he set out from home.
OEDIPUS. Was there no messenger, no fellow traveller
who knew what happened? Such a one might tell
something of use.
CREON. They were all killed save one. He fled in terror

and he could tell us nothing in clear terms
of what he knew, nothing, but one thing only.

OEDIPUS. What was it?
If we could even find a slim beginning
in which to hope, we might discover much.

CREON. This man said that the robbers they encountered
were many and the hands that did the murder
were many; it was no man's single power.

OEDIPUS. How could a robber dare a deed like this
were he not helped with money from the city,
money and treachery?

CREON. That indeed was thought.
But Laius was dead and in our trouble
there was none to help.

OEDIPUS. What trouble was so great to hinder you
inquiring out the murder of your king?

CREON. The riddling Sphinx induced us to neglect
mysterious crimes and rather seek solution
of troubles at our feet.

OEDIPUS. I will bring this to light again. King Phoebus
fittingly took this care about the dead,
and you too fittingly.
And justly you will see in me an ally,
a champion of my country and the God.
For when I drive pollution from the land
I will not serve a distant friend's advantage,
but act in my own interest. Whoever
he was that killed the king may readily
wish to dispatch me with his murderous hand;
so helping the dead king I help myself.

Come children, take your suppliant boughs and go;
up from the altars now. Call the assembly
and let it meet upon the understanding
that I'll do everything. God will decide
whether we prosper or remain in sorrow.

PRIEST. Rise, children—it was this we came to seek,
which of himself the king now offers us.
May Phoebus who gave us the oracle
come to our rescue and stay the plague.

(Exeunt all but the CHORUS)

CHORUS

(Strophe)

What is the sweet spoken word of God from the shrine of Pytho rich in gold
that has come to glorious Thebes?
I am stretched on the rack of doubt, and terror and trembling hold
my heart, O Delian Healer, and I worship full of fears
for what doom you will bring to pass, new or renewed in the revolving years.
Speak to me, immortal voice,
child of Golden Hope.

(Antistrophe)

First I call on you, Athene, deathless daughter of Zeus,
and Artemis, Earth Upholder,
who sits in the midst of the market place in the throne which men call Fame,
and Phoebus, the Far Shooter, three averters of Fate,
come to us now, if ever before, when ruin rushed upon the state,
you drove destruction's flame away
out of our land.

(Strophe)

Our sorrows defy number;
all the ship's timbers are rotten;
taking of thought is no spear for the driving away of the plague.
There are no growing children in this famous land;
there are no women staunchly bearing the pangs of childbirth.
You may see them one with another, like birds swift on the wing,
quicker than fire unmastered,
speeding away to the coast of the Western God.

(Antistrophe)

In the unnumbered deaths
of its people the city dies;
those children that are born lie dead on the naked earth
unpitied, spreading contagion of death; and grey haired mothers and wives
everywhere stand at the altar's edge, suppliant moaning;
the hymn to the healing God rings out but with it the wailing voices are blended.
From these our sufferings grant us, O golden Daughter of Zeus,
glad faced deliverance.

(Strophe)

There is no clash of brazen shields but our fight is with the War God,

a War God ringed with the cries of men, a savage God who burns us;
grant that he turn in racing course backwards out of our country's bounds
to the great palace of Amphitrite or where the waves of the Thracian sea
deny the stranger safe anchorage.
Whatsoever escapes the night
at last the light of day revisits;
so smite the War God, Father Zeus,
beneath your thunderbolt,
for you are the Lord of the lightning, the lightning that
carries fire.

(Antistrophe)

And your unconquered arrow shafts, winged by the golden corded bow,
Lycean King, I beg to be at our side for help;
and the gleaming torches of Artemis with which she scours the Lycean hills,
and I call on the God with the turban of gold, who gave his name to this country of ours,
the Bacchic God with the wine flushed face,
Evian One, who travel
with the Maenad company,
combat the God that burns us
with your torch of pine;
for the God that is our enemy is a God unhonoured among the Gods.

(OEDIPUS *returns)*

OEDIPUS. For what you ask me—if you will hear my words,
and hearing welcome them and fight the plague,
you will find strength and lightening of your load.

Hark to me; what I say to you, I say
as one that is a stranger to the story
as stranger to the deed. For I would not
be far upon the track if I alone
were tracing it without a clue. But now,
since after all was finished, I became
a citizen among you, citizens—
now I proclaim to all the men of Thebes:
who so among you knows the murderer
by whose hand Laius, son of Labdacus,
died—I command him to tell everything
to me,—yes, though he fears himself to take the blame
on his own head; for bitter punishment
he shall have none, but leave this land unharmed.

Or if he knows the murderer, another,
a foreigner, still let him speak the truth.
For I will pay him and be grateful, too.
But if you shall keep silence, if perhaps
some one of you, to shield a guilty friend,
or for his own sake shall reject my words—
hear what I shall do then:
I forbid that man, whoever he be, my land,
my land where I hold sovereignty and throne;
and I forbid any to welcome him
or cry him greeting or make him a sharer
in sacrifice or offering to the Gods,
or give him water for his hands to wash.
I command all to drive him from their homes,
since he is our pollution, as the oracle
of Pytho's God proclaimed him now to me.
So I stand forth a champion of the God
and of the man who died.
Upon the murderer I invoke this curse—
whether he is one man and all unknown,
or one of many—may he wear out his life
in misery to miserable doom!
If with my knowledge he lives at my hearth
I pray that I myself may feel my curse.

Even were this no matter of God's ordinance
it would not fit you so to leave it lie,
unpurified, since a good man is dead
and one that was a king. Search it out.
Since I am now the holder of his office,
and have his bed and wife that once was his,
and had his line not been unfortunate
we would have common children—(fortune leaped
upon his head)—because of all these things,
I fight in his defence as for my father,
and I shall try all means to take the murderer
of Laius the son of Labdacus
the son of Polydorus and before him
of Cadmus and before him of Agenor.
Those who do not obey me, may the Gods
grant no crops springing from the ground they plough

nor children to their women! May a fate
like this, or one still worse than this consume them!
For you who these words please, the other Thebans,
may Justice as your ally and all the Gods
live with you, blessing you now and for ever!

CHORUS. As you have held me to my oath, I speak:
I neither killed the king nor can declare
the killer; but since Phoebus set the quest
it is his part to tell who the man is.

OEDIPUS. Right; but to put compulsion on the Gods
against their will—no man has strength for that.

CHORUS. May I then say what I think second best?

OEDIPUS. If there's a third best, too, spare not to tell it.

CHORUS. I know that what the Lord Teiresias
sees, is most often what the Lord Apollo
sees. If you should inquire of this from him
you might find out most clearly.

OEDIPUS. Even in this my actions have not been sluggard.
On Creon's word I have sent two messengers.
and why the prophet is not here already
I have been wondering.

CHORUS. His skill apart
there is besides only an old faint story.

OEDIPUS. What is it?
I seize on every story.

CHORUS. It was said
that he was killed by certain wayfarers.

OEDIPUS. I heard that, too, but no one saw the killer.

CHORUS. Yet if he has a share of fear at all,
his courage will not stand firm, hearing your curse.

OEDIPUS. The man who in the doing did not shrink
will fear no word.

CHORUS. Here comes his prosecutor:
led by your men the godly prophet comes
in whom alone of mankind truth is native.

(Enter TEIRESIAS, *led by a little boy)*

OEDIPUS. Teiresias, you are versed in everything,
things teachable and things not to be spoken,
things of the heaven and earth-creeping things.
You have no eyes but in your mind you know
with what a plague our city is afflicted.

My lord, in you alone we find a champion,
in you alone one that can rescue us.
Perhaps you have not heard the messengers,
but Phoebus sent in answer to our sending
an oracle declaring that our freedom
from this disease would only come when we
should learn the names of those who killed King Laius,
and kill them or expel from our country.
Do not begrudge us oracles from birds,
or any other way of prophecy
within your skill; save yourself and the city,
save me; redeem the debt of our pollution
that lies on us because of this dead man.
We are in your hands; it is the finest task
to help another when you have means and power.

TEIRESIAS. Alas, how terrible is wisdom when
it brings no profit to the man that's wise!
This I knew well, but had forgotten it.
else I would not have come here.

OEDIPUS. What is this?
How sad you are now you have come!

TEIRESIAS. Let me
go home. It will be easiest for us both
to bear our several destinies to the end
if you will follow my advice.

OEDIPUS. You'd rob us
of this your gift of prophecy? You talk
as one who had no care for law nor love
for Thebes who reared you.

TEIRESIAS. Yes, but I see that even your own words
miss the mark; therefore I must fear for mine.

OEDIPUS. For God's sake if you know of anything,
do not turn from us; all of us kneel to you,
all of us here, your suppliants.

TEIRESIAS. All of you here know nothing. I will not
bring to the light of day my troubles, mine—
rather than call them yours.

OEDIPUS. What do you mean?
You know of something but refuse to speak.
Would you betray us and destroy the city?

TEIRESIAS. I will not bring this pain upon us both,

neither on you nor on myself. Why is it
you question me and waste your labour? I
will tell you nothing.

OEDIPUS. You would provoke a stone! Tell us, you villain,
tell us, and do not stand there quietly
unmoved and balking at the final issue.

TEIRESIAS. You blame my temper but you do not see
your own that lives within you; it is me
you chide.

OEDIPUS. Who would not feel his temper rise
at words like these with which you shame our city?

TEIRESIAS. Of themselves things will come, although I hide them
and breathe no word of them.

OEDIPUS. Since they will come
tell them to me.

TEIRESIAS. I will say nothing further.
Against this answer let your temper rage
as wildly as you will.

OEDIPUS. Indeed I am
so angry I shall not hold back a jot
of what I think. For I would have you know
I think you were complotter of the deed
and doer of the deed save in so far
as for the actual killing. Had you had eyes
I would have said alone you murdered him.

TEIRESIAS. Yes? Then I warn you faithfully to keep
the letter of your proclamation and
from this day forth to speak no word of greeting
to these nor me; you are the land's pollution.

OEDIPUS. How shamelessly you started up this taunt!
How do you think you will escape?

TEIRESIAS. I have.
I have escaped; the truth is what I cherish
and that's my strength.

OEDIPUS. And who has taught you truth?
Not your profession surely!

TEIRESIAS. You have taught me,
for you have made me speak against my will.

OEDIPUS. Speak what? Tell me again that I may learn it better.

TEIRESIAS. Did you not understand before or would you
provoke me into speaking?

OEDIPUS. I did not grasp it,
not so to call it known. Say it again.
TEIRESIAS. I say you are the murderer of the king
whose murderer you seek.
OEDIPUS. Not twice you shall
say calumnies like this and stay unpunished.
TEIRESIAS. Shall I say more to tempt your anger more?
OEDIPUS. As much as you desire; it will be said
in vain.
TEIRESIAS. I say that with those you love best
you live in foulest shame unconsciously
and do not see where you are in calamity.
OEDIPUS. Do you imagine you can always talk
like this, and live to laugh at it hereafter?
TEIRESIAS. Yes, if the truth has anything of strength.
OEDIPUS. It has, but not for you; it has no strength
for you because you are blind in mind and ears
as well as in your eyes.
TEIRESIAS. You are a poor wretch
to taunt me with the very insults which
every one soon will heap upon yourself.
OEDIPUS. Your life is one long night so that you cannot
hurt me or any other who sees the light.
TEIRESIAS. It is not fate that I should be your ruin,
Apollo is enough; it is his care
to work this out.
OEDIPUS. Was this your own design
or Creon's?
TEIRESIAS. Creon is no hurt to you,
but you are to yourself.
OEDIPUS. Wealth, sovereignty and skill outmatching skill
for the contrivance of an envied life,
great store of jealousy fill your treasury chests,
if my friend Creon, friend from the first and loyal,
thus secretly attacks me, secretly
desires to drive me out and secretly
suborns this juggling, trick devising quack,
this wily beggar who has only eyes
for his own gains, but blindness in his skill.
For, tell me, where have you seen clear, Teiresias,
with your prophetic eyes? When the dark singer,

the sphinx, was in your country, did you speak
word of deliverance to its citizens?
And yet the riddle's answer was not the province
of a chance comer. It was a prophet's task
and plainly you had no such gift of prophecy
from birds nor otherwise from any God
to glean a word of knowledge. But I came,
Oedipus, who knew nothing, and I stopped her.
I solved the riddle by my wit alone.
Mine was no knowledge got from birds. And now
you would expel me,
because you think that you will find a place
by Creon's throne. I think you will be sorry,
both you and your accomplice, for your plot
to drive me out. And did I not regard you
as an old man, some suffering would have taught you
that what was in your heart was treason.

CHORUS. We look at this man's words and yours, my king,
and we find both have spoken them in anger.
We need no angry words but only thought
how we may best hit the God's meaning for us.

TEIRESIAS. If you are king, at least I have the right
no less to speak in my defence against you.
Of that much I am master. I am no slave
of yours, but Loxias', and so I shall not
enroll myself with Creon for my patron.
Since you have taunted me with being blind,
here is my word for you.
You have your eyes but see not where you are
in sin, nor where you live, nor whom you live with.
Do you know who your parents are? Unknowing
you are an enemy to kith and kin
in death, beneath the earth, and in this life.
A deadly footed, double-striking curse,
from father and mother both, shall drive you forth
out of this land, with darkness on your eyes,
that now have such straight vision. Shall there be
a place will not be harbour to your cries,
a corner of Cithaeron will not ring
in echo to your cries, soon, soon,—
when you shall learn the secret of your marriage,

which steered you to a haven in this house,—
haven no haven, after lucky voyage?
And of the multitude of other evils
establishing a grim equality
between you and your children, you know nothing.
So, muddy with contempt my words and Creon's!
there is no man shall perish as you shall.

OEDIPUS. Is it endurable that I should hear
such words from him? Go and a curse go with you!
Quick, home with you! Out of my house at once!

TEIRESIAS. I would not have come either had you not called me.

OEDIPUS. I did not know then you would talk like a fool—
or it would have been long before I called you.

TEIRESIAS. I am a fool then, as it seems to you—
but to the parents who have bred you, wise.

OEDIPUS. What parents? Stop! Who are they of all the world?

TEIRESIAS. This day will show your birth and bring your ruin.

OEDIPUS. How needlessly your riddles darken everything.

TEIRESIAS. But it's in riddle answering you are strongest.

OEDIPUS. Yes. Taunt me where you will find me great.

TEIRESIAS. It is this very luck that has destroyed you.

OEDIPUS. I do not care, if it has served this city.

TEIRESIAS. Well, I will go. Come, boy, lead me away.

OEDIPUS. Yes, lead him off. So long as you are here,
you'll be a stumbling block and a vexation;
once gone, you will not trouble me again.

TEIRESIAS. I have said
what I came here to say not fearing your
countenance: there is no way you can hurt me.
I tell you, king, this man, this murderer
(whom you have long declared you are in search of,
indicting him in threatening proclamation
as murderer of Laius)—he is here.
In name he is a stranger among citizens
but soon he will be shown to be a citizen
true native Theban, and he'll have no joy
of the discovery: blindness for sight
and beggary for riches his exchange,
he shall go journeying to a foreign country
tapping his way before him with a stick.
He shall be proved father and brother both

to his own children in his house; to her
that gave him birth, a son and husband both;
a fellow sower in his father's bed
with that same father that he murdered.
Go within, reckon that out, and if you find me
mistaken, say I have no skill in prophecy.

(Exeunt separately TEIRESIAS *and* OEDIPUS*)*

CHORUS

(Strophe)

Who is the man proclaimed
by Delphi's prophetic rock
as the bloody handed murderer,
the doer of deeds that none dare name?
Now is the time for him to run
with a stronger foot
than Pegasus
for the child of Zeus leaps in arms upon him
with fire and the lightning bolt,
and terribly close on his heels
are the Fates that never miss.

(Antistrophe)

Lately from snowy Parnassus
clearly the voice flashed forth,
bidding each Theban track him down,
the unknown murderer.
In the savage forests he lurks and in
the caverns like
the mountain bull.
He is sad and lonely, and lonely his feet
that carry him far from the navel of earth;
but its prophecies, ever living,
flutter around his head.

(Strophe)

The augur has spread confusion,
terrible confusion;
I do not approve what was said
nor can I deny it.
I do not know what to say;
I am in a flutter of foreboding;
I never heard in the present
nor past of a quarrel between

the sons of Labdacus and Polybus,
that I might bring as proof
in attacking the popular fame
of Oedipus, seeking
to take vengeance for undiscovered
death in the line of Labdacus.
(Antistrophe)
Truly Zeus and Apollo are wise
and in human things all knowing;
but amongst men there is no
distinct judgment, between the prophet
and me—which of us is right.
One man may pass another in wisdom
but I would never agree
with those that find fault with the king
till I should see the word
proved right beyond doubt. For once
in visible form the Sphinx
came on him and all of us
saw his wisdom and in that test
he saved the city. So he will not be condemned by my mind.
(Enter CREON*)*
CREON. Citizens, I have come because I heard
deadly words spread about me, that the king
accuses me. I cannot take that from him.
If he believes that in these present troubles
he has been wronged by me in word or deed
I do not want to live on with the burden
of such a scandal on me. The report
injures me doubly and most vitally—
for I'll be called a traitor to my city
and traitor also to my friends and you.
CHORUS. Perhaps it was a sudden gust of anger
that forced that insult from him, and no judgment.
CREON. But did he say that it was in compliance
with schemes of mine that the seer told him lies?
CHORUS. Yes, he said that, but why, I do not know.
CREON. Were his eyes straight in his head? Was his mind right
when he accused me in this fashion?
CHORUS. I do not know; I have no eyes to see
what princes do. Here comes the king himself.

(Enter OEDIPUS)

OEDIPUS. You, sir, how is it you come here? Have you so much
brazen-faced daring that you venture in
my house although you are proved manifestly
the murder of that man, and though you tried,
openly, highway robbery of my crown?
For God's sake, tell me what you saw in me,
what cowardice or what stupidity,
that made you lay a plot like this against me?
Did you imagine I should not observe
the crafty scheme that stole upon me or
seeing it, take no means to counter it?
Was it not stupid of you to make the attempt,
to try to hunt down royal power without
the people at your back or friends? For only
with the people at your back or money can
the hunt end in the capture of a crown.

CREON. Do you know what you're doing? Will you listen
to words to answer yours, and then pass judgment?

OEDIPUS. You're quick to speak, but I am slow to grasp you,
for I have found you dangerous,—and my foe.

CREON. First of all hear what I shall say to that.

OEDIPUS. At least don't tell me that you are not guilty.

CREON. If you believe you cherish something fine
in obstinacy without brains, you're wrong.

OEDIPUS. And you are wrong if you believe that one,
a criminal, will not be punished only
because he is my kinsman.

CREON. This is but just—
but tell me, then, of what offense I'm guilty?

OEDIPUS. Did you or did you not urge me to send
to this prophetic mumbler?

CREON. I did indeed,
and I shall stand by what I told you.

OEDIPUS. How long ago is it since Laius . . . .

CREON. What about Laius? I don't understand.

OEDIPUS. Vanished—died—was murdered?

CREON. It is long,
a long, long time to reckon.

OEDIPUS. Was this prophet
in the profession then?

CREON. He was, and honoured
as highly as he is today.
OEDIPUS. At that time did he say a word about me?
CREON. Never, at least when I was near him.
OEDIPUS. You never made a search for the dead man?
CREON. We searched, indeed, but never learned of anything.
OEDIPUS. Why did our wise old friend not say this then?
CREON. I don't know; and when I know nothing, I
usually hold my tongue.
OEDIPUS. You know this much,
and can declare this much if you are loyal.
CREON. What is it? If I know I'll not deny it.
OEDIPUS. That he would not have said that I killed Laius
had he not met you first.
CREON. You know yourself
whether he said this, but I demand that I
should hear as much from you as you from me.
OEDIPUS. Then hear,—I'll not be proved a murderer.
CREON. Well, then. You're married to my sister.
OEDIPUS. Yes,
that I am not disposed to deny.
CREON. You rule
this country giving her an equal share
in the government?
OEDIPUS. Yes, everything she wants
she has from me.
CREON. And I, as thirdsman to you,
am rated as the equal of you two?
OEDIPUS. Yes, and it's there you've proved yourself false friend.
CREON. Not if you will reflect on it as I do.
Consider, first, if you think any one
would choose to rule and fear rather than rule
and sleep untroubled by a fear if power
were equal in both cases. I, at least,
I was not born with such a frantic yearning
to be a king—but to do what kings do.
And so it is with every one who has learned
wisdom and self-control. As it stands now,
the prizes are all mine—and without fear.
But if I were the king myself, I must
do much that went against the grain.
How should despotic rule seem sweeter to me

than painless power and an assured authority?
I am not so besotted yet that I
want other honours than those that come with profit.
Now every man's my pleasure; every man greets me;
now those who are your suitors fawn on me,—
success for them depends upon my favour.
Why should I let all this go to win that?
My mind would not be traitor if it's wise;
I am no treason lover, of my nature,
nor would I ever dare to join a plot.
Prove what I say. Go to the oracle
at Pytho and inquire about the answers,
if they are as I told you. For the rest,
if you discover I laid any plot
together with the seer, kill me, I say,
not only by your vote but by my own.
But do not charge me on obscure opinion
without some proof to back it. It's not just
lightly to count your knaves as honest men,
nor honest men as knaves. To throw away
an honest friend is, as it were, to throw
your life away, which a man loves the best.
In time you will know all with certainty;
time is the only test of honest men,
one day is space enough to know a rogue.

CHORUS. His words are wise, king, if one fears to fall.
Those who are quick of temper are not safe.

OEDIPUS. When he that plots against me secretly
moves quickly, I must quickly counterplot.
If I wait taking no decisive measure
his business will be done, and mine be spoiled.

CREON. What do you want to do then? Banish me?

OEDIPUS. No, certainly; kill you, not banish you.

CREON. I do not think that you've your wits about you.

OEDIPUS. For my own interests, yes.

CREON. But for mine, too,
you should think equally.

OEDIPUS. You are a rogue.

CREON. Suppose you do not understand?

OEDIPUS. But yet
I must be ruler.

CREON. Not if you rule badly.

OEDIPUS. O, city, city!
CREON. I too have some share
in the city; it is not yours alone.
CHORUS. Stop, my lords! Here—and in the nick of time
I see Jocasta coming from the house;
with her help lay the quarrel that now stirs you.
(Enter JOCASTA)
JOCASTA. For shame! Why have you raised this foolish squabbling
brawl? Are you not ashamed to air your private
griefs when the country's sick? Go in, you, Oedipus,
and you, too, Creon, into the house. Don't magnify
your nothing troubles.
CREON. Sister, Oedipus,
your husband, thinks he has the right to do
terrible wrongs—he has but to choose between
two terrors: banishing or killing me.
OEDIPUS. He's right, Jocasta; for I find him plotting
with knavish tricks against my person.
CREON. That God may never bless me! May I die
accursed, if I have been guilty of
one tittle of the charge you bring against me!
JOCASTA. I beg you, Oedipus, trust him in this,
spare him for the sake of this his oath to God,
for my sake, and the sake of those who stand here.
CHORUS. Be gracious, be merciful,
we beg of you.
OEDIPUS. In what would you have me yield?
CHORUS. He has been no silly child in the past.
He is strong in his oath now.
Spare him.
OEDIPUS. Do you know what you ask?
CHORUS. Yes.
OEDIPUS. Tell me then.
CHORUS. He has been your friend before all men's eyes; do not cast
him away dishonoured on an obscure conjecture.
OEDIPUS. I would have you know that this request of yours
really requests my death or banishment.
CHORUS. May the Sun God, king of Gods, forbid! May I die without
God's blessing, without friends' help, if I had any such
thought. But my spirit is broken by my unhappiness for my
wasting country; and this would but add troubles amongst
ourselves to the other troubles.

OEDIPUS. Well, let him go then—if I must die ten times for it,
or be sent out dishonoured into exile.
It is your lips that prayed for him I pitied,
not his; wherever he is, I shall hate him.
CREON. I see you sulk in yielding and you're dangerous
when you are out of temper; natures like yours
are justly heaviest for themselves to bear.
OEDIPUS. Leave me alone! Take yourself off, I tell you.
CREON. I'll go, you have not known me, but they have,
and they have known my innocence. *(Exit)*
CHORUS. Won't you take him inside, lady?
JOCASTA. Yes, when I've found out what was the matter.
CHORUS. There was some misconceived suspicion of a story, and on
the other side the sting of injustice.
JOCASTA. So, on both sides?
CHORUS. Yes.
JOCASTA. What was the story?
CHORUS. I think it best, in the interests of the country, to leave it
where it ended.
OEDIPUS. You see where you have ended, straight of judgment
although you are, by softening my anger.
CHORUS. Sir, I have said before and I say again—be sure that I would
have been proved a madman, bankrupt in sane council, if I
should put you away, you who steered the country I love
safely when she was crazed with troubles. God grant that
now, too, you may prove a fortunate guide for us.
JOCASTA. Tell me, my lord, I beg of you, what was it
that roused your anger so?
OEDIPUS. Yes, I will tell you.
I honour you more than I honour them.
It was Creon and the plots he laid against me.
JOCASTA. Tell me—if you can clearly tell the quarrel—
OEDIPUS. Creon says
that I'm the murderer of Laius.
JOCASTA. Of his own knowledge or on information?
OEDIPUS. He sent this rascal prophet to me, since
he keeps his own mouth clean of any guilt.
JOCASTA. Do not concern yourself about the matter;
listen to me and learn that human beings
have no part in the craft of prophecy.
Of that I'll show you a short proof.
There was an oracle once that came to Laius,—

I will not say that it was Phoebus' own,
but it was from his servants—and it told him
that it was fate that he should die a victim
at the hands of his own son, a son to be born
of Laius and me. But, see now, he,
the king, was killed by foreign highway robbers
at a place where three roads meet—so goes the story;
and for the son—before three days were out
after his birth King Laius pierced his ankles
and by the hands of others cast him forth
upon a pathless hillside. So Apollo
failed to fulfill his oracle to the son,
that he should kill his father, and to Laius
also proved false in that the thing he feared,
death at his son's hands, never came to pass.
So clear in this case were the oracles,
so clear and false. Give them no heed, I say;
what God discovers need of, easily
he shows to us himself.

OEDIPUS. O dear Jocasta,
as I hear this from you, there comes upon me
a wandering of the soul—I could run mad.

JOCASTA. What trouble is it, that you turn again
and speak like this?

OEDIPUS. I thought I heard you say
that Laius was killed at a crossroads.

JOCASTA. Yes, that was how the story went and still
that word goes round.

OEDIPUS. Where is this place, Jocasta,
where he was murdered?

JOCASTA. Phocis is the country
and the road splits there, one of two roads from Delphi,
another comes from Daulia.

OEDIPUS. How long ago is this?

JOCASTA. The news came to the city just before
you became king and all men's eyes looked to you.
What is it, Oedipus, that's in your mind?

OEDIPUS. Don't ask me yet—tell me of Laius—
how did he look? How old or young was he?

JOCASTA. He was a tall man and his hair was grizzled
already—nearly white—and in his form
not unlike you.

OEDIPUS. O God, I think I have
called curses on myself in ignorance.
JOCASTA. What do you mean? I am terrified
when I look at you.
OEDIPUS. I have a deadly fear
that the old seer had eyes. You'll show me more
if you can tell me one more thing.
JOCASTA. I will.
I'm frightened,—but if I can understand,
I'll tell you all you ask.
OEDIPUS. How was his company?
Had he few with him when he went this journey,
or many servants, as would suit a prince?
JOCASTA. In all there were but five, and among them
a herald; and one carriage for the king.
OEDIPUS. It's plain—it's plain—who was it told you this?
JOCASTA. The only servant that escaped safe home.
OEDIPUS. Is he at home now?
JOCASTA. No, when he came home again
and saw you king and Laius was dead,
he came to me and touched my hand and begged
that I should send him to the fields to be
my shepherd and so he might see the city
as far off as he might. So I
sent him away. He was an honest man,
as slaves go, and was worthy of far more
than what he asked of me.
OEDIPUS. O, how I wish that he could come back quickly!
JOCASTA. He can. Why is your heart so set on this?
OEDIPUS. O dear Jocasta, I am full of fears
that I have spoken far too much; and therefore
I wish to see this shepherd.
JOCASTA. He will come;
but, Oedipus, I think I'm worthy too
to know what is it that disquiets you.
OEDIPUS. It shall not be kept from you, since my mind
has gone so far with its forebodings. Whom
should I confide in rather than you, who is there
of more importance to me who have passed
through such a fortune?
Polybus was my father, king of Corinth,
and Merope, the Dorian, my mother.

I was held greatest of the citizens
in Corinth till a curious chance befell me
as I shall tell you—curious, indeed,
but hardly worth the store I set upon it.
There was a dinner and at it a man,
a drunken man, accused me in his drink
of being bastard. I was furious
but held my temper under for that day.
Next day I went and taxed my parents with it;
they took the insult very ill from him,
the drunken fellow who had uttered it.
So I was comforted for their part, but
still this thing rankled always, for the story
crept about widely. And I went at last
To Pytho, though my parents did not know.
But Phoebus sent me home again unhonoured
in what I came to learn, but he foretold
other and desperate horrors to befall me,
that I was fated to lie with my mother,
and show to daylight an accursed breed
which men would not endure, and I was doomed
to be murderer of the father that begot me.
When I heard this I fled, and in the days
that followed I would measure from the stars
the whereabouts of Corinth—yes, I fled
to somewhere where I should not see fulfilled
the infamies told in that dreadful oracle.
And as I journeyed I came to the place
where, as you say, this king met with his death.
Jocasta, I will tell you the whole truth.
When I was near the branching of the crossroads,
going on foot, I was encountered by
a herald and a carriage with a man in it,
just as you tell me. He that led the way
and the old man himself wanted to thrust me
out of the road by force. I became angry
and struck the coachman who was pushing me.
When the old man saw this he watched his moment,
and as I passed he struck me from his carriage,
full on the head with his two pointed goad.
But he was paid in full and presently

my stick had struck him backwards from the car
and he rolled out of it. And then I killed them
all. If it happened there was any tie
of kinship twixt this man and Laius,
who is then now more miserable than I,
what man on earth so hated by the Gods,
since neither citizen nor foreigner
may welcome me at home or even greet me,
but drive me out of doors? And it is I,
I and no other have so cursed myself.
And I pollute the bed of him I killed
by the hands that killed him. Was I not born evil?
Am I not utterly unclean? I had to fly
and in my banishment not even see
my kindred nor set foot in my own country,
or otherwise my fate was to be yoked
in marriage with my mother and kill my father,
Polybus who begot me and had reared me.
Would not one rightly judge and say that on me
these things were sent by some malignant God?
O no, no, no—O holy majesty
of God on high, may I not see that day!
May I be gone out of men's sight before
I see the deadly taint of this disaster
come upon me.

CHORUS. Sir, we too fear these things. But until you see this man face to face and hear his story, hope.

OEDIPUS. Yes, I have just this much of hope—to wait until the herdsman comes.

JOCASTA. And when he comes, what do you want with him?

OEDIPUS. I'll tell you; if I find that his story is the same as yours, I at least will be clear of this guilt.

JOCASTA. Why what so particularly did you learn from my story?

OEDIPUS. You said that he spoke of highway *robbers* who killed Laius. Now if he uses the same number, it was not I who killed him. One man cannot be the same as many. But if he speaks of a man travelling alone, then clearly the burden of the guilt inclines towards me.

JOCASTA. Be sure, at least, that this was how he told the story. He cannot unsay it now, for every one in the city heard it—not I alone. But, Oedipus, even if he diverges from what he said then, he shall never prove that the murder of Laius squares rightly with the prophecy—for Loxias declared

that the king should be killed by his own son. And that poor creature did not kill him surely,—for he died himself first. So as far as prophecy goes, henceforward I shall not look to the right hand or the left.

OEDIPUS. Right. But yet, send some one for the peasant to bring him here; do not neglect it.

JOCASTA. I will send quickly. Now let me go indoors. I will do nothing except what pleases you. *(Exeunt)*

CHORUS.

(Strophe)

May destiny ever find me
pious in word and deed
prescribed by the laws that live on high:
laws begotten in the clear air of heaven,
whose only father is Olympus;
no mortal nature brought them to birth,
no forgetfulness shall lull them to sleep;
for God is great in them and grows not old.

(Antistrophe)

Insolence breeds the tyrant, insolence
if it is glutted with a surfeit, unseasonable, unprofitable,
climbs to the roof-top and plunges
sheer down to the ruin that must be,
and there its feet are no service.
But I pray that the God may never
abolish the eager ambition that profits the state.
For I shall never cease to hold the God as our protector.

(Strophe)

If a man walks with haughtiness
of hand or word and gives no heed
to Justice and the shrines of Gods
despises—may an evil doom
smite him for his ill-starred pride of heart!—
if he reaps gains without justice
and will not hold from impiety
and his fingers itch for untouchable things.
When such things are done, what man shall contrive
to shield his soul from the shafts of the God?
When such deeds are held in honour,
why should I honour the Gods in the dance?

(Antistrophe)

No longer to the holy place,
to the navel of earth I'll go

to worship, nor to Abae
nor to Olympia,
unless the oracles are proved to fit,
for all men's hands to point at.
O Zeus, if you are rightly called
the sovereign lord, all-mastering,
let this not escape you nor your ever-living power!
The oracles concerning Laius
are old and dim and men regard them not.
Apollo is nowhere clear in honour; God's service perishes.

(Enter JOCASTA, *carrying garlands)*

JOCASTA. Princes of the land, I have had the thought to go
to the Gods' temples, bringing in my hand
garlands and gifts of incense, as you see.
For Oedipus excites himself too much
at every sort of trouble, not conjecturing,
like a man of sense, what will be from what was,
but he is always at the speaker's mercy,
when he speaks terrors. I can do no good
by my advice, and so I came as suppliant
to you, Lycaean Apollo, who are nearest.
These are the symbols of my prayer and this
my prayer: grant us escape free of the curse.
Now when we look to him we are all afraid;
he's pilot of our ship and he is frightened.

(Enter a MESSENGER)

MESSENGER. Might I learn from you, sirs, where is the house of Oedipus? Or best of all, if you know, where is the king himself?

CHORUS. This is his house and he is within doors. This lady is his wife and mother of his children.

MESSENGER. God bless you, lady, and God bless your household! God bless Oedipus' noble wife!

JOCASTA. God bless you, sir, for your kind greeting! What do you want of us that you have come here? What have you to tell us?

MESSENGER. Good news, lady. Good for your house and for your husband.

JOCASTA. What is your news? Who sent you to us?

MESSENGER. I come from Corinth and the news I bring will give you pleasure. Perhaps a little pain too.

JOCASTA. What is this news of double meaning?

MESSENGER. The people of the Isthmus will choose Oedipus to be their king. That is the rumour there.

JOCASTA. But isn't their king still old Polybus?

MESSENGER. No. He is in his grave. Death has got him.
JOCASTA. Is that the truth? Is Oedipus' father dead?
MESSENGER. May I die myself if it be otherwise!
JOCASTA *(to a servant).* Be quick and run to the King with the news. O oracles of the Gods, where are you now? It was from this man Oedipus fled, lest he should be his murderer! And now he is dead, in the course of nature, and not killed by Oedipus.
(Enter OEDIPUS)
OEDIPUS. Dearest Jocasta, why have you sent for me?
JOCASTA. Listen to this man and when you hear reflect what is the outcome of the holy oracles of the Gods.
OEDIPUS. Who is he? What is his message for me?
JOCASTA. He is from Corinth and he tells us that your father Polybus is dead and gone.
OEDIPUS. What's this you say, sir? Tell me yourself.
MESSENGER. Since this is the first matter you want clearly told: Polybus has gone down to death. You may be sure of it.
OEDIPUS. By treachery or sickness?
MESSENGER. A small thing will put old bodies asleep.
OEDIPUS. So he died of sickness, it seems,—poor old man!
MESSENGER. Yes, and of age—the long years he had measured.
OEDIPUS. Ha! Ha! O dear Jocasta, why should one
look to the Pythian hearth? Why should one look
to the birds screaming overhead? They prophesied
that I should kill my father! But he's dead,
and hidden deep in earth, and I stand here
who never laid a hand on spear against him,—
unless perhaps he died of longing for me,
and thus I am his murderer. But they,
the oracles, as they stand—he's taken them
away with him, they're dead as he himself is,
and worthless.
JOCASTA. That I told you before now.
OEDIPUS. You did, but I was misled by my fear.
JOCASTA. Then lay no more of them to heart, not one.
OEDIPUS. But surely I must fear my mother's bed?
JOCASTA. Why should man fear since chance is all in all
for him, and he can clearly foreknow nothing?
Best to live lightly, as one can, unthinkingly.
As to your mother's marriage bed,—don't fear it.
Before this, in dreams too, as well as oracles,

many a man has lain with his own mother.
But he to whom such things are nothing bears
his life most easily.

OEDIPUS. All that you say would be said perfectly
if she were dead; but since she lives I must
still fear, although you talk so well, Jocasta.

JOCASTA. Still in your father's death there's light of comfort?

OEDIPUS. Great light of comfort; but I fear the living.

MESSENGER. Who is the woman that makes you afraid?

OEDIPUS. Merope, old man, Polybus' wife.

MESSENGER. What about her frightens the queen and you?

OEDIPUS. A terrible oracle, stranger, from the Gods.

MESSENGER. Can it be told? Or does the sacred law
forbid another to have knowledge of it?

OEDIPUS. O no! Once on a time Loxias said
that I should lie with my own mother and
take on my hands the blood of my own father.
And so for these long years I've lived away
from Corinth; it has been to my great happiness;
but yet it's sweet to see the face of parents.

MESSENGER. This was the fear which drove you out of Corinth?

OEDIPUS. Old man, I did not wish to kill my father.

MESSENGER. Why should I not free you from this fear, sir,
since I have come to you in all goodwill?

OEDIPUS. You would not find me thankless if you did.

MESSENGER. Why, it was just for this I brought the news,—
to earn your thanks when you had come safe home.

OEDIPUS. No, I will never come near my parents

MESSENGER. Son,
it's very plain you don't know what you're doing.

OEDIPUS. What do you mean, old man? For God's sake, tell me.

MESSENGER. If your homecoming is checked by fears like these.

OEDIPUS. Yes, I'm afraid that Phoebus may prove right.

MESSENGER. The murder and the incest?

OEDIPUS. Yes, old man;
that is my constant terror.

MESSENGER. Do you know
that all your fears are empty?

OEDIPUS. How is that,
if they are father and mother and I their son?

MESSENGER. Because Polybus was no kin to you in blood.

OEDIPUS. What, was not Polybus my father?
MESSENGER. No more than I but just so much.
OEDIPUS. How can
my father be my father as much as one
that's nothing to me?
MESSENGER. Neither he nor I
begat you.
OEDIPUS. Why then did he call me son?
MESSENGER. A gift he took you from these hands of mine.
OEDIPUS. Did he love so much what he took from another's hand?
MESSENGER. His childlessness before persuaded him.
OEDIPUS. Was I a child you bought or found when I
was given to him?
MESSENGER. On Cithaeron's slopes
in the twisting thickets you were found.
OEDIPUS. And why
were you a traveller in those parts?
MESSENGER. I was
in charge of mountain flocks.
OEDIPUS. You were a shepherd?
A hireling vagrant?
MESSENGER. Yes, but at least at that time
the man that saved your life, son.
OEDIPUS. What ailed me when you took me in your arms?
MESSENGER. In that your ankles should be witnesses.
OEDIPUS. Why do you speak of that old pain?
MESSENGER. I loosed you;
the tendons of your feet were pierced and fettered,—
OEDIPUS. My swaddling clothes brought me a rare disgrace.
MESSENGER. So that from this you're called your present name.
OEDIPUS. Was this my father's doing or my mother's?
For God's sake, tell me.
MESSENGER. I don't know, but he
who gave you to me has more knowledge than I.
OEDIPUS. You yourself did not find me then? You took me
from someone else?
MESSENGER. Yes, from another shepherd.
OEDIPUS. Who was he? Do you know him well enough
to tell?
MESSENGER. He was called Laius' man.
OEDIPUS. You mean the king who reigned here in the old days?

MESSENGER. Yes, he was that man's shepherd.
OEDIPUS. Is he alive
still, so that I could see him?
MESSENGER. You who live here
would know that best.
OEDIPUS. Do any of you here
know of this shepherd whom he speaks about
in town or in the fields? Tell me. It's time
that this was found out once for all.
CHORUS. I think he is none other than the peasant
whom you have sought to see already; but
Jocasta here can tell us best of that.
OEDIPUS. Jocasta, do you know about this man
whom we have sent for? Is he the man he mentions?
JOCASTA. Why ask of whom he spoke? Don't give it heed;
nor try to keep in mind what has been said.
It will be wasted labour.
OEDIPUS. With such clues
I could not fail to bring my birth to light.
JOCASTA. I beg you—do not hunt this out—I beg you,
if you have any care for your own life.
What I am suffering is enough.
OEDIPUS. Keep up
your heart, Jocasta. Though I'm proved a slave,
thrice slave, and though my mother is thrice slave,
you'll not be shown to be of lowly lineage.
JOCASTA. O be persuaded by me, I entreat you;
do not do this.
OEDIPUS. I will not be persuaded to let be
the chance of finding out the whole thing clearly.
JOCASTA. It is because I wish you well that I
give you this counsel—and it's the best counsel.
OEDIPUS. Then the best counsel vexes me, and has
for some while since.
JOCASTA. O Oedipus, God help you!
God keep you from the knowledge of who you are!
OEDIPUS. Here, some one, go and fetch the shepherd for me;
and let her find her joy in her rich family!
JOCASTA. O Oedipus, unhappy Oedipus!
that is all I can call you, and the last thing
that I shall ever call you. *(Exit)*

CHORUS. Why has the queen gone, Oedipus, in wild
grief rushing from us? I am afraid that trouble
will break out of this silence.
OEDIPUS. Break out what will! I at least shall be
willing to see my ancestry, though humble.
Perhaps she is ashamed of my low birth,
for she has all a woman's high-flown pride.
But I account myself a child of Fortune,
beneficent Fortune, and I shall not be
dishonoured. She's the mother from whom I spring;
the months, my brothers, marked me, now as small,
and now again as mighty. Such is my breeding,
and I shall never prove so false to it,
as not to find the secret of my birth.
CHORUS.
(Strophe)
If I am a prophet and wise of heart
you shall not fail, Cithaeron,
by the limitless sky, you shall not!—
to know at tomorrow's full moon
that Oedipus honours you,
as native to him and mother and nurse at once;
and that you are honoured in dancing by us, as finding favour in sight
of our king.
Apollo, to whom we cry, find these things pleasing!
(Antistrophe)
Who was it bore you, child? One of
the long-lived nymphs who lay with Pan—
the father who treads the hills?
Or was she a bride of Loxias, your mother? The grassy slopes
are all of them dear to him. Or perhaps Cyllene's king
or the Bacchants' God that lives on the tops
of the hills received you a gift from some
one of the Helicon Nymphs, with whom he mostly plays?
(Enter an OLD MAN, *led by* OEDIPUS' *servants)*
OEDIPUS. If some one like myself who never met him
may make a guess,—I think this is the herdsman,
whom we were seeking. His old age is consonant
with the other. And besides, the men who bring him
I recognize as my own servants. You
perhaps may better me in knowledge since
you've seen the man before.

CHORUS. You can be sure
I recognize him. For if Laius
had ever an honest shepherd, this was he.
OEDIPUS. You, sir, from Corinth, I must ask you first,
is this the man you spoke of?
MESSENGER. This is he
before your eyes.
OEDIPUS. Old man, look here at me
and tell me what I ask you. Were you ever
a servant of King Laius?
HERDSMAN. I was,—
no slave he bought but reared in his own house.
OEDIPUS. What did you do as work? How did you live?
HERDSMAN. Most of my life was spent among the flocks.
OEDIPUS. In what part of the country did you live?
HERDSMAN. Cithaeron and the places near to it.
OEDIPUS. And somewhere there perhaps you knew this man?
HERDSMAN. What was his occupation? Who?
OEDIPUS. This man here,
have you had any dealings with him?
HERDSMAN. No—
not such that I can quickly call to mind.
MESSENGER. That is no wonder, master. But I'll make him remember what he does not know. For I know, that he well knows the country of Cithaeron, how he with two flocks, I with one kept company for three years—each year half a year—from spring till autumn time and then when winter came I drove my flocks to our fold home again and he to Laius' steadings. Well—am I right or not in what I said we did?
HERDSMAN. You're right—although it's a long time ago.
MESSENGER. Do you remember giving me a child
to bring up as my foster child?
HERDSMAN. What's this?
Why do you ask this question?
MESSENGER. Look, old man,
here he is—here's the man who was that child!
HERDSMAN. Death take you! Won't you hold your tongue?
OEDIPUS. No, no,
do not find fault with him, old man. Your words
are more at fault than his.
HERDSMAN. O best of masters,
how do I give offense?
OEDIPUS. When you refuse

to speak about the child of whom he asks you.
HERDSMAN. He speaks out of his ignorance, without meaning.
OEDIPUS. If you'll not talk to gratify me, you
will talk with pain to urge you.
HERDSMAN. O please, sir,
don't hurt an old man, sir.
OEDIPUS *(to the* SERVANTS). Here, one of you,
twist his hands behind him.
HERDSMAN. Why, God help me, why?
What do you want to know?
OEDIPUS. You gave a child
to him,—the child he asked you of?
HERDSMAN. I did.
I wish I'd died the day I did.
OEDIPUS. You will
unless you tell me truly.
HERDSMAN. And I'll die
far worse if I should tell you.
OEDIPUS. This fellow
is bent on more delays, as it would seem.
HERDSMAN. O no, no! I have told you that I gave it.
OEDIPUS. Where did you get this child from? Was it your own
or did you get it from another?
HERDSMAN. Not
my own at all; I had it from some one.
OEDIPUS. One of these citizens? or from what house?
HERDSMAN. O master, please—I beg of you, master, please
don't ask me more.
OEDIPUS. You're a dead man if I
ask you again.
HERDSMAN. It was one of the children
of Laius.
OEDIPUS. A slave? Or born in wedlock?
HERDSMAN. O God, I am on the brink of frightful speech.
OEDIPUS. And I of frightful hearing. But I must hear.
HERDSMAN. The child was called his child; but she within,
your wife would tell you best how all this was.
OEDIPUS. *She* gave it to you?
HERDSMAN. Yes, she did, my lord.
OEDIPUS. To do what with it?
HERDSMAN. Make away with it.

OEDIPUS. She was so hard—its mother?
HERDSMAN. Aye, through fear
of evil oracles.
OEDIPUS. Which?
HERDSMAN. They said that he
should kill his parents.
OEDIPUS. How was it that you
gave it away to this old man?
HERDSMAN. O master,
I pitied it, and thought that I could send it
off to another country and this man
was from another country. But he saved it
for the most terrible troubles. If you are
the man he says you are, you're bred to misery.
OEDIPUS. O, O, O, they will all come,
all come out clearly! Light of the sun, let me
look upon you no more after today!
I who first saw the light bred of a match
accursed, and accursed in my living
with them I lived with, cursed in my killing.
(Exeunt all but the CHORUS)
CHORUS.
(Strophe)
O generations of men, how I
count you as equal with those who live
not at all!
what man, what man on earth wins more
of happiness than a seeming
and after that turning away?
Oedipus, you are my pattern of this,
Oedipus, you and your fate!
Luckless Oedipus, whom of all men
I envy not at all.
(Antistrophe)
In as much as he shot his bolt
beyond the others and won the prize
of happiness complete—
O Zeus—and killed and reduced to nought
the hooked taloned maid of the riddling speech,
standing a tower against death for my land:
hence he was called my king and hence

was honoured the highest of all
honours; and hence he ruled
in the great city of Thebes.
(Strophe)
But now whose tale is more miserable?
Who is there lives with a savager fate?
Whose troubles so reverse his life as his?
O Oedipus, the famous prince
for whom a great haven
the same both as father and son
sufficed for generation,
how, O how, have the furrows ploughed
by your father endured to bear you, poor wretch,
and hold their peace so long?
(Antistrophe)
Time who sees all has found you out
against your will; judges your marriage accursed,
begetter and begot at one in it.

O child of Laius,
would I had never seen you,
I weep for you and cry
a dirge of lamentation.

To speak directly, I drew my breath
from you at the first and so now I lull
my mouth to sleep with your name.
(Enter a SECOND MESSENGER*)*
SECOND MESSENGER. O Princes always honoured by our country,
what deeds you'll hear of and what horrors see
what grief you'll feel, if you as true born Thebans
care for the house of Labdacus's sons.
Phasis nor Ister cannot purge this house,
I think, with all their streams, such things
it hides, such evils shortly will bring forth
into the light, whether they will or not;
and troubles hurt the most
when they prove self-inflicted.
CHORUS. What we had known before did not fall short
of bitter groaning's worth; what's more to tell?
SECOND MESSENGER. Shortest to hear and tell—our glorious queen
Jocasta's dead.

CHORUS. Unhappy woman! How?

SECOND MESSENGER. By her own hand. The worst of what was done
you cannot know. You did not see the sight.
Yet in so far as I remember it
you'll hear the end of our unlucky queen.
When she came raging into the house she went
straight to her marriage bed, tearing her hair
with both her hands, and crying upon Laius
long dead—Do you remember, Laius,
that night long past which bred a child for us
to send you to your death and leave
a mother making children with her son?
And then she groaned and cursed the bed in which
she brought forth husband by her husband, children
by her own child, an infamous double bond.
How after that she died I do not know,—
for Oedipus distracted us from seeing.
He burst upon us shouting and we looked
to him as he paced frantically around,
begging us always: Give me a sword, I say,
to find this wife no wife, this mother's womb,
this field of double sowing whence I sprang
and where I sowed my children! As he raved
some god showed him the way—none of us there.
Bellowing terribly and led by some
invisible guide he rushed on the two doors,—
wrenching the hollow bolts out of their sockets,
he charged inside. There, there, we saw his wife
hanging, the twisted rope around her neck.
When he saw her, he cried out fearfully
and cut the dangling noose. Then, as she lay,
poor woman, on the ground, what happened after,
was terrible to see. He tore the brooches—
the gold chased brooches fastening her robe—
away from her and lifting them up high
dashed them on his own eyeballs, shrieking out
such things as: they will never see the crime
I have committed or had done upon me!
Dark eyes, now in the days to come look on
forbidden faces, do not recognize
those whom you long for—with such imprecations
he struck his eyes again and yet again

with the brooches. And the bleeding eyeballs gushed
and stained his beard—no sluggish oozing drops
but a black rain and bloody hail poured down.

So it has broken—and not on one head
but troubles mixed for husband and for wife.
The fortune of the days gone by was true
good fortune—but today groans and destruction
and death and shame—of all ills can be named
not one is missing.

CHORUS. Is he now in any ease from pain?

SECOND MESSENGER. He shouts
for some one to unbar the doors and show him
to all the men of Thebes, his father's killer,
his mother's—no I cannot say the word,
it is unholy—for he'll cast himself,
out of the land, he says, and not remain
to bring a curse upon his house, the curse
he called upon it in his proclamation. But
he wants for strength, aye, and some one to guide him;
his sickness is too great to bear. You, too,
will be shown that. The bolts are opening.
Soon you will see a sight to waken pity
even in the horror of it.

(Enter the blinded OEDIPUS*)*

CHORUS. This is a terrible sight for men to see!
I never found a worse!
Poor wretch, what madness came upon you!
What evil spirit leaped upon your life
to your ill-luck—a leap beyond man's strength!
Indeed I pity you, but I cannot
look at you, though there's much I want to ask
and much to learn and much to see.
I shudder at the sight of you.

OEDIPUS. O, O,
where am I going? Where is my voice
borne on the wind to and fro?
Spirit, how far have you sprung?

CHORUS. To a terrible place whereof men's ears
may not hear, nor their eyes behold it.

OEDIPUS. Darkness!
Horror of darkness enfolding, resistless, unspeakable visitant sped by an ill wind in haste!
madness and stabbing pain and memory
of evil deeds I have done!
CHORUS. In such misfortunes it's no wonder
if double weighs the burden of your grief.
OEDIPUS. My friend,
you are the only one steadfast, the only one that attends on me;
you still stay nursing the blind man.
Your care is not unnoticed. I can know
your voice, although this darkness is my world.
CHORUS. Doer of dreadful deeds, how did you dare
so far to do despite to your own eyes?
what spirit urged you to it?
OEDIPUS. It was Apollo, friends, Apollo,
that brought this bitter bitterness, my sorrows to completion.
But the hand that struck me
was none but my own.
Why should I see
whose vision showed me nothing sweet to see?
CHORUS. These things are as you say.
OEDIPUS. What can I see to love?
What greeting can touch my ears with joy?
Take me away, and haste—to a place out of the way!
Take me away, my friends, the greatly miserable,
the most accursed, whom God too hates
above all men on earth!
CHORUS. Unhappy in your mind and your misfortune,
would I had never known you!
OEDIPUS. Curse on the man who took
the cruel bonds from off my legs, as I lay in the field.
He stole me from death and saved me,
no kindly service.
Had I died then
I would not be so burdensome to friends.
CHORUS. I, too, could have wished it had been so.
OEDIPUS. Then I would not have come
to kill my father and marry my mother infamously.
Now I am godless and child of impurity,

begetter in the same seed that created my wretched self.
If there is any ill worse than ill,
that is the lot of Oedipus.

CHORUS. I cannot say your remedy was good;
you would be better dead than blind and living.

OEDIPUS. What I have done here was best done—don't tell me
otherwise, do not give me further counsel.
I do not know with what eyes I could look
upon my father when I die and go
under the earth, nor yet my wretched mother—
those two to whom I have done things deserving
worse punishment than hanging. Would the sight
of children, bred as mine are, gladden me?
No, not these eyes, never. And my city,
its towers and sacred places of the Gods,
of these I robbed my miserable self
when I commanded all to drive *him* out,
the criminal since proved by God impure
and of the race of Laius.
To this guilt I bore witness against myself—
with what eyes shall I look upon my people?
No. If there were a means to choke the fountain
of hearing I would not have stayed my hand
from locking up my miserable carcase,
seeing and hearing nothing; it is sweet
to keep our thoughts out of the range of hurt.

Cithaeron, why did you receive me? why
having received me did you not kill me straight?
And so I had not shown to men my birth.

O Polybus and Corinth and the house,
the old house that I used to call my father's—
what fairness you were nurse to, and what foulness
festered beneath! Now I am found to be
a sinner and a son of sinners. Crossroads,
and hidden glade, oak and the narrow way
at the crossroads, that drank my father's blood
offered you by my hands, do you remember
still what I did as you looked on, and what

I did when I came here? O marriage, marriage!
you bred me and again when you had bred
bred children of your child and showed to men
brides, wives and mothers and the foulest deeds
that can be in this world of ours.

Come—it's unfit to say what is unfit
to do.—I beg of you in God's name hide me
somewhere outside your country, yes, or kill me,
or throw me into the sea, to be forever
out of your sight. Approach and deign to touch me
for all my wretchedness, and do not fear.
No man but I can bear my evil doom.

CHORUS. Here Creon comes in fit time to perform
or give advice in what you ask of us.
Creon is left sole ruler in your stead.

OEDIPUS. Creon! Creon! What shall I say to him?
How can I justly hope that he will trust me?
In what is past I have been proved towards him
an utter liar.

(Enter CREON*)*

CREON. Oedipus, I've come
not so that I might laugh at you nor taunt you
with evil of the past. But if you still
are without shame before the face of men
reverence at least the flame that gives all life,
our Lord the Sun, and do not show unveiled
to him pollution such that neither land
nor holy rain nor light of day can welcome.
(To a SERVANT*)* Be quick and take him in. It is most decent
that only kin should see and hear the troubles
of kin.

OEDIPUS. I beg you, since you've torn me from
my dreadful expectations and have come
in a most noble spirit to a man
that has used you vilely—do a thing for me.
I shall speak for your own good, not for my own.

CREON. What do you need that you would ask of me?

OEDIPUS. Drive me from here with all the speed you can
to where I may not hear a human voice.

CREON. Be sure, I would have done this had not I
wished first of all to learn from God the course
of action I should follow.
OEDIPUS. But his word
has been quite clear to let the parricide,
the sinner, die.
CREON. Yes, that indeed was said.
But in the present need we had best discover
what we should do.
OEDIPUS. And will you ask about
a man so wretched?
CREON. Now even you will trust
the God.
OEDIPUS. So. I command you—and will beseech you—
to her that lies inside that house give burial
as you would have it; she is yours and rightly
you will perform the rites for her. For me—
never let this my father's city have me
living a dweller in it. Leave me live
in the mountains where Cithaeron is, that's called
my mountain, which my mother and my father
while they were living would have made my tomb.
So I may die by their decree who sought
indeed to kill me. Yet I know this much:
no sickness and no other thing will kill me.
I would not have been saved from death if not
for some strange evil fate. Well, let my fate
go where it will.
Creon, you need not care
about my sons; they're men and so wherever
they are, they will not lack a livelihood.
But my two girls—so sad and pitiful—
whose table never stood apart from mine,
and everything I touched they always shared—
O Creon, have a thought for them! And most
I wish that you might suffer me to touch them
and sorrow with them.
(Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE, OEDIPUS' *two daughters)*
O my lord! O true noble Creon! Can I
really be touching them, as when I saw?
What shall I say?

Yes, I can hear them sobbing—my two darlings!
and Creon has had pity and has sent me
what I loved most?
Am I right?

CREON. You're right: it was I gave you this
because I knew from old days how you loved them
as I see now.

OEDIPUS. God bless you for it, Creon,
and may God guard you better on your road
than he did me!
O children,
where are you? Come here, come to my hands,
a brother's hands which turned your father's eyes,
those bright eyes you knew once, to what you see,
a father seeing nothing, knowing nothing,
begetting you from his own source of life.
I weep for you—I cannot see your faces—
I weep when I think of the bitterness
there will be in your lives, how you must live
before the world. At what assemblages
of citizens will you make one? to what
gay company will you go and not come home
in tears instead of sharing in the holiday?
And when you're ripe for marriage, who will he be,
the man who'll risk to take such infamy
as shall cling to my children, to bring hurt
on them and those that marry with them? What
curse is not there? "Your father killed his father
and sowed the seed where he had sprung himself
and begot you out of the womb that held him."
These insults you will hear. Then who will marry you?
No one, my children; clearly you are doomed
to waste away in barrenness unmarried.
Son of Menoeceus, since you are all the father
left these two girls, and we, their parents, both
are dead to them—do not allow them wander
like beggars, poor and husbandless.
They are of your own blood.
And do not make them equal with myself
in wretchedness; for you can see them now
so young, so utterly alone, save for you only.

Touch my hand, noble Creon, and say yes.
If you were older, children, and were wiser,
there's much advice I'd give you. But as it is,
let this be what you pray: give me a life
wherever there is opportunity
to live, and better life than was my father's.

CREON. Your tears have had enough of scope; now go within the house.

OEDIPUS. I must obey, though bitter of heart.

CREON. In season, all is good.

OEDIPUS. Do you know on what conditions I obey?

CREON. You tell me them, and I shall know them when I hear.

OEDIPUS. That you shall send me out to live away from Thebes.

CREON. That gift you must ask of the God.

OEDIPUS. But I'm now hated by the Gods.

CREON. So quickly you'll obtain your prayer.

OEDIPUS. You consent then?

CREON. What I do not mean, I do not use to say.

OEDIPUS. Now lead me away from here.

CREON. Let go the children, then, and come.

OEDIPUS. Do not take them from me.

CREON. Do not seek to be master in everything,
for the things you mastered did not follow you throughout your life.

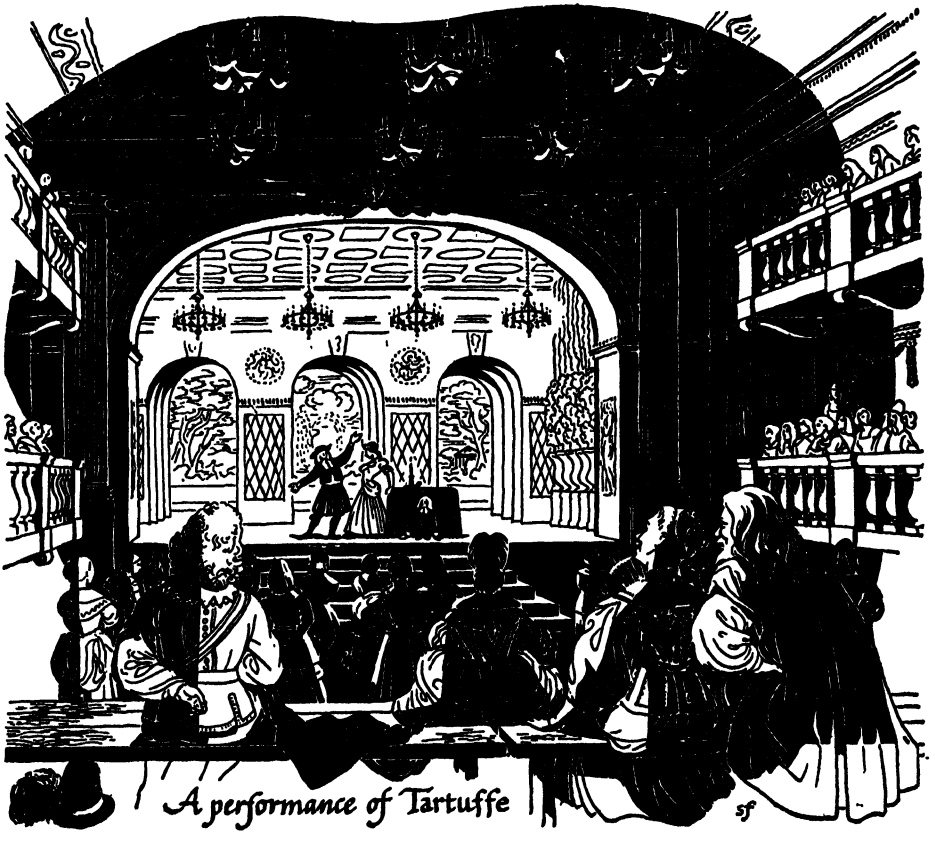
(As CREON *and* OEDIPUS *go out)*

CHORUS. You that live in my ancestral Thebes, behold this Oedipus,—
him who knew the famous riddles and was a man most masterful;
not a citizen who did not look with envy on his lot—
See him now and see the breakers of misfortune swallow him!
Look upon that last day always. Count no mortal happy till
he has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain.

MOLIÈRE Tartuffe

Contrasted with the Greek theater, or even the sixteenth-century Elizabethan theater (see p. 90), the French theater in which Tartuffe *(1669) was presented seems fairly up-to-date. It was a roofed theater, and it had a curtained stage, most of which was located behind a proscenium arch. The stage, since it was indoors, was artificially lighted—not too well, it happened, since the light apparently was furnished by candles in chandeliers hanging above the stage. The employment of a curtain made possible the use of scenery—and of course this device influenced dramatic form.*

The scenes were painted on "flats" (canvas stretched on wooden frames and arranged in pairs parallel to the curtain) and backdrops. Such scenery gave a sense of locality, usually an open square with buildings on two sides, or the interior of a room. Such scenes could be changed behind the curtain during the



A performance of Tartuffe

course of a presentation, but because of the trouble and the expense involved, they usually were not. Therefore the nature of the scenery tended to limit the playwright to one setting—as in Molière's Tartuffe. *Heavy stage properties were limited to a few chairs and tables: in* Tartuffe, *the only necessary property is a table.*

The Palais Royal, the theater in which most of Molière's best plays were produced, was about one hundred by fifty feet in dimension. The auditorium included two galleries, which ran along the sides and were divided into boxes, and a main floor, which was divided into two sections. The front section contained no seats and, though it was closer to the stage than any other section, was the cheapest part of the house. The rear part of the main floor contained benches on a series of steps.

Some French theatergoers were inclined to be noisy and unruly—not only the standees who were crowded together in the front part of the ground floor but also the occupants of the expensive boxes. But most theatergoers—members of the solid burgher class or the upper class—were well-mannered and, moreover, were quite proud of their taste in drama. Such an audience readily responded to the intellectual comedy, to the social satire, to the polished verse, and to the characterization one finds in the plays of Molière.

The public production of Tartuffe *was banned for several years because some held that the attack it made upon a religious hypocrite would be considered a general attack upon religion. In the preface to the first edition of the play, its author took pains to point out that "the play in no wise tends to turn to ridicule the things that we ought to reverence." The drama, he said, was so written as "to make clear the distinction between your hypocrite and your man of true devoutness." To this end, Molière said, "I have employed . . . . two whole acts in preparing for the entry of my scoundrel. He does not leave the auditor one moment in doubt; . . . . he says nothing, he does nothing, but what paints him to the spectators as a rascal, and sets off the character of the truly virtuous man I put in opposition to him." The statement throws a good deal of light upon Molière's aim and his method of achieving it.*

CHARACTERS

ORGON, *husband to* ELMIRE
DAMIS, *his son*
VALÈRE, *betrothed to* MARIANNE
CLÉANTE, *brother-in-law to* ORGON
TARTUFFE
MR. LOYAL, *bailiff*
A POLICE OFFICER
ELMIRE, *wife to* ORGON
MADAME PERNELLE, *mother to* ORGON
MARIANNE, ORGON'S *daughter, betrothed to* VALÈRE
DORINE, *maid to* MARIANNE
FLIPOTE, *servant to* MME. PERNELLE

The scene is in Paris, in the house of ORGON.

ACT I.

Scene I: MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE, FLIPOTE.

PERNELLE. Come along, Flipote, come along, let me get away from them all.
ELMIRE. You go so fast that one can hardly keep up with you.
PERNELLE. Never mind, daughter, never mind; come no farther; I can well dispense with these ceremonies.
ELMIRE. We acquit ourselves of our duty toward you. But, mother, may I ask why you are in such a hurry to leave us?
PERNELLE. For the simple reason that I cannot bear to see what goes on in your house, and that no effort is made to comply with my wishes. Yes, I leave your house very ill edified. Things are done against all my admonitions; there is no respect paid to anything; everyone speaks out as he likes, and it is exactly like the court of King Petaud.[1]
DORINE. If . . .
PERNELLE. You, a servant, are a great deal too strong in the jaw, most rude, and must have your say about everything.
DAMIS. But . . .
PERNELLE. You are, in good round English, a fool, my child. I, your grandmother, tell you so; and I always forewarned your father that you would turn out a worthless fellow, and would never bring him anything but vexation.

From *The Dramatic Works of Molière,* translated by Charles Heron Wall.

[1]*King Petaud,* the name which the corporation of beggars used to give in old times to their chief.

MARIANNE. I think . . .

PERNELLE. And you, his sister, are all demureness, and look as if butter would not melt in your mouth. But it is truly said that still waters run deep, and on the sly you lead a life which I thoroughly dislike.

ELMIRE. But, mother . . .

PERNELLE. I should be sorry to vex you, my daughter, but your conduct is altogether unbecoming; you ought to set them a good example, and their late mother did much better. You spend money too freely; and I am shocked to see you go about dressed like a princess. She who wishes to please her husband only, has no need of such finery.

CLÉANTE. But madam, after all . . .

PERNELLE. As for you, her brother, I esteem you greatly. I love and respect you, sir; but all the same if I were in my son's her husband's place, I would beg of you most earnestly never to enter the house. You always advocate rules of life that honest folks ought not to follow.—I am a little outspoken, but such is my disposition, and I never mince matters when I have something on my mind.

DORINE. Your Tartuffe is very fortunate, no doubt, in . . .

PERNELLE. He is a very worthy man, to whom you would do well to listen, and I can't bear, without getting into a passion, to see him molested by a scapegrace like you.

DAMIS. What! can I allow a straight-laced bigot to assume a tyrannical authority in this house; and that we should never think of any pleasure unless we are assured of that fine gentleman's consent.

DORINE. According to him and his maxims, we can do nothing without committing a sin; for the zealous critic superintends everything.

PERNELLE. And whatever he superintends is well superintended. It is the way to Heaven he wants to show you, and my son should make you all love him.

DAMIS. No, mother, there is no father nor anything in the world which can induce me to wish him well, and I should be false to my own heart if I spoke otherwise. Everything he does excites my wrath, and I foresee that some day or other something will happen, and that I shall be forced to come to an open quarrel with the sneaking scoundrel.

DORINE. Indeed it is most scandalous to see a stranger come and make himself at home here; most scandalous that a beggar who had no shoes to his feet when he first came, and whose coat was not worth three halfpence, should so far forget himself as to interfere with everything and play the master!

PERNELLE. Ah! mercy on us! It would be much better if everything were managed according to his pious directions.

DORINE. Yes, he is a saint in your opinion; but depend upon it, he is really nothing but a downright hypocrite.

PERNELLE. What backbiting!

DORINE. I should trust neither him nor his Laurent without good security, I can tell you.

PERNELLE. I don't know what the servant may really be; but I'll answer for the master being a holy man. You hate him and reject him because he tells you of your faults. It is against sin that he is incensed, and there is nothing he has so much at heart as the interest of Heaven.

DORINE. Has he? Why, then, and particularly of late, is he angry when anyone comes near us? In what does a polite visit offend Heaven, that he should make a disturbance enough to drive us mad? Shall I tell you here privately what I think? (*pointing to* ELMIRE) I really believe that he is, in good faith, . . . jealous of madam!

PERNELLE. Hold your tongue, and mind what you are saying. He is not the only one who blames these visits. All the confusion which accompanies the people you receive, those carriages always waiting at the gate, the noisy crowd of lackeys, disturb the whole neighbourhood. I am most willing to believe that there is really no harm done; but, in short, it gives people occasion to talk, and that is not right.

CLÉANTE. Ah! madam, would you hinder people from talking? It would be a sad thing if in this world we had to give up our best friends because of some stupid story in which we may play a part. But even if we could bring ourselves to do such a thing, do you think it would force people to be silent? There is no safeguard against calumny. Let us, therefore, not mind all that foolish gossip, but only endeavour to lead a virtuous life, and leave full licence to the scandal-mongers.

DORINE. Are not Daphné, our neighbour, and her small husband, those who have been speaking evil of us? The people whose conduct offers the greatest hold to ridicule are always the first to speak unkindly of others. They never fail to catch at the least sign of a mutual esteem to spread far and wide the news with glee, and to give it the meaning they wish people to credit. By giving to the actions of others the colour that belongs to their own, they think to justify their conduct to the world; and under the delusive hope of some resemblance, to give their own intrigues a look of innocence, or cause to fall elsewhere a part of the blame of which they have too heavy a share.

PERNELLE. All these reasonings are beside the mark. Everybody, for instance, knows that Orante leads an exemplary life, that her thoughts are of Heaven only; now, I have heard say that she has not a very high opinion of the people who visit here.

DORINE. The example is well chosen, and the lady is really too good! It is true she leads an austere life, but age has brought that ardent zeal, and we know that she is a prude, because she could hardly be anything else.

As long as it was in her power to make conquests, she profited largely by all her advantages; but now, aware that her eyes have lost their lustre, she, forsooth, renounces the world which forsakes her, and under the specious veil of great discretion hides the decay of her worn-out charms. This is the way with coquettes now-a-days; it is misery to them to be deserted by their lovers, and when thus left to themselves they see no other loophole of escape from the gloomy despair than prudishness. The worthy women censure everything with severity, and forgive nothing; they loudly blame everybody's ways of living, not out of motives of charity but because, through envy, they cannot bear to see another enjoy the pleasures of which age deprives them.

PERNELLE *(to* ELMIRE). This, daughter, is the idle nonsense that pleases you. I am of necessity forced to be silent in your house, for this lady has the privilege of talking all day long; yet I will not be beaten, and you shall hear me in my turn. I tell you that my son never acted more wisely than when he took this holy man into his family; that heaven, in its mercy, has sent him in time to reclaim your minds from error. It is for your salvation that he is here, and he reproves nothing but what deserves reproof. These visits, these balls, and this idle talk are all begotten of the evil one. You never hear there any pious conversation, but only tittle-tattle and nonsensical foolish things. Often, also, our neighbours come in for a share, and there is evil-speaking about everybody. In short, sensible people lose their senses in the confusion of such gatherings. A thousand idle stories are started in a moment, and it was well said the other day by a good doctor, that it is a perfect Babel; for everyone there jabbers till he can jabber no more. And in order to explain how this remark came.... *(Pointing to* CLÉANTE) There, do you see that gentleman giggling already! Go and find the fools who give you cause to laugh; and without.... *(To* ELMIRE) Farewell to you, daughter, I won't speak a word more. Know that I don't think half as much of your home as I once did, and that it will be many a long day before you catch me in here again. *(Giving a box on the ear to* FLIPOTE) Come along; what are you dreaming and gaping about there? Holy Virgin! I'll warm your ears for you. Come along, you hussy; come along, I say.

Scene II: CLÉANTE, DORINE.

CLÉANTE. No, I won't follow her, for fear she should abuse me again. How the old woman....

DORINE. It is a pity she does not hear you call her so. She would soon tell you her mind about what she thinks of you, and that she is not of an age to call forth such a remark from you.

CLÉANTE. What a passion she got in about nothing, and how mad she is after her Tartuffe!

DORINE. Yes, indeed. But all this is nothing compared to the infatuation of her son; if you could but see him, you would soon say that it was worse and worse! Our civil troubles had given Orgon the reputation of a man of sense, and he showed courage while serving his king; but since he is thus besotted with his Tartuffe, he has almost become silly. He calls him "brother," and in his inmost soul loves him a hundred times more than either mother, son, daughter, or wife. He makes him the only confidant of all his secrets, and the prudent adviser of all his actions. He caresses him, kisses him, and no one could show a stronger affection for any lady-love. When at table he insists upon his occupying the place of honour, and is quite delighted to see him gulp down as much as half-a-dozen people. The very best cuts are for him, and if the hiccup disturbs him, our master gives him a "God bless you." In a word, he dotes upon him, he is everything to him—his hero. He admires all his actions, quotes him on all occasions, looks upon every trivial thing he does as a wonder, and every word he says as the sayings of an oracle. Tartuffe, who understands his man, and means to make his profit by him, knows how to impose on him in a hundred different ways; by his cant he extorts money from him, and, on the strength of his hypocritical bigotry, takes upon himself to reprove the whole family. Even that jackanapes of a boy who acts as a servant to him, dares to find fault with us; he comes and sermonises us with fierce, indignant looks, and throws away our ribbons, rouge, and patches. The wretch the other day tore a handkerchief to pieces, because he had found it folded in a "Flower of the Saints,"[1] saying that we were committing the abominable sin of mixing holiness with the adornments of hell.

Scene III: ELMIRE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

ELMIRE *(to* CLÉANTE). You are very fortunate not to have accompanied her to the door to have heard the things she said to us. But I just caught sight of my husband; and as he did not see me, I must go and wait upstairs for his coming, and only say good morning to him.

CLÉANTE. I will stop here some time.

Scene IV: CLÉANTE, DAMIS, DORINE.

DAMIS. Speak to him a little about my sister's marriage. I have an idea that Tartuffe is opposed to it, and that it is he who puts my father up to all

[1]A book written by a celebrated Spanish Jesuit, and translated into French.

those trying evasions. You know how I am interested in the matter.... If love unites my sister and Valère, his sister also is very dear to me; and if it must....

DORINE. Here he is.

Scene V: ORGON, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

ORGON. Ah! good morning, brother.

CLÉANTE. I was just going away, but I am glad to see you back. The fields are not very green just now, are they?

ORGON. Dorine.... *(to* CLÉANTE) Brother, pray excuse me; you will kindly allow me to allay my anxiety by asking news of the family. *(To* DORINE) Has everything gone on well these last two days? What has happened? How is everybody?

DORINE. The day before yesterday our mistress was very feverish from morning to night, and suffered from a most extraordinary headache.

ORGON. And Tartuffe?

DORINE. Tartuffe! He is wonderfully well, stout and fat, with blooming cheeks and ruddy lips.

ORGON. Poor man!

DORINE. In the evening she felt very faint, and the pain in her head was so great that she could not touch anything at supper.

ORGON. And Tartuffe?

DORINE. He ate his supper by himself before her; and very devoutly devoured a brace of partridges and half a leg of mutton hashed!

ORGON. Poor man!

DORINE. She spent the whole of the night without getting one wink of sleep; she was very feverish, and we had to sit up with her until the morning.

ORGON. And Tartuffe?

DORINE. Overcome by a pleasant sleepiness he passed from the table to his room, and got at once into his warmed bed, where he slept comfortably till the next morning.

ORGON. Poor man!

DORINE. At last yielding to our persuasions, she consented to be bled, and immediately felt relieved.

ORGON. And Tartuffe?

DORINE. He took heart right valiantly, and fortifying his soul against all evils, to make up for the blood which our lady had lost, drank at breakfast four large bumpers of wine.

ORGON. Poor man!

DORINE. Now at last, they are both well; and I will go and tell our lady how glad you are to hear of her recovery.

Scene VI: ORGON, CLÉANTE.

CLÉANTE. She is laughing at you to your face, brother; and although I am far from wishing to vex you, I must say that she is right. Was ever such a whim heard of before? Is it possible that you should be so infatuated with a man as to forget everything for him? And, after having saved him from want, that you should come to....

ORGON. Not a word more, brother, for you do not know the man you are speaking of.

CLÉANTE. I do not know him, if you like, but in order to see what kind of man he is....

ORGON. Brother, you would be delighted with him if you knew him, and you would never get over your wonder. He is a man who.... ah! a man.... in short, a man. Whoever carefully follows his precepts lives in most profound peace, and all the rest of the world is but dross to him. Yes, I am quite another man since I became acquainted with him. He teaches me to have no affection for anybody, he detaches my heart from all the ties of this world; and I should see my brother, children, mother, and wife die, without caring about it.

CLÉANTE. Humane feelings these, brother!

ORGON. Ah! if you had only seen him when I first met him, you would feel for him the same love that I have. He came every day to church, and with gentle looks knelt down straight before me on both his knees. He attracted the attention of the whole congregation by the ardour with which, wrapped in saintly ecstasy, he sent up his prayer to Heaven. He sighed deeply, and every moment humbly kissed the ground. When I went out, he would steal quickly before me to offer me holy water at the door. Having heard through his servant, who imitates him in everything, of his poverty, and who he is, I made him small presents, but he, with the greatest modesty, always returned me part of it: "It is too much," he would say, "too much by half, I do not deserve your pity;" and when I refused to take it back again, he went, before my eyes, to distribute it to the poor. At last Heaven moved me to take him into my house, and since then everything has been prospering here. I see that he reproves everything, and, with regard to my wife, takes extreme care of my honour. He warns me of the people who cast loving eyes upon her, and is a dozen times more jealous of her than I am. You would never believe how far he carries his pious zeal. He accuses himself of sin for the slightest thing imaginable; a mere trifle is enough to shock him; so much so, that the other day he blamed himself for having caught a flea while at his prayers, and for having killed it with too much wrath.

CLÉANTE. You are crazy, brother, I believe! Are you laughing at me with such stuff? What is it you mean? All this foolery....

ORGON. Brother, what you say savours of freethinking; you are somewhat tainted with it; and, as I have told you again and again, you will draw some heavy judgment upon your head.

CLÉANTE. Tut! This is the usual way of talking with such as you. They want everybody to be as blind as they are; to see clearly is to be a free-thinker; and not to worship empty show is to act from a want of faith and of respect for holy things. Believe me, all your denunciations do not frighten me; I know what I say, and God sees my heart. I am no dupe of all your formalists. Devotion, like courage, has its pretenders; and in the same way that the truly brave are not those who make the most noise where honour leads them, so the real and truly pious men whose example we ought to follow are not those who affect such grimaces. What! will you make no distinction between hypocrisy and true religion? Will you call them both by the same name, and render the same homage to the mask as to the face? Will you put on the same level falsehood and sincerity, and confound appearance with reality? Will you esteem the shadow as much as the substance, and false coin as much as good? Men are really strange beings; they never keep to simple nature. The bounds of reason seem too narrow for them, and in every character they over-act their parts; they often spoil even the noblest thing by exaggeration. This to yourself, by the way, brother.

ORGON. Yes, you are doubtless a doctor revered by all; all the knowledge of the world has taken its abode in you; you are the only wise and enlightened man,—the oracle, the Cato of the present age; and all men compared to you are fools.

CLÉANTE. No, I am not a revered doctor, brother; no, all the knowledge of this world has not found its abode in me. I have merely the science of discerning truth from falsehood. And as I know nothing in the world so noble and so beautiful as the holy fervour of genuine piety, so there is nothing, I think, so odious as the whitewashed outside of a specious zeal; as those downright impostors, those hireling-bigots whose sacrilegious and deceitful grimaces impose on others with impunity, and who trifle as they like with all that mankind holds sacred; those men who, wholly given to mercenary ends, trade upon godliness, and would purchase honour and reputation at the cost of hypocritical looks and affected groans; who, seized with strange ardour, make use of the next world to secure their fortune in this; who, with great affectation and many prayers, daily preach solitude and retirement while they themselves live at Court; who know how to reconcile their zeal with their vices; who are passionate, revengeful, faithless, full of deceit, and who, to work the destruction of

a fellow-man, insolently cover their fierce resentment with the cause of Heaven. They are so much the more dangerous in that they, in their bitter wrath, use against us those weapons which men revere; and their anger, which everybody lauds, assassinates us with a consecrated weapon. There are too many such mean hypocrites in the world; but from them the truly pious are easy to distinguish. Our age offers us abundant and glorious examples, my brother. Look at Ariston, look at Periande, Oronte, Alcidamus, Polydore, and Clitandre. No one will refuse them this title. They are no pretenders to virtue. You never see in them this unbearable ostentation, and their piety is human and tractable. They never censure the doings of others; they think there is too much pride in such censure; and leaving lofty words to others, they only reprove our actions by their own virtue. They do not trust to the appearance of evil, and are more inclined to judge kindly of others. We find no cabals, no intrigues among them; all their anxiety is to live a holy life. They never persecute the sinner, but they hate the sin. They do not care to display for the interest of Heaven a more ardent zeal than Heaven itself displays. These are people after my own heart; it is thus we should live: this is the pattern for us to follow. Tartuffe is not of this stamp, I know. You speak with the best intention of his goodness, but I fear you are dazzled by false appearances.

ORGON. Well, my dear brother, have you done?

CLÉANTE. Yes.

ORGON *(going)*. I am your servant.

CLÉANTE. Pray, one word more. Let us drop this discussion. You know that Valère has your promise to be your son-in-law?

ORGON. Yes.

CLÉANTE. And that you had fixed a day for the wedding?

ORGON. True.

CLÉANTE. Why, then, do you put off the ceremony?

ORGON. I don't know.

CLÉANTE. Have you any other project in your mind?

ORGON. Perhaps.

CLÉANTE. Would you break your word?

ORGON. I don't say that.

CLÉANTE. You have no reason, I think, to prevent you from fulfilling your promise?

ORGON. That depends.

CLÉANTE. Valère has asked me to speak to you on the subject.

ORGON. Heaven be praised for that!

CLÉANTE. But what answer shall I give him?

ORGON. Any answer you please.

CLÉANTE. Still, we ought to know your intentions. What are they?
ORGON. To do Heaven's will.
CLÉANTE. Let us speak reasonably. You gave your word to Valère; will you or will you not keep it?
ORGON. Good-bye. *(Exit)*
CLÉANTE. *(alone)*. I greatly fear some misfortune for his love. I must go and tell him of all that is going on.

ACT II.

Scene I: ORGON, MARIANNE.

ORGON. Mariannel
MARIANNE. Father!
ORGON. Come here; I have something to say to you privately.
MARIANNE *(to* ORGON, *who peers into a little side-room)*. What are you looking for?
ORGON. I want to see if there is anyone there who could overhear us: this is a most likely place for such a purpose. Now we are all right. Marianne, I have always found you of a sweet disposition, and you have always been very dear to me.
MARIANNE. I thank you very much for this fatherly love.
ORGON. Rightly spoken, my daughter; and, to deserve it, you should think of nothing but of pleasing me.
MARIANNE. I have no dearer wish at heart.
ORGON. Very well; then tell me, what do you say of our guest, Tartuffe?
MARIANNE. Who, I?
ORGON. You. Be careful how you answer.
MARIANNE. Alas! I will say anything you please of him.

Scene II: ORGON, MARIANNE, DORINE *(coming in softly and standing behind* ORGON *without being noticed by him)*.

ORGON. You speak wisely. Then say, daughter, that he possesses the greatest merit; that he has touched your heart; and that it would be happiness to you to see him, with my approbation, become your husband.
MARIANNE *(drawing back with surprise)*. Eh!
ORGON. What is the matter?
MARIANNE. What did you say?
ORGON. What?
MARIANNE. Did I make a mistake?
ORGON. Make a mistake?
MARIANNE. Who is it, father, that you would have me say has touched my

heart, and whom, with your approbation, it would be happiness to have for a husband?

ORGON. Tartuffe.

MARIANNE. But I feel nothing of the kind, I assure you, father. Why would you have me tell such a falsehood?

ORGON. But I wish it to be the truth; and it is sufficient for you that I have decided it should be so.

MARIANNE. What! you wish me, father....

ORGON. Yes, daughter, I intend to unite Tartuffe to my family by marrying him to you. I am resolved that he shall be your husband; and as I can ... *(Seeing* DORINE) What are you doing here? Your curiosity must be very strong, young damsel, for you to come and listen to us after that fashion.

DORINE. Really, sir, I don't know whether the report arose from conjecture or by chance; but I have just been told of this match, and I treated the whole story as a sorry joke.

ORGON. Why! Is the thing so incredible?

DORINE. So incredible, sir, that I do not believe it, even when I hear you speak of it.

ORGON. I shall find the means of making you believe it, you may be sure.

DORINE. Pooh! pooh! you are telling us a fine story indeed!

ORGON. I am telling you what will very soon prove true.

DORINE. Nonsense!

ORGON. I assure you, daughter, that I am not jesting.

DORINE. Ah! ah! Don't you go and believe your father, he is only laughing.

ORGON. I tell you....

DORINE. It'll all be lost time; nobody will believe you.

ORGON. My anger at last....

DORINE. Very well! very well! We believe you, and so much the worse for you. What! is it possible, sir, that with your wise looks, and that large beard in the very midst of your face, you should be foolish enough to wish....

ORGON. Now, listen. You have of late taken certain liberties here which do not please me at all. Do you hear?

DORINE. Let us speak calmly, sir, I beseech you. Are you laughing at us with this scheme? Your daughter will never do for a bigot; he has something else to think about. And then, what does such an alliance bring to you? Why should you, with all your wealth, go and choose a beggar for your son-in-law....

ORGON. Hold your tongue. If he has no money, remember that that is the very reason why we should esteem him. His poverty is a noble poverty, and one which ought to place him above all greatness, for he lost his

fortune through the little care he had for the things of this world, and through his anxiety for the next. However, with my help, he will have the means of settling his affairs and of recovering his own. For, poor as he is, he is a gentleman, and the estate which he has a right to is considerable.

DORINE. Yes; at least he says so. But this vanity, sir, does not agree well with piety. Whoever gives himself to the privations of a holy life should not make such a boast of title and lineage; the humble ways of piety suffer from the publicity of such ambition. Why such pride? .... But what I say vexes you. Let us leave his nobility aside and speak of his person. Would you really, without sorrow, give a girl like your daughter to a man of his stamp? And ought you not to think a little of propriety, and prevent the consequences of such a union? You ought to know that you endanger a woman's virtue when you marry her against her will or taste. Her living virtuously in the bonds of matrimony depends much on the husband who is given to her; and those who are everywhere pointed at, have often made their wives what they are. It is, in fact, very difficult to remain faithful to certain husbands of a certain kind; and whoever gives his daughter to a man she hates is responsible to Heaven for all the sins she commits. Think to what danger you are exposed by such a scheme.

ORGON. I see that I shall have to learn from her what to do!

DORINE. It would be all the better for you if you followed my advice.

ORGON. Daughter, let us no longer waste our time with such nonsense; I am your father, and I know what you want. I had promised you to Valère; but, from what I am told, not only is he rather given to gambling, but I also suspect him of being a freethinker. I never see him come to church.

DORINE. Would you have him run there at your fixed hours, like those who go there only to be seen?

ORGON. I don't ask your opinion in the matter—In short, Tartuffe is on the best terms with Heaven, and this is a treasure to which nothing else can be compared. You will find all your wishes satisfied by such a union; it will prove a continual source of delight and pleasure. You will live together in your faithful love like two young children—like two turtle-doves. Never will any unhappy discussion arise between you, and you will make anything you like of him.

DORINE. She will make nought but a fool of him, I know.

ORGON. Gracious me, what language!

DORINE. I tell you that he has the look of one, and that his destiny will overrule, sir, all the virtue your daughter may have.

ORGON. Leave off interrupting me. Mind you keep silent, and not poke your word in, where you have no business.

DORINE *(she interrupts him each time he turns round to speak to his daughter).* What I say is only for your own good, sir.

ORGON. You take too much upon you. Be quiet, if you please.

DORINE. If I did not love you....

ORGON. I don't wish to be loved.

DORINE. And I shall love you, in spite of yourself, sir.

ORGON. How now?

DORINE. I have your honour at heart, and I cannot bear to see you bring a thousand ill-natured remarks upon yourself.

ORGON. Will you be silent?

DORINE. It is a shame to allow you to think of such a marriage.

ORGON. Will you hold your peace, you serpent, whose insolence....

DORINE. What! you're a pious man, and you give way to anger?

ORGON. Yes; my patience must give way before all this. I insist upon you holding your tongue.

DORINE. Very well; but, although I don't speak, I think none the less.

ORGON. Think, if you like; but be careful to tell me nothing of your thoughts, or take care.... *(Turning to his daughter)* Like a prudent man, I have carefully weighed everything.

DORINE *(aside).* It makes me furious not to be able to speak.

ORGON. Although he is no dandy, Tartuffe's face is such....

DORINE. Yes, 'tis a fine phiz!

ORGON. That even if you had no sympathy whatever with all his other gifts....

DORINE. Yes, she is well provided for! (ORGON *turns round to face* DORINE, *and with crossed arms listens to her)* If I were in her place, depend upon it no man should marry me against my will without paying for it. I would soon show him, after our wedding-day, that a woman can always revenge herself.

ORGON. So, you will pay no heed to what I say?

DORINE. What do you complain of? I am not speaking to you.

ORGON. What is it you are doing, then?

DORINE. I am speaking to myself; that's all.

ORGON *(aside).* To punish her insolence, I shall have to make her feel the weight of my hand. *(He gets ready to give a box on the ear to* DORINE, *and at each word he says to his daughter he turns round to look at* DORINE, *who stands bolt upright, without speaking)* Daughter, you cannot but approve the determination I have come to.... and believe that the husband.... I have chosen for you.... *(To* DORINE) Why don't you speak to yourself?

DORINE. I have nothing to say to myself.

ORGON. Only try one little word more.

DORINE. I don't choose to.

ORGON. I was waiting for you.

DORINE. No such fool, I!

ORGON. In short, daughter, you must obey, and show for my choice that deference....

DORINE *(running away).* I'd take good care not to marry such a man.

ORGON (*who has missed giving a box on the ear to* DORINE). You have there with you, daughter, a pestilent hussy, with whom I can live no longer without sin. I feel unable to go on now. Her insolent remarks have put me in such a passion that I must go out awhile to recover myself. *(Exit)*

Scene III: MARIANNE, DORINE.

DORINE. Tell me, have you lost all power of speech? and must I act for you in this? What! you allow a mad proposal to be made to you, without saying a single word against it!

MARIANNE. What will you have me do against the absolute will of my father?

DORINE. Anything to turn off such a threatened danger.

MARIANNE. But what?

DORINE. Why, tell him that no one loves at the bidding of another; that you marry for yourself, and not for him; that, as this business concerns you only, it is you, not him, that the husband should please; and that, since his Tartuffe seems so charming in his eyes he may marry him himself as much as he likes.

MARIANNE. A father has such authority over us that I acknowledge I had not the courage to answer him.

DORINE. But, let us see. Valère has proposed to you; now, tell me, do you love him or do you not?

MARIANNE. Ah! how unjust you are towards my love, Dorine. Why should you ask me such a thing? Have I not opened my heart to you? Do you not know how greatly I love him?

DORINE. How am I to know whether you spoke from your heart, and whether it is perfectly true that you love him?

MARIANNE. You do me a great wrong to doubt it, Dorine; and you know very well my true feelings in the matter.

DORINE. So that you really love him?

MARIANNE. Yes, passionately.

DORINE. And, if we are to believe appearances, he loves you as well?

MARIANNE. Yes; I believe he does.

DORINE. So that you are both anxious to be married?

MARIANNE. Certainly.

DORINE. What do you mean to do, then, about that other marriage?

MARIANNE. To die by my own hands, if I am forced to comply with it.

DORINE. Very good; that's a resource which had not entered my head. You have only to die in order to get out of trouble. The remedy is really excellent! Pooh! it puts me out of all patience to hear this kind of talk.

MARIANNE. Alas! how angry you seem, Dorine. You have no pity for the sorrows of others.

DORINE. I have no pity for those who talk nonsense, and who, in the time of trial, are as soft as you are.

MARIANNE. But how can I help, if timidity....

DORINE. But love requires firmness.

MARIANNE. Have I wavered in my love for Valère? and is it not for him to obtain me from my father?

DORINE. Yet, if your father is a downright churl who is gone crazy with his Tartuffe, and does not keep his promise about your marriage, is your lover to be blamed for that?

MARIANNE. Yet you would not have me, by a haughty and contemptuous refusal, let everyone into the secret of my love? Whatever may be Valère's qualities, am I to forget for him the modesty of my sex, and my duty as a daughter? Would you have the state of my feelings exposed to the eyes of the world....

DORINE. No, no; I don't want anything. I see that you wish to have Mr. Tartuffe; and, now I think of it, I should be wrong to dissuade you from such a marriage. What reasons can I have to oppose your wishes? The match, in itself, is most advantageous. Mr. Tartuffe! oh! oh! that is not a proposal to be despised. Indeed, to say the truth, Tartuffe is no fool; and it is no small honour to be his better-half. Everybody attributes glory to him already. He is a nobleman in his village; and, withal, a well-built fellow, with red ears and florid cheeks. You will live only too happily with such a husband.

MARIANNE. Alas!

DORINE. What delight will be yours when you are the wife of such a handsome spouse!

MARIANNE. Ah! leave off speaking in such a way, I beg of you, and help me to find some means of avoiding this marriage. I give up timidity, I hesitate no longer, and I am ready to do anything.

DORINE. No, no; a daughter should obey her father, were he to ask her to marry an ape! After all, your fate is splendid! What do you complain of? You will go in a van to his village, which is fertile in cousins of both sexes, and it will be your joy to entertain them. You will at once be introduced, by way of footing, into the best society, and will go and visit the bailiff's wife and the assessor's lady, who will honour you with a folding chair. There, during the carnival, you may hope for a ball with the great band:

to wit, two bagpipes, and sometimes Fagotin[1] and the marionettes; only, if your husband....

MARIANNE. Ah! you kill me! Try rather to assist me, Dorine. Give me your advice.

DORINE. I am your servant.

MARIANNE. Ah! I beseech you, Dorine!

DORINE. No, for your punishment you deserve that the thing should take place.

MARIANNE. Dear Dorine, do!

DORINE. No.

MARIANNE. If I must tell openly the feeling of my....

DORINE. Oh dear, no; Tartuffe is the man for you, and you shall have a taste of him.

MARIANNE. You know that I have always trusted you; grant me....

DORINE. No, you shall be, ah! yes, you shall be tartufied.

MARIANNE. Very well, since my fate draws no pity from you, leave me wholly to my despair; from it my heart will gather fresh strength, and I know an infallible remedy for my sufferings. *(Is going)*

DORINE. Here! here! come back! I'll be angry no longer. I must have pity on you, in spite of everything.

MARIANNE. I assure you, Dorine, that if I am forced to endure such misery, I have no resource left but to die.

DORINE. Don't despair. We may, with some skill, prevent.... But here is Valère, your lover.

Scene IV: VALÈRE, MARIANNE, DORINE.

VALÈRE. There is a report about, madam, of which I had no idea, and which is really excellent.

MARIANNE. What is it?

VALÈRE. That you are going to be married to Tartuffe.

MARIANNE. It is quite true that my father has taken this idea into his head.

VALÈRE. Your father....

MARIANNE. Has changed his mind. He has just now proposed the thing to me.

VALÈRE. What! seriously?

MARIANNE. Yes, seriously. He openly declared himself for the match.

VALÈRE. And what resolution have you taken?

MARIANNE. I hardly know.

VALÈRE. The answer is candid—You hardly know?

MARIANNE. No.

VALÈRE. No?

[1]A clever monkey, very well known in Molière's time.

MARIANNE. What do you advise me?

VALÈRE. I? I advise you to take him for a husband.

MARIANNE. You advise me to take him?

VALÈRE. Yes.

MARIANNE. Sincerely?

VALÈRE. Of course. The choice is splendid, and is worth considering.

MARIANNE. Very well, sir, I will follow the advice you give me.

VALÈRE. I see that it will not be any great trouble to you to follow it.

MARIANNE. No more trouble than it was for you to give it.

VALÈRE. I gave it in order to afford you pleasure, madam.

MARIANNE. And I will follow it in order to afford you pleasure, sir.

DORINE *(drawing back at the furthest part of stage).* Now, let us see what'll come out of all this.

VALÈRE. It is thus you love me! and it was all deceit when you. . . .

MARIANNE. This is nothing to the purpose. You tell me plainly that I ought to accept for a husband the man who is proposed to me, and I simply say that I will do so, since I receive such advice from you.

VALÈRE. Do not make what I said an excuse. You had already taken a decision, and you simply make use of a frivolous pretext to break off your engagement to me.

MARIANNE. Yes, it is exactly so.

VALÈRE. I have not the least doubt about it; and never has your heart had the least affection for me.

MARIANNE. Alas! you may think as you please.

VALÈRE. Yes, yes, I can think as I please; but my offended heart will perhaps be beforehand with you in such a design; and I know who will accept my love and my hand.

MARIANNE. I have no doubt of it; and the love claimed by merit. . . .

VALÈRE. Ah! madam, let us leave merit aside. I possess very little, and your behaviour towards me is a proof of it; yet I trust in the indulgence that another may have for me, and she, knowing that I am free, will consent, without shame, to make up for my loss.

MARIANNE. Your loss is not much; and you will soon be comforted in the exchange.

VALÈRE. You may trust me for that; I shall do my best. Our honour demands that we should forget a heart that forgets us; but if, when we do our utmost, we do not succeed, we must hide our failure; for to love where we are loved no longer is but a weakness of which we ought to be ashamed.

MARIANNE. These feelings are noble and worthy of praise.

VALÈRE. No doubt; and they have a right to be approved. What! would you have me for ever keep in my heart the ardent love I feel for you? Would

you have me see you belong to another without bestowing the heart you refuse elsewhere?

MARIANNE. On the contrary, it is the very thing I hope for; and I should like to see the thing already done.

VALÈRE. You would like to see it?

MARIANNE. Certainly.

VALÈRE. You have insulted me too long, madam, and I shall, to satisfy you, go this very moment. *(About to go)*

MARIANNE. Do so.

VALÈRE *(coming back)*. At least, remember that it is you who drive me to this extremity. *(Going)*

MARIANNE. Very well.

VALÈRE *(coming back again)*. And that this decision is entirely due to your example.

MARIANNE. To my example; let it be so.

VALÈRE *(going)*. Enough! you shall be obeyed at once.

MARIANNE. So much the better.

VALÈRE *(coming back again)*. You see me here for the last time.

MARIANNE. That's well.

VALÈRE *(goes, and when near the door turns round)*. What is it you say?

MARIANNE. What is the matter?

VALÈRE. Did you not call me?

MARIANNE. No, you are dreaming.

VALÈRE. Very well, I go then. Farewell, madam. *(Goes away slowly)*

DORINE *(to* MARIANNE). I really believe you are crazy, with all this nonsense. I have left you to quarrel as much as you pleased, so as to see how far you would go.—I say, Mr. Valère! *(She stops* VALÈRE *by the arm)*

VALÈRE *(affecting to resist)*. Well, what do you want, Dorine?

DORINE. Come here.

VALÈRE. No, no, I feel too indignant. Do not stop me, since she wishes it.

DORINE. Stop.

VALÈRE. No, my mind is quite made up.

DORINE. Ah!

MARIANNE *(aside)*. He hates the sight of me; my presence drives him away, and I shall do well to free him from it. *(Is going)*

DORINE *(letting go of* VALÈRE *and running after* MARIANNE). The other, now! Where are you going?

MARIANNE. Leave me.

DORINE. You must come back.

MARIANNE. No, no, Dorine, it is in vain for you to keep me.

VALÈRE *(aside)*. I see plainly that my presence is hateful to her, and it is better that I should free her from it.

DORINE *(letting go of* MARIANNE *to run after* VALÈRE). Again! Plague you both!—Come, I will have it so. Cease all this fooling, and come here, both of you. *(She holds them both)*

VALÈRE *(to* DORINE). But what is it you want?

MARIANNE *(to* DORINE). But what do you mean?

DORINE. To set you all right again, and to help you out of your troubles. *(To* VALÈRE) Are you mad, to have such a quarrel?

VALÈRE. Did you not hear how she spoke to me?

DORINE *(to* MARIANNE). Have you lost your senses, you, to get into such a passion?

MARIANNE. Did you not see how it all happened, and how he treated me?

DORINE. You are a silly couple. *(To* VALÈRE) She has no greater anxiety than to keep faithful to you. *(To* MARIANNE) You are the only one he loves, and he asks for nothing else than to marry you; I'll answer for it, upon my life.

MARIANNE *(to* VALÈRE). Why, then, give me such advice?

VALÈRE *(to* MARIANNE). Why, also, ask me for one on such a matter?

DORINE. You are absurd, both of you. *(To* VALÈRE) Come, your hand. *(To* MARIANNE) Now, yours.

VALÈRE *(giving his hand to* DORINE). Why my hand?

MARIANNE *(also giving her hand).* What is the use of all this?

DORINE. Come, come quickly, come on; you love each other more than you think. (VALÈRE *and* MARIANNE *hold each other's hand for a while without looking at each other)*

VALÈRE *(turning to* MARIANNE). Don't do things too much against your will, and give a man a civil look. (MARIANNE *turns round to* VALÈRE *and smiles)*

DORINE. Now, really, lovers are very foolish.

VALÈRE *(to* MARIANNE). Have I not a right to complain of you? And, to say the least, are you not very unkind to take pleasure in saying such a cruel thing to me?

MARIANNE. But are you not also the most ungrateful lover. . . .

DORINE. Let us leave all that aside for another time, and think of what we can do to ward off this tiresome marriage.

MARIANNE. Tell us what means we must make use of?

DORINE. We'll try everything. *(To* MARIANNE) Your father is absurd, *(To* VALÈRE) and it is ridiculous. *(To* MARIANNE) But you, the best you can do is to seem to acquiesce willingly in his wish; for, in case of alarm, it would be easier for you to put off this marriage. When we gain time we can find remedies for anything. Sometimes you will complain of sudden illness; that will necessitate a delay; at another you will bring forward some evil omens—either that you have met a dead body, have broken a looking-glass, or have dreamt of muddy water. But the best resource

of all is that they cannot possibly make you his wife unless you say "Yes." However, if we mean our plans to be successful, the best thing for the present is, I think, for us not to be found talking together. *(To* VALÈRE) Go away at once; make use of your friends to force her father to keep the promise he made to you. We will, on our side, ask his brother to act with us, and gain the mother-in-law to our side. Good-bye.

VALÈRE *(to* MARIANNE). Whatever we may all do, my greatest hope is really in you.

MARIANNE *(to* VALÈRE). I cannot answer for the will of my father, but I will never belong to anyone but Valère.

VALÈRE. Ah! how happy you make me! And, whatever they dare. . . .

DORINE. Ah me! lovers are never tired of talking! You must be off, I tell you.

VALÈRE *(goes and comes back).* In short. . . .

DORINE. What length of tongue! You go, sir, that way; and you, miss, this. (DORINE *pushes them both away and forces them to separate)*

ACT III.

Scene I: DAMIS, DORINE.

DAMIS. May Heaven this moment crush me; may everybody take me for ever for the greatest fool alive, if there is any respect or any power able to stop me, and if I do not. . . .

DORINE. Pray moderate your anger; your father only just mentioned the matter; we do not always do what we propose, and it's a long way from the project to the execution.

DAMIS. I will put a stop to the intrigues of that scoundrel, and will tell him in his ear a word or two which. . . .

DORINE. Gently, gently; allow your stepmother to act first upon him and your father. She has a certain power over Tartuffe. He is very amiable towards her, and may have a certain tenderness of heart for her. Would to Heaven it were possible! It would be a fine thing! In short, she has sent for him on your account; she wants to sound him about this marriage, which makes you so furious, to know what he thinks, and to make him understand what unpleasantness it would cause in the family, if he encourages it at all. His servant says that he is at his prayers, so that I have not been able to see him; but he added that he will soon come down. Go, then, I beg of you, and leave me to wait for him.

DAMIS. But I can be present at this interview.

DORINE. No, no; better leave them alone.

DAMIS. I should say nothing to him.

DORINE. You think so; but we know what a state of anger you are put in at times; it is the surest way to spoil everything. You must go.

DAMIS. No, I will listen without getting into a rage.

DORINE. How tiresome you are! There he is coming. Go away. (DAMIS *hides himself in the small room at the side of the stage)*

Scene II: TARTUFFE, DORINE.

TARTUFFE *(as soon as he sees* DORINE *speaks to his servant, who is inside the house).* Laurent, lock up my hair-shirt and my scourge, and pray Heaven ever to enlighten you with grace. If anybody comes to see me, say that I am gone to the prisons to distribute my alms.

DORINE *(aside).* What boasting and affectation!

TARTUFFE. What is it you want?

DORINE. To tell you. . . .

TARTUFFE *(taking a handkerchief out of his pocket).* Ah! Heaven! before you speak to me, take this handkerchief, pray.

DORINE. What's the matter?

TARTUFFE. Cover this bosom, of which I cannot bear the sight. Such objects hurt the soul, and are conducive to sinful thoughts.

DORINE. You are very susceptible to temptation, it seems, and the flesh makes great impression on you. I don't know why you should burn so quickly; but as for me, I am not so easily moved, and were I to see your hide from tip to toe, I know pretty well that I should in no way be tempted.

TARTUFFE. Put more modesty into your speech, or I will leave you at once.

DORINE. You need not, for I shall soon leave you in peace, and all I have to say is, that my lady is coming in this room, and would be glad to have a moment's talk with you.

TARTUFFE. Alas! With all my heart.

DORINE *(aside).* How sweet we are! In good troth, I still abide by what I said.

TARTUFFE. Will she soon be here?

DORINE. Directly. I hear her, I believe; yes, here she is. I leave you together.

Scene III: ELMIRE, TARTUFFE.

TARTUFFE. May Heaven, in its great goodness, ever bestow on you health of body and of mind, and shower blessings on your days, according to the prayer of the lowest of its servants.

ELMIRE. I am much obliged to you for this pious wish; but let us sit down a moment to talk more comfortably.

TARTUFFE *(seated).* Have you quite recovered from your indisposition?

ELMIRE *(seated).* Quite. That feverishness soon left me.

TARTUFFE. My prayers have not merit sufficient to have obtained this favour from Heaven; but I have not offered up one petition in which you were not concerned.

ELMIRE. Your anxious zeal is really too great.

TARTUFFE. We cannot have too great anxiety for your dear health; and to give you back the full enjoyment of it, I would have sacrificed my own.

ELMIRE. You carry Christian charity very far, and I am under much obligation to you for all this kindness.

TARTUFFE. I do only what you deserve.

ELMIRE. I wished to speak to you in private on a certain matter, and I am glad that nobody is here to hear us.

TARTUFFE. And I also am delighted. It is very sweet for me, madam, to find myself alone with you.... I have often prayed Heaven to bestow this favour upon me; but till now it has been in vain.

ELMIRE. For my part, all I want is, that you should speak frankly, and hide nothing from me. (DAMIS, *without being seen, half opens the door of the room to hear the conversation)*

TARTUFFE. And my wish is also, that you will allow me the cherished favour of speaking openly to you, and of giving you my word of honour, that if I have said anything against the visits which are paid here to your charms, it has never been done out of hatred to you; but rather out of an ardent zeal which carries me away, and from a sincere feeling of....

ELMIRE. I quite understand it to be so, and I feel sure that it all proceeds from your anxiety for my good.

TARTUFFE *(taking her hands and pressing them).* It is really so, madam, and my fervour is such....

ELMIRE. Ah! you press my hand too much.

TARTUFFE. It is through an excess of zeal. I never intended to hurt you, I had much rather.... *(He puts his hand on* ELMIRE'S *knees)*

ELMIRE. Why do you put your hand there?

TARTUFFE. I was feeling your dress; the stuff is very soft.

ELMIRE. I beg of you to leave off, I am very ticklish. (ELMIRE *draws back her chair, and* TARTUFFE *follows her with his)*

TARTUFFE *(handling* ELMIRE'S *collar).* Heaven! how marvellous this point lace is! The work done in our days is perfectly wonderful, and never has such perfection been attained in everything.

ELMIRE. It is true. But let us speak of what brings me here. I have been told that my husband intends to break his word, and to give you his daughter in marriage. Is that true? Pray tell me?

TARTUFFE. He has merely alluded to it. But, madam, to tell you the truth, that is not the happiness for which my soul sighs; I find elsewhere the unspeakable attractions of the bliss which is the end of all my hopes.

ELMIRE. That is because you care not for earthly things.

TARTUFFE. My breast, madam, does not enclose a heart of flint.

ELMIRE. I know, for my part, that all your sighs tend towards Heaven, and that you have no desire for anything here below.

TARTUFFE. Our love for the beauty which is eternal, stifles not in us love for that which is fleeting and temporal; and we can easily be charmed with the perfect works Heaven has created. Its reflected attractions shine forth in such as you; but it is in you alone that its choicest wonders are centred. It has lavished upon you charms which dazzle the eye, and which touch the heart; and I have never gazed on you, perfect creature, without admiring the Creator of the universe, and without feeling my heart seized with an ardent love for the most beautiful picture in which He has reproduced Himself. At first I feared that this secret tenderness might be a skilful assault of the evil one; I even thought I would avoid your presence, fearing you might prove a stumbling-block to my salvation. But I have learnt, O adorable beauty, that my passion need not be a guilty one; that I can reconcile it with modesty; and I have given up my whole soul to it. I know that I am very presumptuous in making you the offer of such a heart as mine; but in my love I hope everything from you, nothing from the vain efforts of my unworthy self. In you is my hope, my happiness, my peace; on you depends my misery or bliss; and by your verdict I shall be for ever happy, if you wish it; unhappy if it pleases you.

ELMIRE. Quite a gallant declaration. But you must acknowledge that it is rather surprising. It seems to me that you might have fortified your heart a little more carefully against temptation, and have paused before such a design. A devotee like you, who is everywhere spoken of as. . . .

TARTUFFE. Ah! Although a devotee, I am no less a man. When your celestial attractions burst upon the sight, the heart surrenders, and reasons no more. I know that such language from me seems somewhat strange; but after all, madam, I am not an angel; and, if you condemn the confession I make, you have only your own attractions to blame for it. As soon as I beheld their more than human beauty, my whole being was surrendered to you. The unspeakable sweetness of your divine charms forced the obstinate resistance of my heart; it overcame everything—fasting, prayers, and tears—and fixed all my hopes in you. A thousand times my eyes and my sighs have told you this; to-day I explain myself with words. Ah! if you consider with some kindness the tribulations and trials of your unworthy slave, if your goodness has compassion on me, and deigns to stoop so low as my nothingness, I shall ever have for you, O marvellous beauty, a devotion never to be equalled. With me your reputation runs no risk, and has no disgrace to fear. All those court gallants upon whom women dote, are noisy in their doings, boastful in their talk. Ever vain

of their success, they never receive favours without divulging them; and their indiscreet tongues dishonour the altar on which their hearts sacrifice. But men like me burn with a hidden flame, and secrecy is for ever assured. The care which we take of our own reputation is a warrant to the woman who accepts our heart that she will find love without scandal, and pleasure without fear.

ELMIRE. I have listened to you, and your rhetoric expresses itself in terms strong enough. Are you not afraid that I might be disposed to tell my husband of this passionate declaration, and that its sudden disclosure might influence the friendship which he has towards you?

TARTUFFE. I know that your tender-heartedness is too great, and that you will excuse, because of human frailty, the violent transports of a love which offends you, and will consider, when you look at yourself, that people are not blind, and that flesh is weak.

ELMIRE. Others might take all this differently; but I will endeavour to show my discretion. I will tell nothing to my husband of what has taken place; but, in return, I must require one thing of you, which is to forward honestly and sincerely the marriage which has been decided between Valère and Marianne, and renounce the unjust power which would enrich you with what belongs to another....

Scene IV: ELMIRE, DAMIS, TARTUFFE.

DAMIS *(coming out of the side-room where he was hidden).* No, madam, no; all this must be made public. I was in that place and overheard everything. Heaven in its goodness seems to have directed my steps hither, to confound the pride of a wretch who wrongs me, and to guide me to a sure revenge for his hypocrisy and insolence. I will undeceive my father, and will show him in a clear, strong light the heart of the miscreant who dares to speak to you of love.

ELMIRE. No, Damis, it is sufficient if he promises to amend, and endeavours to deserve the forgiveness I have spoken of. Since I have promised it, let me abide by my word. I have no wish for scandal. A woman should despise these follies, and never trouble her husband's ears with them.

DAMIS. You have your reasons for dealing thus with him, and I have mine for acting otherwise. It is a mockery to try to spare him. In the insolent pride of his canting bigotry he has already triumphed too much over my just wrath, and has caused too many troubles in our house. The impostor has governed my father but too long, and too long opposed my love and Valère's. It is right that my father's eyes should be opened to the perfidy of this villain. Heaven offers me an easy opportunity, and I am thankful for it. Were I not to seize it, I should deserve never to have another.

ELMIRE. Damis. . . .

DAMIS. No, I will, with your permission, follow my own counsel. My heart is overjoyed; and it is in vain for you to try and dissuade me from tasting the pleasure of revenge. I will at once make a full disclosure of all this. But here is the very person to give me satisfaction.

Scene V: ORGON, ELMIRE, DAMIS, TARTUFFE.

DAMIS. Come, father, we will treat your arrival with a piece of news which will somewhat surprise you. You are well rewarded for all your caresses, and this gentleman well repays your tenderness. His great zeal for you has just shown itself, and stops at nothing short of dishonouring you. I have overheard him here, making to your wife an insulting declaration of a guilty love. She, amiable and gentle, and in her too great discretion, insisted upon keeping the matter a secret from you; but I cannot encourage such shamelessness, and I think it would be an offence to you were I to be silent about it.

ELMIRE. Yes, in my opinion, it is better not to trouble the peace of a husband by repeating to him such senseless words. Honour does not depend on our speaking of it; it is sufficient that we can defend ourselves. I have always had the same feelings on the subject; and you would have said nothing, Damis, if I had had any influence over you.

Scene VI: ORGON, DAMIS, TARTUFFE.

ORGON. What do I hear! O Heaven! Is it possible!

TARTUFFE. Yes, brother, I am a wicked, guilty, miserable sinner, full of iniquity, the greatest wretch that earth ever bore. Each moment of my life is overburdened with pollution; it is but a long continuation of crimes and defilement, and I see that Heaven, to punish me for my sins, intends to mortify me on this occasion. However great may be the crime laid to my charge, I have neither the wish nor the pride to deny it. Believe what is said to you, arm all your wrath, and drive me like a criminal from your house. Whatever shame is heaped upon me, I deserve even greater.

ORGON *(to his son).* Ah! miscreant! how dare you try to sully the spotless purity of his virtue with this falsehood?

DAMIS. What! the feigned meekness of this hypocrite will make you give the lie to. . . .

ORGON. Hold your tongue, you cursed plague!

TARTUFFE. Ah! let him speak; you blame him wrongfully, and you would do better to believe what he tells you. Why should you be so favourable to me in this instance? Do you know, after all, what I am capable of doing? Do you, brother, trust to the outward man; and do you think me good, because of what you see? No, no, you are deceived by appearances,

and I am, alas! no better than they think. Everybody takes me for a good man, no doubt; but the truth is, that I am worthless. *(To* DAMIS) Yes, dear child, speak; call me perfidious, infamous, reprobate, thief, and murderer; load me with still more hateful names; I do not gainsay them, I have deserved them all; and on my knees I will suffer the ignominy due to the crimes of my shameful life. *(Kneels)*

ORGON *(to* TARTUFFE). Ah! brother, this is too much. *(To his son)* Does not your heart relent, traitor?

DAMIS. What! Can his words so far deceive you as. . . .

ORGON. Hold your tongue, rascal! *(Raising* TARTUFFE) Brother, pray rise. *(To his son)* Wretch!

DAMIS. He can. . . .

ORGON. Hold your tongue!

DAMIS. I am furious. What! I am taken for. . . .

ORGON. If you say one word more, I'll break every bone. . . .

TARTUFFE. In Heaven's name, my brother, do not forget yourself! I had rather suffer the greatest injury than that he should receive the most trifling hurt on my account.

ORGON *(to his son)*. Ungrateful wretch!

TARTUFFE. Leave him in peace. If I must on my knees ask forgiveness for him. . . . *(He falls on his knees,* ORGON *does the same, and embraces* TARTUFFE)

ORGON. Alas! my brother, what are you doing? *(To his son)* See his goodness, rascal!

DAMIS. So. . . .

ORGON. Peace.

DAMIS. What! I. . . .

ORGON. Peace, I say. I know the motive which makes you accuse him. You all hate him, and I now see wife, children, and servants embittered against him. You have recourse to everything to drive this pious person from my home. But the more you strive to send him away, the more will I do to keep him. I will therefore, to crush the pride of the whole family, hasten his marriage with my daughter.

DAMIS. You mean to force her to accept him?

ORGON. Yes, traitor; and, to confound you all, it shall be done this very evening. Ah! I defy the whole household; I will show you that you have to obey me, and that I am the master here. Now, quick, retract your words and this very moment throw yourself at his feet to ask his forgiveness.

DAMIS. Who? I? Ask forgiveness of the villain who by his impostures. . . .

ORGON. What, scoundrel, you refuse, and abuse him besides? A cudgel! give me a cudgel! *(to* TARTUFFE) Don't prevent me. *(To his son)* Get out

of my house this moment, and be careful you are never bold enough to set foot in it again.

DAMIS. Yes, I shall go, but. . . .

ORGON. Quick, then, decamp; I disinherit you, you scoundrel, and give you my curse besides.

Scene VII: ORGON, TARTUFFE.

ORGON. To offend a holy man in that way!

TARTUFFE. O Heaven! forgive me as I forgive him; *(To* ORGON) if you could know the pain it gives me to see them try to blacken my character to you, dear brother. . . .

ORGON. Alas!

TARTUFFE. The very thought of this ingratitude is a torture too great for me to bear . . . the horror that I feel. . . . My heart is so full that I cannot speak. . . . It will kill me.

ORGON *(in tears, running to the door where he drove his son out).* Wretch! how I grieve to have spared you and not to have made an end of you on the spot. *(To* TARTUFFE) Compose yourself, brother, do not give way to grief.

TARTUFFE. No, let us put an end to all these painful disputes. I see what great troubles I occasion here, and I think, brother, that my duty is to leave your house.

ORGON. How! surely you are not in earnest?

TARTUFFE. They hate me, and I see that they will try to make you doubt my good faith towards you.

ORGON. What does it matter? Do you see me listen to them?

TARTUFFE. I have no doubt but that they will persevere in their attacks; and these very reports which you refuse to believe to-day may another time be credited by you.

ORGON. No, brother, never.

TARTUFFE. Ah! brother, a wife can easily influence the mind of her husband.

ORGON. No, no.

TARTUFFE. Let me go away, and thus remove from them all occasion of attacking me.

ORGON. No, you will stop here; my life depends upon it.

TARTUFFE. Well, if it is so, I must do violence to myself. Ah, if you only would. . . .

ORGON. No!

TARTUFFE. I yield. Let us say no more about it. But I know how I must behave in future. Honour is a delicate matter, and friendship requires me to prevent reports and causes for suspicion. I will avoid your wife, and you shall never see me. . . .

ORGON. No, you will see and speak to her in spite of everybody. I delight in vexing people; and I wish you to be seen in her company at all hours of the day. This is not all. The better to brave them, I will have no other heir but you, and I will go at once and draw up a deed of gift, by which you will inherit all my possessions. A true, faithful friend whom I take for son-in-law is more precious to me than son, wife, or relations. Will you not accept what I propose?

TARTUFFE. May Heaven's will be done in all things!

ORGON. Poor man! Let us go forthwith to draw up the deed, and then let envy burst with rage.

ACT IV.

Scene I: CLÉANTE, TARTUFFE.

CLÉANTE. Yes, it is in everybody's mouth, and I am only telling you the truth. The rumours to which this news gives rise, reflect little credit upon you, and I am glad I have met with you, sir, so that I might tell you plainly my mind on the subject. I do not inquire into the reports that are spread about, I pass them by and admit the worst view of the case. I will suppose that Damis has not acted well, and that you have been wrongly accused. Yet is it not the part of a good Christian to forgive all injuries and to banish from his heart every desire of revenge? Should you allow a son to be driven away from his father's house, because you have fallen out with him? I repeat it—I only speak the simple truth when I tell you that great and small are scandalised by it. Believe me, you had better bring peace back to this house, and not push matters to extremes. Make a sacrifice to God of your resentment, and restore the son to his father's favour.

TARTUFFE. Alas! sir, I have no dearer wish at heart; I bear him no ill-will; I forgive him everything. I've nothing to blame him for, and would serve him to the best of my power. But the interests of Heaven are against it, and if he comes I must leave; after his inconceivable behaviour I can hold no intercourse with him without scandal. Imagine what the world would say! they would impute it to sheer policy on my part, and would say everywhere that, knowing myself to be guilty, I affect a charitable zeal for my accuser; that I fear him and wish to conciliate him, so that by underhand dealings I may engage him to silence.

CLÉANTE. These are but sham excuses, sir, and your reasons are too far-fetched. Why should you take the interests of Heaven upon yourself? Cannot Heaven punish the guilty without our help? Leave vengeance to God, remember the forgiveness which He claims from us. Care not

to be judged of men when you do His sovereign will. What! the paltry fear of what the world may say can prevent the accomplishment of a good and noble action? No, no; let us ever do what Heaven has commanded, and not trouble ourselves with any other care.

TARTUFFE. I have already told you, sir, that I forgive him, and in that I do what Heaven has commanded; but, after the scandal and insult of to-day, Heaven does not require that I should live with him.

CLÉANTE. And does it ask from you, sir, to give a ready ear to what a mere caprice dictates to the father? and to accept an inheritance to which you have no right?

TARTUFFE. Those who know me will not think that I act from mercenary motives. The riches of this world have no attraction for me; I am not dazzled by their deceptive glitter. If I bring myself to accept the gift of this property from the father, it is merely that I am afraid of its falling into wicked hands, and of its being shared by those who would make a criminal use of it in the world and would not employ it, as I propose to do, for the glory of Heaven and the well-being of my fellow-men.

CLÉANTE. Ah! sir, banish these delicate scruples from your mind, for they may give cause for the rightful heir to complain. Suffer him, without giving yourself any such anxiety, to enjoy his rights at his own peril; and consider that it is better for him to make a bad use of it, than that you should be accused of defrauding him of it. I only wonder that you could have heard such a proposal without confusion. For, in truth, do we find among the maxims of true piety any which enjoins the stripping a lawful heir of his inheritance? And if Heaven has put any invincible obstacle against your living with Damis, would it not be more honourable for you to retire like a discreet person, than to suffer an only son to be turned out of doors for you? Believe me, sir, it would be giving your probity. . . .

TARTUFFE. Sir, it is half-past three: certain devotions call me upstairs; pray excuse me for leaving you so soon. *(Exit)*

CLÉANTE. Ah!

Scene II: ELMIRE, MARIANNE, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

DORINE *(to* CLÉANTE). For pity's sake join us in all we do for her, sir. She is in a terrible state of dread, and the marriage-contract which her father has got ready for to-night drives her to despair. Here he comes. Let us all unite our efforts, I beg of you, and try either by force or cunning to bring to nought the wretched design which has thrown us all into consternation.

Scene III: ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

ORGON. Ah! I am delighted to find you all here. *(To* MARIANNE) In this contract I bring wherewith to please you. You know, do you not, what I mean?

MARIANNE *(at* ORGON'S *feet).* Father! in the name of Heaven, which is a witness of my grief; in the name of all that can move your heart, forgo the rights my birth gives you, and do not exact this obedience from me. Do not by such a harsh law compel me to complain to Heaven of my duty to you, and do not, alas! render most miserable the life I owe you. If, contrary to the sweet hopes which I had cherished, you now forbid me to belong to the man I love, I beseech you on my knees at least to save me from the wretchedness of belonging to him I abhor. Do not drive me to despair by making use of all your power over me.

ORGON *(moved and aside).* Stand firm, my heart! No human weakness!

MARIANNE. I do not feel aggrieved by your tenderness for him; you can act as your heart prompts you—give him all you possess, and join to it what is mine. I consent, and give it up to him with all my heart. But do not dispose in the same way of my person; suffer me to wear out the rest of my wretched life in the austere discipline of a convent.

ORGON. Ah, yes, you are, I see, one of those would-be nuns, because your father crosses your forbidden love. Stand up! The more your heart recoils from the match, the better it will be for your salvation. Mortify your senses by this marriage, and trouble me no longer on the subject.

DORINE. But what....

ORGON. Hold your tongue; speak to people of your own set. I forbid you once and for all to say a word.

CLÉANTE. If you will allow me to speak and advise....

ORGON. Brother, your advice is of the best possible kind; it is full of truth and good sense, and I value it highly. You will, however, allow me not to avail myself of it.

ELMIRE *(to her husband).* I hardly know what to say in the face of all this, and I really admire you in your blindness. You must be bewitched with the man and altogether prepossessed in his favour for you to deny the truth of what we tell you took place to-day!

ORGON. I am your humble servant, but I judge by appearances. I know how lenient you are towards my rascal of a son, and see that you were afraid of disowning the trick he would have played to the poor fellow. In short, you took the matter too easily for me to believe you; you would have been more moved had the thing been true.

ELMIRE. Is it necessary for our honour, to take up arms so furiously at a simple declaration of love? Is it not possible to give a fitting answer with-

out anger in our eyes and invectives in our mouth? For my part, I listen with mere indifference to such talk, and I care not to make any ado about it. I prefer to show that virtue can be accompanied by gentleness, and I have no respect for those savage prudes who defend their honour with tooth and nail, and who at the slightest word are ready to tear a man's eyes out. Heaven preserve me from such discretion! I prefer a virtue with nothing of the tigress about it, for I believe that a quiet and cold rebuff is quite as efficient.

ORGON. In short, I know all about this business, and no words of yours can alter my conviction.

ELMIRE. I wonder more and more at your strange weakness. But what answer would your credulity give, if I made you see that we have told you the truth?

ORGON. See?

ELMIRE. Yes.

ORGON. Rubbish.

ELMIRE. But, still, suppose I find a way of showing it to you, so that you cannot mistake it?

ORGON. Moonshine.

ELMIRE. What a strange man you are! Yet at least answer me. I do not ask you to believe us; but suppose we could find a place where you can see and hear all about what we have told you, what would you say then of your pious man?

ORGON. In that case, I should say that.... I should say nothing; for, in short, it is impossible.

ELMIRE. Your error lasts too long, and you have taxed me too long with falsehood. You must, to satisfy me, without delay, be a witness of what I have said.

ORGON. Be it so; I take you at your word. We will see how far you can make your promise good.

ELMIRE *(to* DORINE). Get him to come in here.

DORINE *(to* ELMIRE). He is very crafty, and, maybe, it will be a difficult matter to catch him.

ELMIRE *(to* DORINE). No, we are easily duped by those we love, and we deceive ourselves through our own conceit. Tell him to come, *(to* CLÉANTE *and* MARIANNE) and you withdraw.

Scene IV: ELMIRE, ORGON.

ELMIRE. Now bring the table here, and get under it.

ORGON. Get under it?

ELMIRE. It is important that you should be well concealed.

ORGON. But why under the table?

ELMIRE. Ah! never mind; do what I tell you. I have my plan quite ready in my head, and you shall judge. Place yourself where I tell you, and then be careful that you are neither seen nor heard.

ORGON. I must say that my condescension is very great. However, I will see you through your scheme.

ELMIRE. You will have nothing to answer me. *(To her husband, who is under the table)* Mind! I'm going to speak on a strange subject, and you must not be shocked. I have a right to say whatever I choose, since it is to convince you, as I have promised to do. I will, by coaxing speeches, make the hypocrite drop his mask, will flatter the insolent desires of his love, and leave free room to his audacity. As it is only because of you, and the better to confound him, that I shall affect to return his love, I will cease as soon as you feel convinced, and things need go no further than you please. It is for you to spare your wife, to stop his mad purpose when you think matters have been carried far enough, and to suffer me to be exposed to his insolence only as far as is necessary to disabuse you. This is your concern, you can act when you like, and.... He is coming. ... Do not move, and be careful that you do not show yourself.

Scene V: TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON *(under the table).*

TARTUFFE. I am told that you wish to speak with me here.

ELMIRE. Yes, I have important things to reveal to you. But shut this door before I begin, and look everywhere to see if anyone can overhear us; (TARTUFFE *goes to shut the door and returns)* it will never do to risk having over again such an affair as that of this morning. Never in my life was I so taken by surprise, and Damis put me in a terrible fright on your account. You saw how I tried all I could to baffle his design and to calm his anger. My confusion was so great, it is true, that the thought of denying his accusations never came to my mind. But, thank Heaven, it is all for the best, and things are through it on a much safer footing. The esteem in which you are held has dispersed the storm; and my husband can have no suspicion of you, for, in order to set at defiance ill-natured comments, he wishes us to be constantly together. I can therefore be locked up here alone with you without fear of incurring blame; and thus I feel authorized to open to you a heart too forward perhaps in answering your love.

TARTUFFE. This language, madam, is somewhat hard for me to understand, and you spoke but lately in a very different strain.

ELMIRE. Ah! if such a refusal has offended you, how little you know the heart of woman, and how little you understand what we mean when we so feebly defend ourselves! At such times our modesty always struggles

against any tender feelings a lover inspires. Whatever reasons we may find to justify the love that conquers us, there is always a certain shame attached to the avowal of it. At first we try to avoid this avowal, but from our manner it is easy to see that our heart surrenders; that, simply for the sake of honour, our lips refuse to give words to our wishes; and that, while refusing, we promise everything.—I feel that I am making a very free confession to you, not sparing woman's modesty; but I have begun, and will continue.—Should I have been so anxious to restrain Damis; should I have listened, think you, with so much calmness to your declaration throughout, and have taken the thing as you do know I did, if the offer of your heart had not been a pleasure to me? When I tried to make you renounce the match which had just been proposed, what could you infer from such an action, if it was not that I felt interested in you, and that I should have experienced great sorrow if by such a marriage you had divided that affection which I wanted wholly to be mine!

TARTUFFE. It is certainly, madam, an extreme delight to hear such words from the lips of one we love; and their honey diffuses through all my senses a soothing softness I never knew till now. To please you is the supreme study of my life, and to be sure of your love my greatest happiness. Yet, forgive me, madam, if my heart somewhat doubts its felicity, and fancies that these words may be a specious artifice to make me break off the marriage which is soon to take place; and, if I may speak openly to you, I shall not trust such sweet language unless some of the favours after which I sigh have assured me of their sincerity, and fix in my mind a sure belief in the enchanting goodness you bear for me.

ELMIRE *(after having coughed to draw her husband's attention).* What! would you proceed so fast, and from the first exhaust the tenderness of my heart? I do myself violence to make you a sweet declaration of love; yet this is not enough for you, and to satisfy you the affair must be pushed even to the last extreme.

TARTUFFE. The less we deserve a blessing, the less we dare to hope for it. Love cannot feel secure with words only. We easily suspect a lot brimful of happiness, and we must enjoy the possession of it, before we can believe in it. I feel myself so unworthy of your favours that I doubt the success of my boldness, and I will believe nothing, madam, before you give real proofs.

ELMIRE. Alas! how tyrannical your passion is! How it bewilders my mind! With what fierce sway it takes possession of my heart! and with what violence it exacts what it desires! Is there no avoiding your pursuit? and will you not allow me time to breathe? Is it right that you should persist

so peremptorily? Should you exact what you desire with such tenacity, and thus abuse by your pressing ardour the weakness that you see I have for you?

TARTUFFE. But if you receive my love with kindness, why refuse me convincing proof?

ELMIRE. But how can I consent to what you ask without offending Heaven, of which you are always speaking?

TARTUFFE. If it is only Heaven you can oppose to my wishes, it is nothing for me to remove such an obstacle; and that ought not to be a restraint to your love.

ELMIRE. But they make us so terribly afraid of the judgments of Heaven.

TARTUFFE. I can, madam, dissipate these ridiculous terrors, and I understand the art of allaying scruples. It is true that Heaven forbids certain gratifications, but there are means of compounding with it upon such matters, and of rectifying the evil of the act by the purity of the intention. We shall be able to initiate you into all those secrets, madam; all you have to do is to suffer yourself to be led by me. Satisfy my wishes, and be without fear. I will be answerable for everything and take the sin upon myself. (ELMIRE *coughs louder)* You cough very much, madam.

ELMIRE. Yes, I am suffering torture.

TARTUFFE. Will you accept a piece of this liquorice?

ELMIRE. It is an obstinate cold, and I see plainly that all the liquorice in the world will do no good in this case.

TARTUFFE. That is certainly very trying.

ELMIRE. Yes, more than can be expressed.

TARTUFFE. In short, your scruples, madam, are easy to remove. You are sure of an inviolable secrecy with me, and it is only publicity which makes the wrong. The scandal is what constitutes the offence, and to sin in secret is not to sin at all.

ELMIRE *(coughing and knocking the table).* Well, I see that I have no alternative but to yield, that I must consent to grant you everything, and that unless I do so I must not expect to satisfy or to convince. It is surely very hard to come to this, and I give way much against my will; but since it seems a settled thing that I should be driven to it, since I cannot be believed without more convincing proofs, in spite of all I may say, I must perforce make up my mind to it and give satisfaction. If my thus consenting carries any offence with it, so much the worse for him who forces me to do this violence to myself. The fault certainly cannot be accounted mine.

TARTUFFE. No, madam, I take it entirely upon myself, and the thing in itself....

ELMIRE. Just open this door, I pray you, and see if my husband is not in the passage.

TARTUFFE. There is no need, madam, to trouble about him. Between ourselves, he is a man to be led by the nose. He is more likely to be proud of finding us together, and I have brought him to the point of seeing everything without believing in anything.

ELMIRE. All the same, go for a moment and look everywhere very carefully, I beg of you.

Scene VI: ORGON, ELMIRE.

ORGON *(coming from under the table).* We have here, I acknowledge, an abominable scoundrel. I cannot get over it; I feel stunned.

ELMIRE. What! you come out so soon! You are jesting. Go under the table again; it is not time yet; wait to see the end in order to feel quite sure, and don't trust to mere surmises.

ORGON. No, never did hell produce anything more wicked.

ELMIRE. Nonsense! you should not believe things too lightly. Be sure that you feel quite convinced before you surrender, and be in no hurry, for fear of a mistake. *(She hides* ORGON *behind her)*

Scene VII: TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON.

TARTUFFE *(not seeing* ORGON). Everything is propitious to me. I have searched every room, there is no one there; and my delighted soul.... (TARTUFFE *goes with open arms to embrace* ELMIRE; *she draws back and* TARTUFFE *sees* ORGON)

ORGON *(stopping* TARTUFFE). Gently, gently, you yield too freely to your amorous transports, and you should be less imperious in your desires. Oh! oh! holy man, you wanted to make a fool of me! How you give way to temptation! You marry my daughter, and covet my wife! I for a long time doubted if you were in earnest, and I expected every moment that you would change your tone, but this is carrying the proof far enough; I am satisfied, and I require no further test.

ELMIRE *(to* TARTUFFE). It is much against my inclination that I have done all this, but I have been driven to the necessity of treating you thus.

TARTUFFE *(to* ORGON). What! can you believe. . . .

ORGON. Come, no noise, out of this house, and without ceremony.

TARTUFFE. My intention....

ORGON. Your speeches are no longer in season; leave this house at once.

TARTUFFE. It is to you to leave the house, you who speak as if you were master here. The house belongs to me, and I will make you know it. I will soon show you that it is vain for you to resort to these base false-

hoods to quarrel with me. You little know what you do when you insult me. I can confound and punish imposture, avenge offended Heaven, and make those repent who speak of driving me hence.

Scene VIII: ELMIRE, ORGON.

ELMIRE. What language is this? What is it he means?

ORGON. Alas! I feel quite confused, and have little reason to laugh.

ELMIRE. What is it?

ORGON. What he says shows me my error, and the deed of gift troubles my mind.

ELMIRE. The deed of gift?

ORGON. Yes, the thing is done. But I have something else to make me anxious.

ELMIRE. And what is that?

ORGON. I will tell you everything; but first let us see if a certain casket is still upstairs.

ACT V.

Scene I: ORGON, CLÉANTE.

CLÉANTE. Where are you running?

ORGON. Alas! how can I tell!

CLÉANTE. It seems to me that the first thing to be done is to consult together, and to see what steps we can take in this emergency.

ORGON. This casket troubles me terribly; I am more distressed about it than about all the rest put together.

CLÉANTE. Does this casket contain any important secret?

ORGON. It is a trust which Argan, my unfortunate friend, entrusted to my keeping with great secrecy. He chose me of all others when he fled. It contains papers, he told me, on which his life and fortune depend.

CLÉANTE. How, then, could you trust them into other hands?

ORGON. A scruple of conscience made me go straight to the scoundrel to confide in him; by his sophistry he persuaded me to give him the casket to keep, so that in case of any inquiry I might have ready at hand a subterfuge to ease my conscience, while taking oath contrary to the truth.

CLÉANTE. According to appearances you are in a very awkward position; the deed of gift and this confidence, to speak to you frankly, are steps which you have taken with little consideration; you may be led far with such pledges. This man has such power over you, that it is a great imprudence in you to irritate him, and you would do better to look for some gentler means of settling with him.

ORGON. What! to hide such a double and wicked heart under so fair a semblance of ardent piety! And I, who took in a begging pauper....

There, it's all over, I renounce all pious people, I shall have the greatest abhorrence for them, and shall be worse than the devil to them in future.

CLÉANTE. Just like you! Now we have another fit of excess; you never keep within bounds in anything; you never listen to healthy common sense, and always rush from one extreme to another. You see your mistake and acknowledge that you were deceived by a false appearance of piety; but to make up for this, what necessity is there to be guilty of a worse mistake? Why should you make no difference between the heart of a rascally villain and that of every good man? Because a scoundrel has shamelessly imposed upon you under the solemn mask of austerity, must you go and fancy that everybody is like him, and that there are no sincere people in the world? Leave such inferences to unbelievers; distinguish virtue from its appearance; never be too hasty in giving your esteem, and avoid either extreme. Keep, if you can, from doing homage to imposture, but at the same time do not injure true piety. And if you must lean towards one extreme, better to offend as you already have done.

Scene II: ORGON, CLÉANTE, DAMIS.

DAMIS. What! father, is it true that the rascal threatens you, that he has lost the remembrance of all you have done for him, and that in his cowardly and shameless arrogance he makes use of your own goodness as an arm against you?

ORGON. Yes, even so, my son; and I cannot tell you what intolerable grief it is to me.

DAMIS. Leave him to me. I will crop his ears for him; no one should hesitate to punish such insolence; I will rid you of him, and end all this business. I must crush him.

CLÉANTE. You speak exactly like a foolish young fellow. Keep these violent outbursts within bounds, I pray you. We live under a king and in an age when we gain little by violence.

Scene III: MADAM PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE.

PERNELLE. What is all this I hear? What dreadful, mysterious reports are those?

ORGON. They are strange things which I have witnessed with my own eyes, and you see how I am rewarded for all my goodness. I kindly pick up a poor destitute fellow; I take him into my own house, and treat him like my own brother; I heap favours upon him every day; I give him my daughter, and everything I possess; and yet, in the meanwhile, the perfidious and infamous rascal forms the wicked project of seducing my wife;

and not satisfied with so base an attempt, he now dares to threaten me with my own gifts. He is making use, for my own ruin, of those advantages which my indiscreet kindness has put into his hands; he is trying to deprive me of my estates, and to reduce me to the state of beggary from whence I rescued him.

DORINE. Poor man!

PERNELLE. I can never believe, my son, that he would commit so base an action.

ORGON. What?

PERNELLE. Good people are always subject to envy.

ORGON. What do you mean, mother?

PERNELLE. That you live after a strange sort here, and that I am but too well aware of the ill-will they all bear him.

ORGON. What has this ill-will to do with what I have just told you?

PERNELLE. I have told it you a hundred times when you were young, that in this world virtue is ever liable to persecution, and that, although the envious die, envy never dies.

ORGON. But what has this to do with what has happened to-day?

PERNELLE. They have concocted a hundred foolish stories against him.

ORGON. I have already told you that I saw it all myself.

PERNELLE. The malice of evil-disposed persons is very great.

ORGON. You would make me swear, mother! I tell you that I saw his audacious attempt with my own eyes.

PERNELLE. Evil tongues have always some venom to pour forth; and here below there is nothing proof against them.

ORGON. You are maintaining a very senseless argument. I saw it, I tell you; saw it with my own eyes; what you can call s-a-w, saw! Must I din it over and over into your ears, and shout as loud as half-a-dozen people?

PERNELLE. Gracious goodness! appearances often deceive us. We must not always judge by what we see.

ORGON. I shall go mad.

PERNELLE. We are by nature prone to judge wrongly, and good is often mistaken for evil.

ORGON. I ought to look upon his desire of seducing my wife as charitable?

PERNELLE. You ought to have good reasons before you accuse another, and you should have waited till you were quite sure of the fact.

ORGON. Heaven save the mark! how could I be more sure? I suppose, mother, I ought to have waited till... you will make me say something foolish.

PERNELLE. In short, his soul is possessed with too pure a zeal, and I cannot possibly conceive that he would think of attempting what you accuse him of.

ORGON. If you were not my mother, I really don't know what I might not say to you, you make me so savage.

DORINE *(to* ORGON). A fair repayment of things in this world; you would believe nobody, and now you are not believed yourself.

CLÉANTE. We are wasting in mere trifles the precious time which we ought to employ in devising what measures to take. We should not sleep when a villain threatens us.

DAMIS. What! you think his impudence can go so far as....

ELMIRE. I hardly think it possible. His ingratitude would be too glaring, were he to carry his threats into execution.

CLÉANTE. Do not trust to that. He will find means to justify his doings against you, and, for a less matter than this, people have been involved in sad troubles. I repeat it: knowing all the arms he had against you, you should not have pushed him so far.

ORGON. You are right; but what could I do? In the face of that scoundrel's impudence I was not master of my own resentment.

CLÉANTE. I wish it were possible to patch up a peace between you.

ELMIRE. If I had only known what he had in his possession, I would not have given cause for such uneasiness, and my....

ORGON *(to* DORINE, *on seeing* MR. LOYAL *coming).* What does that man want? Go at once and find out. I am, indeed, in a fit state of mind for people to come and see me!

Scene IV: ORGON, MADAM PERNELLE, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, CLÉANTE, DAMIS, DORINE, MR. LOYAL.

LOYAL *(to* DORINE *at the further part of the stage).* Good day, my dear sister; pray let me speak to your master.

DORINE. He is with friends, and I do not think he can see anyone just now.

LOYAL. I would not be intrusive. I feel sure that he will find nothing unpleasant in my visit; in fact, I come for something which will be very gratifying to him.

DORINE. What is your name?

LOYAL. Only tell him that I come from Mr. Tartuffe, for his benefit.

DORINE *(to* ORGON). It is a man who comes in a civil way from Mr. Tartuffe, on some business which will make you glad, he says.

CLÉANTE *(to* ORGON). You must see who it is, and what the man wants.

ORGON *(to* CLÉANTE). He is coming, perhaps, to settle matters between us in a friendly way. How, in this case, ought I to behave to him?

CLÉANTE. Don't show your resentment, and, if he speaks of an agreement, listen to him.

LOYAL *(to* ORGON). Your servant, sir; may Heaven punish whoever wrongs you, and may it be as favourable to you, sir, as I wish.

ORGON *(aside to* CLÉANTE). This pleasant beginning agrees with my conjectures, and augurs some sort of reconciliation.

LOYAL. All your family was always dear to me, and I served your father.

ORGON. Sir, I am sorry and ashamed to say that I do not know who you are, neither do I remember your name.

LOYAL. My name is Loyal; I was born in Normandy, and am a royal bailiff in spite of envy. For the last forty years I have had the good fortune to fill the office, thanks to Heaven, with great credit; and I come, sir, with your leave, to serve you the writ of a certain order.

ORGON. What! you are here. . . .

LOYAL. Gently, sir, I beg. It is merely a summons: a notice for you to leave this place, you and yours, to take away all your goods and chattels, and make room for others, without delay or adjournment, as hereby decreed.

ORGON. I! leave this place?

LOYAL. Yes, sir, if you please. The house incontestably belongs, as you are well aware, to the good Mr. Tartuffe. He is now lord and master of your estates, according to a deed I have in my keeping. It is in due form, and cannot be challenged.

DAMIS *(to* MR. LOYAL). This great impudence is, indeed, worthy of all admiration.

LOYAL *(to* DAMIS). Sir, I have nothing at all to do with you. *(Pointing to* ORGON) My business is with this gentlemen. He is tractable and gentle, and knows too well the duty of a gentleman to try and oppose authority.

ORGON. But. . . .

LOYAL. Yes, sir, I know that you would not for anything show contumacy; and that you will allow me, like a reasonable man, to execute the orders I have received.

DAMIS. You may chance to catch a good drubbing on your black skirt, Mr. Bailiff, I assure you.

LOYAL *(to* ORGON). Sir, see that your son keeps silent or retires. I should be sorry to be forced to put your name down in my official report.

DAMIS *(aside).* This Mr. Loyal has a strangely disloyal look.

LOYAL. I feel greatly for all good men, and I wished to take the business upon myself in order to oblige you and to render you service. By so doing I prevented the choice from falling upon others, who might not have had the same consideration that I have for you, and might have proceeded in a less gentle manner.

ORGON. And what worse thing can be done than to order people to go out of their house?

LOYAL. I will allow you time, and will suspend until to-morrow, sir, the execution of the writ. I shall only come, without noise or scandal, to spend the night here with ten of my people. For form's sake, you must,

if you please, bring me the keys before going to bed. I shall be careful not to trouble your rest, and to suffer nothing unseemly to happen. To-morrow morning you must, however, exert yourself and clear the house to the very last thing. My men will help you in this; I have chosen them strong, so that they might assist you in removing everything. Nobody can act better than I am doing, I feel sure; and, as I treat you with the greatest consideration, I will ask of you, sir, to act as well by me, and to see that I am in no way hindered in the execution of my duty.

ORGON *(aside)*. I'd give the hundred best louis which are left me, to be able to administer to that ugly face of his the soundest blows that were ever dealt.

CLÉANTE *(aside to* ORGON). Forbear, and don't make things worse.

DAMIS. Before such strange insolence I can hardly restrain myself, and my fingers itch to be at him.

DORINE. To such a broad back, in good faith, Mr. Loyal, a sound cudgelling would not seem out of place.

LOYAL. Such shameful words may be punished, my dear, and women, too, are answerable to the law.

CLÉANTE *(to* MR. LOYAL). Enough, sir; enough. Give us the paper, please, and go.

LOYAL. Good day. May Heaven bless ye all!

ORGON. And may it confound both you and the scoundrel who sends you!

Scene V: ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE.

ORGON. Well! mother, you see whether I am right; and you can judge of the rest by the writ. Do you at last acknowledge his rascality?

PERNELLE. I am thunderstruck, and can scarcely believe my eyes and ears.

DORINE *(to* ORGON). You are wrong, sir, to complain, and wrong to blame him. His pious intentions are thus confirmed. His love for his neighbour is great; he knows that riches often corrupt men, and it is out of pure charity that he takes away from you all that may prove a hindrance to your salvation.

ORGON. Must I always be reminding you to hold your tongue?

CLÉANTE *(to* ORGON). Let us go and see what course we had better follow.

ELMIRE. Yes, go; expose the insolent ingratitude of the wretch. Such a proceeding must destroy the validity of the deed. His perfidy will appear too odious for him to be able to obtain the success he trusts in.

Scene VI: VALÈRE, ORGON, MADAME PERNELLE, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, DAMIS, DORINE.

VALÈRE. It is with regret, sir, that I come to distress you, but I am forced to

it by the urgency of the danger. A friend with whom I am most intimate, and who knows what interest I take in all that concerns you, has, for my sake, by delicate means, broken through the secrecy we owe to the affairs of state, and has just sent me intelligence, the purport of which is that you had better have recourse to immediate flight. The villain who has so long imposed on you, an hour ago accused you before the king; and, among other charges which he brings against you, he has put in his hands the important casket of a state criminal, of whom, he said, you kept the guilty secret in contempt of your duty as a subject. I am not informed of the particulars of the crime laid to your charge, but a warrant is issued against you, and, the better to execute it, he himself is appointed to accompany the person who is to arrest you.

CLÉANTE. Now his pretensions are strengthened; this is how the scoundrel seeks to possess himself of your estate.

ORGON. Man is, I must own, a wretched animal!

VALÈRE. The least delay may prove fatal to you. I have my coach at the door, so as to take you away at once, and a thousand louis which I have brought for you. Lose no time; the blow is crushing, and one which can only be parried by flight. I will take you myself to a place of safety, and will accompany you to the last in your escape.

ORGON. Alas! what thanks do I not owe to your kindness? I must put off to another time my thanks to you for it. I pray Heaven it may be given to me to acknowledge this generous help. Farewell! take care, all of you. . . .

CLÉANTE. Go quickly. We shall see that everything necessary is done.

Scene VII: TARTUFFE, A POLICE OFFICER, MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE, MARIANNE, VALÈRE, DAMIS, DORINE.

TARTUFFE (*stopping* ORGON). Gently, sir, gently; not so fast, I beg. You have not far to go to find a lodging, and you are a prisoner in the king's name.

ORGON. Wretch! you had reserved this shaft for the last; by it you finish me, and crown all your perfidies.

TARTUFFE. Your abuse has no power to disturb me, and I know how to suffer everything for the sake of Heaven.

CLÉANTE. Your moderation is really great, we must acknowledge.

DAMIS. How impudently the infamous wretch sports with Heaven!

TARTUFFE. Your anger cannot move me; I have no other wish but to fulfill my duty.

MARIANNE. You may claim great glory from the performance of this duty; it is a very honourable employment for you.

TARTUFFE. The employment cannot be otherwise than glorious, when it comes from the power that sends me here.

ORGON. But do you remember that my charitable hand, ungrateful scoundrel, raised you from a state of misery?

TARTUFFE. Yes, I know what help I have received from you; but the interest of my king is my first duty. The just obligation of this sacred duty stifles in my heart all other claims, and I would sacrifice to it friend, wife, relations, and myself with them.

ELMIRE. The impostor!

DORINE. With what treacherous cunning he makes a cloak of all that men revere.

CLÉANTE. But if the zeal you speak of is so perfect, how is it that to show it, you wait till he has surprised you making love to his wife? How is it that you inform against him, only after self-respect forces him to send you away? I will not say that the gift of all his possessions he made over to you should have prevented you from doing your duty, but, since you wished to treat him as a criminal, why did you consent to accept anything from him?

TARTUFFE *(to the* OFFICER). I beg of you, sir, to deliver me from all this noise, and to act according to the orders you have received.

OFFICER. I have certainly put off too long the discharge of my duty, and you very rightly remind me of it. To execute my order, follow me immediately to the prison in which a place is assigned to you.

TARTUFFE. Who? I, sir?

OFFICER. Yes, you.

TARTUFFE. Why to prison?

OFFICER. To you I have no account to render. *(To* ORGON) Pray, sir, recover from your great alarm. We live under a king who is an enemy to fraud; a king who can read the heart, and whom all the arts of impostors cannot deceive. His great mind, endowed with delicate discernment, at all times sees things in their true light. He is never betrayed into exaggeration, and his sound reason knows not excess. On men of worth he bestows immortal glory; but he dispenses his favours without blindness, and his love for the truly great does not prevent him from feeling the horror which the vicious must inspire. This man had no chance of deceiving him, for he has pierced through more subtle snares. His clear insight enabled him at once to discover the baseness of his heart. Coming to accuse you, he betrayed himself, and by the even-handed justice of supreme equity discovered himself to be a notorious rascal, of whom, under another name, the king had already received information. His life is a long list of dark deeds, and would fill volumes. Our king, in a word, abhorring his base ingratitude and dishonesty towards you, has added it to his other crimes, and has placed me under his orders only to see how far his im-

pudence would carry him, and to oblige him to give you full satisfaction. Yes, he has ordered me to take away from him, before you, all the documents he says he has of yours. He annuls, by his sovereign will, the terms of the contract by which you give him your property. He moreover forgives you this secret offence in which you were involved by the flight of your friend. This to reward the zeal which you once showed for him in maintaining his rights, and to prove that his heart, when it is least expected, knows how to recompense a good action. Merit with him is never lost, and he remembers good better than evil.

DORINE. Heaven be thanked!

PERNELLE. Ah! I breathe again.

ELMIRE. What a favourable end to our troubles!

MARIANNE. Who would have foretold it?

ORGON *(to* TARTUFFE, *as the Officer leads him off).* Ah! wretch, now you are. . . .

Scene VIII: MADAME PERNELLE, ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANNE, CLÉANTE, VALÈRE, DAMIS, DORINE.

CLÉANTE. Ah! brother, forbear, and do not descend to abuse. Leave the wretch to his evil destiny, do not add to the remorse that crushes him. Better hope that his heart will now, by a happy change, become virtuous; and that, reforming his life through the detestation of his crimes, he may soften the justice of our glorious king; while you must go and thank him on your knees for his goodness and leniency to you.

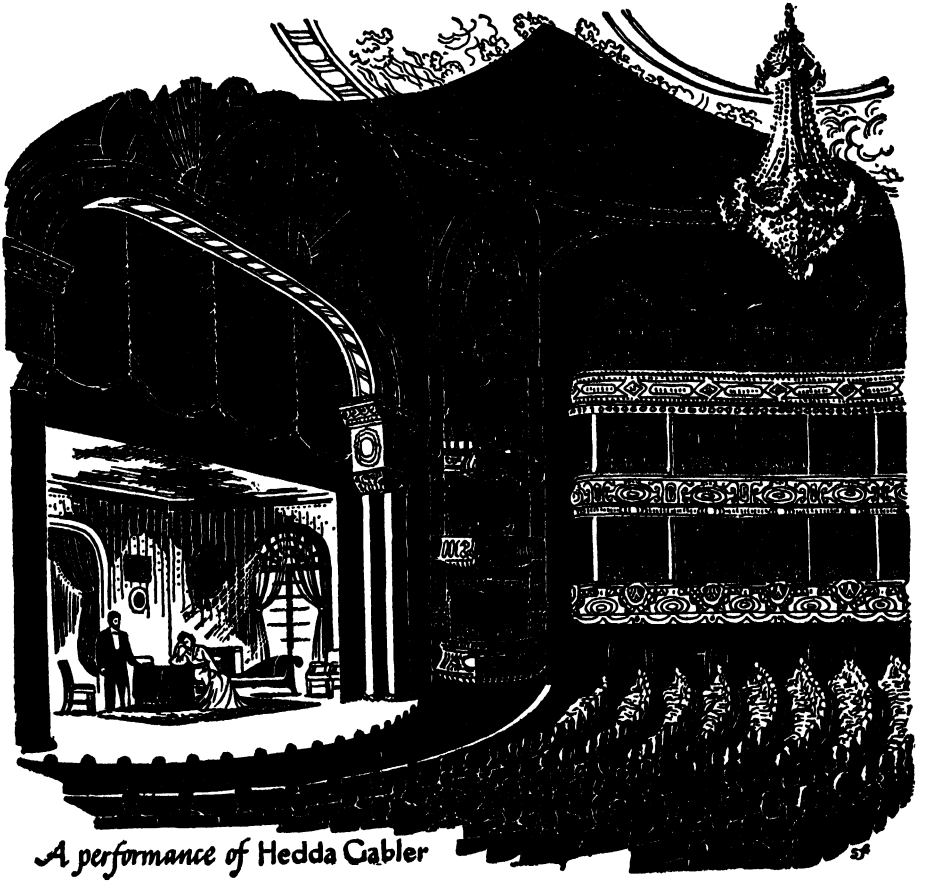
ORGON. Yes, you are right; let us, with joy, throw ourselves at his feet, and praise the goodness he shows towards us. Then, having acquitted ourselves of this first duty, let us think of another, and by a happy wedding crown in Valère the ardour of a generous and sincere lover.

HENRIK IBSEN

Hedda Gabler

By the time Ibsen's Hedda Gabler *appeared, in 1891, the modern theater, in most of its essentials, had come into being. Examples were to be found in all the big cities, not only in Europe and Great Britain but also in the United States. Since that time, some of the architectural fashions have changed, and various experiments have been tried, but most of the important generalizations about the theater hold good for the whole period from 1891 to the present.*

The typical modern theater has an auditorium containing a main floor, two or three horseshoe galleries, and boxes. In general, the prices of seats are determined by the excellence of the view of the stage which they afford. Only those theatergoers who sit in boxes pay high



A performance of Hedda Gabler

prices for poor (but easily seen) vantage points and thus prolong a generally outmoded aristocratic tradition. The audiences as a rule are made up of the upper and middle economic classes: the laboring class has tended to find its entertainment away from the playhouse. The modern audience contains a much larger proportion of women than any audience in the past. Since the dramatist tries to appeal to his audience, especially in a period when the theater is commercialized as it is today, these shifts in the make-up of the audience naturally have influenced dramatic productions.

The stage—the portion of the modern theater building behind the proscenium —has become very complicated because of the liking of present-day audiences for realistic or unusual scenery. Only half or two thirds of the whole area—the part enclosed by painted scenery—is visible, like a picture in a frame, to the audience. Above this five-sided box, in an area extending to the roof of the theater, scenery is lifted and hung, to be lowered when needed. Behind the scene-enclosed area, and to each side, are placed properties and additional scenery. Unless costs prevent, greatly varied and quite elaborate settings and properties may be used in any play. Such extensive changes of scenery are time-consuming, and so the modern theater misses the continuity of action most earlier theaters had, but most contemporary audiences do not find this lack disturbing. The chief modern development, of course, has been in lighting made possible by electricity. By arranging and manipulating lights—footlights, lights in the wings or above the stage, or spotlights located in the gallery, directors can secure realistic or fantastic effects, emphasize details in the setting or parts of the action, and communicate moods or emotions.

In general, modern audiences have

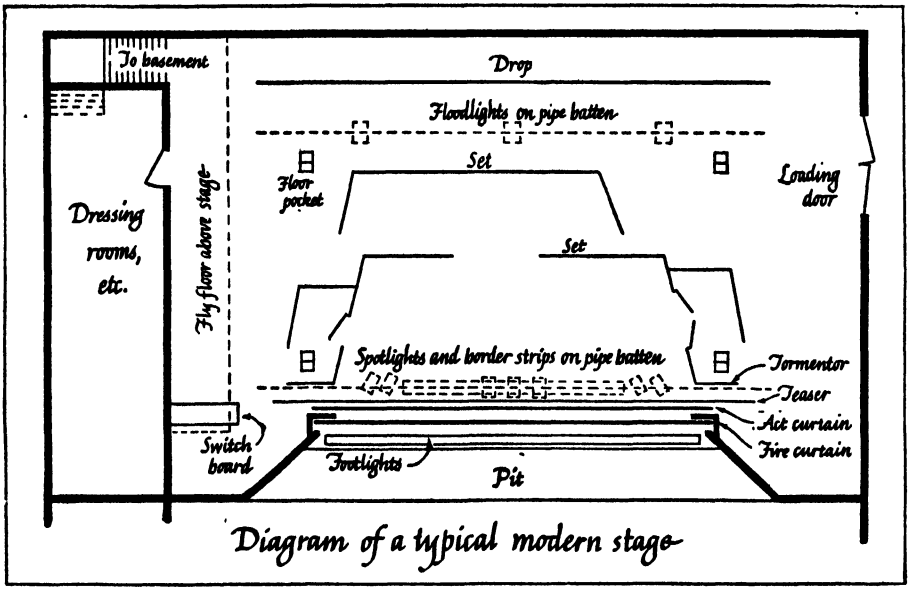


Diagram of a typical modern stage

been less enthusiastic about tragedies than most audiences in the past were. They do support some tragedies, however, which have been written by first-rate dramatists and which deal with serious current problems. Ibsen, a great dramatist who was also a pioneer in the writing of "problem plays," was internationally famous during his lifetime and continues to command admiration. In Hedda Gabler, *he has achieved fine characterization and has dealt with an important problem. As a result, he has written a play which, from 1891 to the present, has been an exciting experience for many playgoers and readers.*

CHARACTERS

GEORGE TESMAN, *a young man of letters*
MRS. HEDDA TESMAN *(born* GABLER*), his wife*
MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *his aunt*
MRS. ELVSTED
JUDGE BRACK
EJLERT LÖVBORG
BERTHA, *servant to the Tesmans.*

The action proceeds in Tesman's villa in the western part of the city.

ACT I

A spacious, pretty, and tastefully furnished sitting-room, decorated in dark colors. In the wall at the back is a broad door-way, with curtains drawn aside. This door-way leads into a smaller room, which is furnished in the same style as the sitting-room. On the wall to the right in this latter there is a folding-door, which leads out to the hall. On the opposite wall, to the left, there is a glass door, also with curtains drawn back. Through the panes of glass are seen part of a verandah, which projects outside, and trees covered with autumn foliage. On the floor in front stands an oval table with a cover on it and chairs around. In front of the wall on the right a broad, dark, porcelain stove, a high-backed arm-chair, a foot-stool, with cushions and two ottomans. Up in the right-hand corner a settee and a small round table. In front, to left, a little away from the wall, a sofa. Opposite the glass door a pianoforte. On both sides of the door-way in the back stand étagères with pieces of terra cotta and majolica. Close to the back wall of the inner room is seen a sofa, a table, and some chairs. Above this sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a general's uniform. Over the table a chandelier with dim, milk-colored shade. A great

Translated from the Norwegian by Edmund Gosse.

many bouquets of flowers, in vases and glasses, are arranged about the sitting-room. Others lie on the table. Thick carpets are spread on the floors of both rooms. It is morning, and the sun shines in through the glass door.

(MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *with hat and parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by* BERTHA, *who carries a bouquet with paper wrapped around it.* MISS TESMAN *is a good-natured-looking lady of about sixty-five, neatly, but simply dressed in a gray walking-costume.* BERTHA *is a somewhat elderly servant-maid, with a plain and rather countrified appearance)*

MISS TESMAN *(stands inside the door, listens, and says under her breath).* Well! I declare if I believe that they are up yet!

BERTHA *(in the same tone).* That's just what I said, Miss Juliana. Just think how late the steamer came in last night. And what they were doing after that! Gracious, the amount of things the young mistress would unpack before she would consent to go to bed!

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes! Let them have their sleep out. But, at all events, they shall have fresh morning air when they come. *(She goes to the glass door, and throws it wide open)*

BERTHA *(at the table, standing irresolute, with the bouquet in her hand).* There isn't an atom of room left anywhere. I think I shall put it down here, miss. *(Lays down the bouquet in front of the pianoforte)*

MISS TESMAN. Well, you've got a new master and mistress at last, my dear Bertha. God knows how hard it is for me to part with you.

BERTHA *(tearfully).* And—for me—too! What am I to say? I, who have been in your service for all these years and years, Miss Juliana.

MISS TESMAN. We must take it quietly, Bertha. The truth is, there's nothing else to be done. George *must* have you with him in the house, you see. He *must.* You have been used to look after him ever since he was a little boy.

BERTHA. Yes, miss, but I can't help thinking so much about her who lies at home. Poor thing, so utterly helpless! And then with a new servant-maid there. *She'll* never, never learn to wait on the invalid properly.

MISS TESMAN. Oh! I shall get her into proper training for it. And I shall do most of it myself, you may be sure. You need not be so anxious about my poor sister, dear Bertha.

BERTHA. Yes, but you know there are other things besides, Miss Juliana. I am so dreadfully afraid that I shall not be able to suit the young mistress.

MISS TESMAN. Now, dear me, just at first there may possibly be one thing or another——

BERTHA. For there's no doubt that she's tremendously particular.

MISS TESMAN. Well, you can understand that. General Gabler's daughter. What she was used to as long as the General lived! Can you remember when she rode over with her father? In the long, black riding-habit? And with feathers in her hat?

BERTHA. Yes, I should think I did. Well! if ever I thought in those days that she and Master George would make a match of it.

MISS TESMAN. Nor I either. But by the way, Bertha, while I remember it, you must not say Master George in future; you must say the Doctor.

BERTHA. Oh, yes, the young mistress said something about that last night—the very moment she came in at the door. Is that so, Miss Juliana?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, of course it is. Recollect, Bertha, they made him a doctor while he was abroad. While he was travelling, you understand. I did not know a word about it until he told me down there on the quay.

BERTHA. Well, he can be made whatever he likes, he can. He is so clever. But I should never have believed that he would have taken to curing people.

MISS TESMAN. No, he is not that sort of doctor. *(Nods significantly)* Besides, who knows but what you may soon have to call him something grander still.

BERTHA. Not really! What may that be, Miss Juliana?

MISS TESMAN *(smiles)*. H'm—I'm not sure that you ought to know about it. *(Agitated)* Oh, dear, Oh dear! if only my poor Jochum could rise from his grave and see what his little boy has grown into. *(Glances around)* Taken the covers off all the furniture?

BERTHA. Mrs. George said I was to do so. She can't bear covers on the chairs she says.

MISS TESMAN. But—are they to be like this every day?

BERTHA. Yes, I believe so. Mrs. George said so. As to the doctor, he didn't say anything.

(GEORGE TESMAN *enters, humming, from the right side into the back room, carrying an empty open hand-bag. He is of middle height, a young-looking man of thirty-three, rather stout, with an open, round, jolly countenance, blond hair and beard. He wears spectacles and is dressed in a comfortable, rather careless indoor suit)*

MISS TESMAN. Good-morning, good-morning, George.

TESMAN. Aunt Julie! Dear Aunt Julie! *(Walks up to her and shakes her hand)* Right out here so early! Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Well, you can fancy I wanted to look after you a little.

TESMAN. And that although you have not had your usual night's rest!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, that doesn't matter the least in the world.

TESMAN. Well, did you get safe home from the quay? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, dear me, yes, thank God! The Judge was so kind as to see me home right to my door.

TESMAN. We were so sorry we could not take you up in the carriage. But you saw yourself—Hedda had so many boxes that she was obliged to take with her.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, it was quite dreadful what a quantity of boxes she had.

BERTHA (*to* TESMAN). Shall I go up and ask the mistress whether I can help her?

TESMAN. No, thank you, Bertha—it is not worth while for you to do that. If she wanted anything she would ring, she said.

BERTHA *(to the right).* Yes, yes, all right.

TESMAN. But look here—take this bag away with you.

BERTHA *(takes it).* I will put it up in the garret. *(She goes out through the hall door)*

TESMAN. Just fancy, Aunt, that whole bag was stuffed full of nothing but transcripts. It is perfectly incredible what I have collected in the various archives. Wonderful old things, which nobody had any idea of the existence of.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, indeed, you have not wasted your time on your wedding-journey, George.

TESMAN. No, I may say I have not. But do take off your hat, Aunt. Look here. Let me untie the bow. Eh?

MISS TESMAN *(while he does it).* Oh, dear me! it seems exactly as if you were still at home with us.

TESMAN *(turns and swings the hat in his hand).* Well, what a smart, showy hat you have got for yourself, to be sure.

MISS TESMAN. I bought it for Hedda's sake.

TESMAN. For Hedda's sake, eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, in order that Hedda may not be ashamed of me when we are walking in the street together.

TESMAN *(patting her under the chin).* You positively think of everything, Aunt Julie! *(Puts the hat on a chair close to the table)* Now, look here, let us sit down here on this sofa and chat a little until Hedda comes. *(They sit down. She places her parasol on the settee)*

MISS TESMAN *(takes both his hands in hers and looks at him).* How nice it is to have you, George, as large as life, before one's very eyes again. Oh, my dear, you are poor Jochum's own boy.

TESMAN. And for me, too. To see you again, Aunt Julie! You who have been both father and mother to me.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, I know very well that you are still fond of your old aunts.

TESMAN. And so there's no improvement in Aunt Rina. Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Ah, no, there is no improvement for her to be hoped for, poor

thing. She lies there just as she has lain all these years. But I pray the Lord to let me keep her a while yet. For I don't know how I could live without her, George. Most of all now, you see, when I have not you to look after any longer.

TESMAN *(pats her on the back).* Come, come!

MISS TESMAN. Well, but remember that you are a married man now, George. Fancy its being *you* who carried off Hedda Gabler! The lovely Hedda Gabler. Think of it! She who had such a crowd of suitors around her!

TESMAN *(hums a little and smiles contentedly).* Yes, I expect I have plenty of good friends here in town that envy me. Eh?

MISS TESMAN. And what a long wedding-journey you made, to be sure! More than five—nearly six months.

TESMAN. Well, it has been a sort of travelling scholarship for me as well. All the archives I had to examine. And the mass of books I had to read through!

MISS TESMAN. Yes, indeed, I expect so. *(More quietly and in a lower voice)* But now listen, George—haven't you anything—anything particular to tell me?

TESMAN. About the journey?

MISS TESMAN. Yes.

TESMAN. No, I don't think of anything more than I have mentioned in my letters. I told you yesterday about my taking my doctor's degree while we were abroad.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, yes, yes, you told me that. But I mean—haven't you any—any particular—prospects——?

TESMAN. Prospects?

MISS TESMAN. Good God, George—I'm your old aunt!

TESMAN. Oh, yes, I have prospects.

MISS TESMAN. Well!

TESMAN. I have an excellent chance of becoming a professor one of these days.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, a professor——!

TESMAN. Or—I might even say I am certain of becoming one. But, dear Aunt Julie, you know that just as well as I do!

MISS TESMAN *(giggling).* Yes, of course I do. You are quite right about that. *(Crosses over)* But we were talking about your journey. It must have cost a lot of money, George?

TESMAN. No, indeed. That large stipend went a long way toward paying our expenses.

MISS TESMAN. But I can scarcely understand how you can have made it sufficient for two of you.

TESMAN. No, no, it is not easy to make that out, is it? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. And when it is a lady that is your travelling companion. For I've heard that that makes everything frightfully more expensive.

TESMAN. Yes, of course—rather more expensive it certainly is. But Hedda was *bound* to have that journey, Aunt. She was really *bound* to have it. We could not have done anything else.

MISS TESMAN. No, no, you could not. A wedding-trip is quite the proper thing nowadays. But tell me—have you made yourself quite comfortable here in these rooms?

TESMAN. Oh, yes, indeed. I have been busy ever since it was light.

MISS TESMAN. And what do you think of it all?

TESMAN. Splendid. Perfectly splendid! The only thing I don't know is what we shall do with the two empty rooms between the back-room there and Hedda's bedroom.

MISS TESMAN *(smiling)*. Oh, my dear George, you may find a use for them in the—course of time.

TESMAN. Yes, you are quite right about that, Aunt Julie. For, as I add to my collection of books, I shall—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Just so, my dear boy. It was your collection of books I was thinking about.

TESMAN. I am most pleased for Hedda's sake. Before we were engaged she said that she never wanted to live anywhere else than in Mrs. Falk's villa.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, fancy!—and that it should happen to be for sale just when you had started on your journey.

TESMAN. Yes, Aunt Julie, there is no doubt we were in luck's way, eh?

MISS TESMAN. But expensive, my dear George! It will be expensive for you —all this place.

TESMAN *(looks rather dispiritedly at her)*. Yes, I daresay it will be, Aunt.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, my goodness!

TESMAN. How much do you think? Give a guess. Eh?

MISS TESMAN. No, I can't possibly tell till all the bills come in.

TESMAN. Well, fortunately Judge Brack has bargained for lenient terms for me. He wrote so himself to Hedda.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, do not bother about that, my boy. Besides I have given security for the furniture and all the carpets.

TESMAN. Security? You? Dear Aunt Julie, what sort of security could you give?

MISS TESMAN. I have given a mortgage on our income.

TESMAN *(jumps up)*. What! On your—and Aunt Rina's income!

MISS TESMAN. Yes, you know I did not see any other way out of it.

TESMAN *(stands in front of her)*. But you must be mad, Aunt! The income—that is the only thing which you and Aunt Rina have to live upon.

MISS TESMAN. Well, well, don't be so excited about it. It is all a matter of form, you know. Judge Brack said so too. For it was he who was so kind as to arrange the whole thing for me. Merely a matter of form, he said.

TESMAN. Yes, that may well be. But at the same time——

MISS TESMAN. And now you will have your own salary to draw from. And, dear me, supposing we have to fork out a little? Pinch a little at first? It will merely be like a pleasure for us, that will.

TESMAN. Oh, Aunt, you will never be tired of sacrificing yourself for me!

MISS TESMAN *(stands up and places her hands on his shoulders).* Do you think I have any other joy in this world than to smooth the way for you, my dear boy? You, who have never had a father or a mother to look after you. And now we stand close to the goal. The prospect may have seemed a little black from time to time. But, thank God, it's all over now, George!

TESMAN. Yes, it really is marvellous how everything has adapted itself.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, and those who opposed you—and tried to bar your way—they have all had to submit. They are fallen, George! He who was the most dangerous of all—he is just the one who has fallen worst. And now he lies in the pit he digged for himself—poor misguided man!

TESMAN. Have you heard anything about Ejlert? Since I went away, I mean.

MISS TESMAN. Nothing, except that he has been publishing a new book.

TESMAN. Not really? Ejlert Lövborg? Quite lately? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, they say so. Heaven knows if there can be much good in it. No, when *your* new book comes out—that will be something different, that will, George! What is the subject to be?

TESMAN. It will treat of the domestic industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages.

MISS TESMAN. Fancy your being able to write about that as well!

TESMAN. At the same time, it may be a long while before the book is ready. I have these extensive collections, which must be arranged first of all, you see.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, arrange and collect—you are good at that. You are not poor Jochum's son for nothing.

TESMAN. I am so awfully glad to be going on with it. Especially now that I have a comfortable house and home to work in.

MISS TESMAN. And first and foremost, now you have her who was the desire of your heart, dear George.

TESMAN *(embraces her).* Oh, yes, yes, Aunt Julie. Hedda—she is the loveliest part of it all! *(Looks toward the doorway)* I think she's coming now, eh?

(HEDDA *approaches from the left through the back room. She is a lady of twenty-nine. Face and figure dignified and distinguished. The color of*

the skin uniformly pallid. The eyes steel-gray, with a cold, open expression of serenity. The hair an agreeable brown, of medium tint, but not very thick. She is dressed in tasteful, somewhat loose morning costume)

MISS TESMAN. Good-morning, dear Hedda! Good-morning!

HEDDA *(stretching her hand to her).* Good-morning, dear Miss Tesman! Paying a visit so early? That was friendly of you.

MISS TESMAN *(seems a little embarrassed).* Well, have you slept comfortably in your new home?

HEDDA. Oh, yes, thanks! Tolerably.

TESMAN *(laughs).* Tolerably. Well, that is a joke, Hedda! You were sleeping like a stone, when I got up.

HEDDA. Fortunately. We have to accustom ourselves to everything new, Miss Tesman. It comes little by little. *(Looks toward the left)* Ugh!—the girl has left the balcony door open. There is a perfect tide of sunshine in here.

MISS TESMAN *(goes to the door).* Well, we will shut it.

HEDDA. No, no, don't do that! Dear Tesman, draw the curtains. That gives a softer light.

TESMAN *(at the door).* All right—all right. There, Hedda—now you have both shade and fresh air.

HEDDA. Yes, there is some need of fresh air here. All these flowers—— But, dear Miss Tesman, won't you sit down?

MISS TESMAN. No, thank you. Now that I know that all is going well here, thank God. And I must be getting home again now. To her who lies and waits there so drearily, poor thing.

TESMAN. Give her ever so many kind messages from me. And say that I am coming over to see her to-day, later on.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, I will. Oh! but—George. *(Fumbles in the pocket of her cloak)* I almost forgot. I have something here for you.

TESMAN. What is it, Aunt? Eh?

MISS TESMAN *(brings up a flat package wrapped in newspaper and gives it to him).* Look here, my dear boy.

TESMAN *(opens it).* No, you don't say so. Have you really been keeping this for me, Aunt Julie! Hedda! This is positively touching! Eh?

HEDDA *(by the étagères to the right).* Yes, dear, what is it?

TESMAN. My old morning shoes! My slippers!

HEDDA. Ah, yes! I remember you so often spoke of them while we were travelling.

TESMAN. Yes, I wanted them so badly. *(Goes to her)* You shall just look at them, Hedda.

HEDDA *(goes away toward the stove).* No, thanks, I really don't care about doing that.

TESMAN *(following her).* Just think—Aunt Rina lay and embroidered them for me. So ill as she was. Oh, you can't believe how many memories are bound up in them.

HEDDA *(by the table).* Not for me personally.

MISS TESMAN. Hedda is quite right about that, George.

TESMAN. Yes, but I thought that now, now she belongs to the family.

HEDDA *(interrupting).* We shall never be able to get on with that servant, Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. Not get on with Bertha?

TESMAN. What do you mean, dear? Eh?

HEDDA *(points).* Look there! She has left her old hat behind her on the chair.

TESMAN *(horrified, drops the slippers on the floor).* But Hedda—

HEDDA. Think—if any one came in and saw a thing of that kind.

TESMAN. But—but Hedda—it is Aunt Julie's hat!

HEDDA. Really?

MISS TESMAN *(takes the hat).* Yes, indeed, it is mine. And it is not old at all, little Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I really did not look carefully at it, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN *(putting on the hat).* This is positively the first time I have worn it. Yes, I assure you it is.

TESMAN. And it is smart, too! Really splendid!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, only moderately, my dear George. *(Looks around)* My parasol? Here it is. *(Takes it)* For this is also mine. *(Murmurs)* Not Bertha's.

TESMAN. New hat and parasol! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA. And very nice and pretty they are.

TESMAN. Yes, are they not? Eh? But, Aunt, look carefully at Hedda before you go. See how nice and pretty *she* is!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, my dear, there is nothing new in that, Hedda has been lovely all her days. *(She nods and goes to the right)*

TESMAN *(follows her).* Yes, but have you noticed how buxom and plump she has become? How she has filled out during our trip?

HEDDA *(walks across the floor).* Oh! Don't!

MISS TESMAN *(stops and turns around).* Filled out?

TESMAN. Yes, Aunt Julie, you don't notice it so much now she has her wrapper on. But I, who have opportunity of—

HEDDA *(at the glass door, impatiently).* Oh, you have no opportunity for anything!

TESMAN. It must be the mountain air down there in the Tyrol—

HEDDA *(sharply, interrupting).* I am exactly as I was when I started.

TESMAN. Yes, that is what you maintain. But I declare that you are not. Do not you think so, Aunt?

MISS TESMAN *(folds her hands and gazes at her).* Hedda is lovely—lovely—lovely. *(Goes to her, bends her head down with both her hands, and kisses her hair)* God bless and preserve Hedda Tesman. For George's sake.

HEDDA *(gently releases herself).* Oh! let me go.

MISS TESMAN *(quietly agitated).* I shall come in to have a look at you every single day.

TESMAN. Yes, do, Aunt! Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Good-by—good-by!

(She goes out through the hall door. TESMAN *follows her out. The door stands half open.* TESMAN *is heard to repeat his messages to Aunt Rina and thanks for the slippers. At the same time,* HEDDA *walks across the floor, lifts her arms and clenches her hands as if distracted. Draws the curtains from the glass door, remains standing there, and looks out. Shortly after,* TESMAN *comes in again and shuts the door behind him)*

TESMAN *(takes the slippers up from the floor).* What are you standing there and looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA *(once more calm and self-possessed).* I was merely standing and looking out at the foliage. It is so yellow. And so withered.

TESMAN *(picks up the slippers and lays them on the table).* Yes, we have got into September now.

HEDDA *(agitated again).* Yes, think—we are already in—in September.

TESMAN. Did you not think Aunt Julie was odd? Almost mysterious? Can you make out what was the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA. I scarcely know her. Is she accustomed to be like that?

TESMAN. No, not as she was to-day.

HEDDA *(goes away from the glass door).* Do you think she was offended about the hat?

TESMAN. Oh! nothing much! Perhaps just a very little for the moment—

HEDDA. But what a way of behaving to throw one's hat away from one here in the drawing-room! One does not do that.

TESMAN. Well, you can depend upon it, Aunt Julie is not in the habit of doing so.

HEDDA. All the same I shall take care to make it all right again with her.

TESMAN. Yes, dear, sweet Hedda, you will do that, won't you?

HEDDA. When you go to see them later on to-day, you can ask her to come here this evening.

TESMAN. Yes, that I certainly will. And then there is one thing you could do which would please her immensely.

HEDDA. What?

TESMAN. If you could only persuade yourself to say "Thou" to her. For my sake, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, no, Tesman—that you really must not ask me to do. I have told you so once before. I shall try to call her Aunt. And that must be enough.

TESMAN. Very well, very well. But I merely thought, that now you belong to the family——

HEDDA. H'm—I am not perfectly sure. *(Goes across the floor toward the doorway)*

TESMAN *(after a pause)*. Is anything the matter with you, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. I was merely looking at my old piano. It does not seem to match very well with all the rest.

TESMAN. The first time I am paid we will see about getting it changed.

HEDDA. No, no—not changed. I will not have it taken away. We can put it in the back room. And we can have another here in its place. When there's an occasion, I mean.

TESMAN *(slightly embarrassed)*. Yes, we can do that.

HEDDA *(takes up the bouquet on the piano)*. These flowers were not here when we came last night.

TESMAN. Aunt Julie must have brought them for you.

HEDDA *(looks into the bouquet)*. A visiting card. *(Takes it out and reads)* "Am coming again later in the day." Can you guess whom it is from?

TESMAN. No. From whom, then? Eh?

HEDDA. The name is "Mrs. Elvsted."

TESMAN. Not really? Mrs. Elvsted! Miss Rysing, her name used to be.

HEDDA. Just so. She with the irritating hair which she went around and made a sensation with. Your old flame, I've heard.

TESMAN *(laughing)*. Well, it did not last long. And that was before I knew you, Hedda, that was. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA. Extraordinary that she should call upon us. I have scarcely known her since our being at school together.

TESMAN. Yes, and I have not seen her for—goodness knows how long. How she can endure living up there in that poky hole. Eh?

HEDDA *(considers, and suddenly says)*. Listen, Tesman—is it not up there that there is a place which he haunts—he—Ejlert Lövborg?

TESMAN. Yes, it is somewhere up there in that neighborhood.

(BERTHA *appears in the hall door)*

BERTHA. She has come again, ma'am—that lady who was here just now and left the flowers. *(Points)* Those you are holding, ma'am.

HEDDA. Ah! is she? Then will you show her in?

(BERTHA *opens the door for* MRS. ELVSTED, *and goes out herself.* MRS. ELVSTED *is a slender figure, with a pretty, gentle face. The eyes are light blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a frightened, questioning expression. Her hair is singularly bright, almost white-gold, and un-*

usually copious and wavy. She is a year or two younger than HEDDA. *Her costume is a dark visiting-dress, which is in good taste, but not in the latest fashion)*

HEDDA *(comes pleasantly to meet her).* Good-day, dear Mrs. Elvsted. It is awfully nice to see you again.

MRS. ELVSTED *(nervously trying to get self-command).* Yes, it is very long since we met.

TESMAN *(holding out his hand to her).* And we two, also. Eh?

HEDDA. Thanks, for your lovely flowers——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, please—I wanted to have come here at once, yesterday afternoon. But when I heard that you were travelling——

TESMAN. Are you just come to town? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. I arrived at noon yesterday. Oh, I was so perfectly in despair, when I heard you were not at home.

HEDDA. In despair? Why?

TESMAN. But, my dear Mrs. Rysing—Mrs. Elvsted, I mean——

HEDDA. I hope there is nothing wrong.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, there is. And I don't know any other living creature whom I could appeal to.

HEDDA *(puts the bouquet on the table).* Come—let us sit here on the sofa.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I have not a moment's quiet to sit down.

HEDDA. Oh, yes, I'm sure you have. Come here. *(She drags* MRS. ELVSTED *down on the sofa, and sits at her side)*

TESMAN. Well? And so, Mrs.——

HEDDA. Has anything particular happened up at your place?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes—it both has and has not happened. Oh—I should be so extremely sorry if you misunderstood me——

HEDDA. But the best thing you can do is to tell us the whole story, Mrs. Elvsted.

TESMAN. You have come here on purpose to do that. Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes—that is so. And so I must tell you—if you don't know it already—that Ejlert Lövborg is also in town.

HEDDA. Is Lövborg——

TESMAN. No, you don't say that Ejlert Lövborg is come back again! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Good gracious, I hear it!

MRS. ELVSTED. He has now been here a week. Just think of that—a whole week! In this dangerous town. Alone! With all the bad company that is to be found here.

HEDDA. But, dear Mrs. Elvsted—how does *he* really concern you?

MRS. ELVSTED *(looks terrified around and says rapidly).* He was the tutor for the children.

HEDDA. For your children?

MRS. ELVSTED. For my husband's. I have none.

HEDDA. For your step-children, then.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes.

TESMAN *(somewhat hesitatingly)*. Was he so far—I don't quite know how to express myself—so far—regular in his mode of life that he could be set to that kind of employment? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Of late years there has been nothing to bring forward against him.

TESMAN. Has there not, really? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED. Not the smallest thing, I assure you! Not in any respect whatever. But at the same time—now, when I knew that he was here—in town—and a great deal of money passing through his hands! Now I am so mortally frightened for him.

TESMAN. But why did he not stay up there, where he was? With you and your husband? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. When the book was published, he could not settle down up there with us any longer.

TESMAN. Ah! that is true—Aunt Julie said he had brought out a new book.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, a large new book, all about the progress of civilization. It was a fortnight ago. And now it is being bought and read so much—and has made such a great sensation——

TESMAN. Has it really? It must be something he has had lying about him from his good days.

MRS. ELVSTED. You mean, from before——?

TESMAN. Yes, of course.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he has written it all since he has been up with us. Now—within the last year.

TESMAN. That is good news, Hedda! Fancy that!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, yes, if only it might keep like that!

HEDDA. Have you met him here?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not yet. I have had the greatest difficulty in finding out his address. But I am really to see him to-morrow.

HEDDA *(gives her a searching look)*. All things considered, I think it seems a little strange of your husband—h'm——

MRS. ELVSTED *(nervously)*. Of my husband! What?

HEDDA. To send *you* to town on such an errand. Not to come in himself and look after his friend.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, no, no—my husband has no time for that. And there were—some purchases I had to make.

HEDDA *(slightly smiling)*. Ah, that is a different matter.

MRS. ELVSTED *(rising quickly and uneasily).* And now I do beg of you, Mr. Tesman, receive Ejlert Lövborg kindly, if he comes to you! And that he is sure to do! Good gracious, you used to be such great friends once. And you both go in for the same studies. The same class of knowledge—so far as I can judge.

TESMAN. Well, we used to, at all events.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, and therefore I do beg you so earnestly that you will—you too—that you will keep an eye upon him. Oh! you will, won't you, Mr. Tesman—you promise me you will?

TESMAN. Yes, I shall be very glad indeed, Mrs. Rysing—

HEDDA. Elvsted.

TESMAN. I shall do for Ejlert all that it is in my power to do. You can depend upon that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how perfectly lovely that is of you! *(Presses his hands)* Thanks, thanks, thanks! *(With a frightened expression)* Yes, for my husband is so very fond of him.

HEDDA *(rising).* You ought to write to him, Tesman. For perhaps he might not quite like to come to you of himself.

TESMAN. Yes, that would be best, wouldn't it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. And do not put it off. Now, immediately, it seems to me.

MRS. ELVSTED *(supplicating).* Oh, yes, if you would!

TESMAN. I'll write this very moment. Have you his address, Mrs.—Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. *(Takes a little slip of paper out of her pocket and gives it to him)* Here it is.

TESMAN. Good, good. Then I will go in. *(Looks around him)* That is true—the slippers? Now then. *(Takes the package and is going)*

HEDDA. Be sure you write in a very cordial and friendly way to him. And write a pretty long letter, too.

TESMAN. Yes, I will.

MRS. ELVSTED. But not a word to hint that I have been begging for him.

TESMAN. No, of course, not a word. Eh? *(He goes through the back room to the left)*

HEDDA *(walks up to* MRS. ELVSTED, *smiles, and says in a low voice).* Well! Now we have killed two birds with one stone.

MRS. ELVSTED. What *do* you mean?

HEDDA. Do you not understand that I wanted to get rid of him?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, that he might write the letter—

HEDDA. And also to have a chat alone with you.

MRS. ELVSTED *(confused).* About the same subject?

HEDDA. Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED *(distressed).* But there is no more, Mrs. Tesman! Really no more!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, indeed there is. There is a great deal more. I understand as much as that. Come here—let us sit down and be perfectly frank with one another. *(She presses* MRS. ELVSTED *down into the arm-chair—by the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(anxiously, looks at her watch).* But dear Mrs.——I really intended to be going now.

HEDDA. Oh! there cannot be any reason for hurrying—is there? Tell me a little how you are getting on at home.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, that is the very last thing I should wish to discuss.

HEDDA. But to me, dear——? Goodness, we went to the same school together.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but you were in the class above me! Oh! how fearfully afraid of you I was then!

HEDDA. Were you afraid of me?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, fearfully afraid. Because, when we met on the stairs, you always used to pull my hair.

HEDDA. No, did I really?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, and once you said you would scorch it off my head.

HEDDA. Oh, that was only nonsense, you know.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I was so stupid in those days. And then besides, after —we were separated so far—far from one another. Our circles were so entirely different.

HEDDA. Well, now we will try to come closer to each other again. Now listen! At school we said "thou" to one another. And we called one another by our Christian names——

MRS. ELVSTED. No, you are certainly quite mistaken about that.

HEDDA. No, I am sure I am not, no! I recollect it perfectly. And we will be frank with one another, just as we were in those old days. *(Draws footstool nearer)* There! *(Kisses her cheek)* Now say "thou" to me, and call me Hedda.

MRS. ELVSTED *(presses and pats her hands).* Oh, such goodness and friendliness! It is something that I am not at all accustomed to.

HEDDA. There, there, there! And I shall say "thou" to you, just as I used to do, and call you my dear Thora.

MRS. ELVSTED. My name is Thea.

HEDDA. So it is. Of course. I meant Thea. *(Looks significantly at her)* So you are but little accustomed to goodness and friendliness, Thea? In your own home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if I had a home! But I have not one. Have never had one.

HEDDA *(looking slightly at her).* I had a suspicion of something of the sort

MRS. ELVSTED *(staring helplessly in front of her).* Yes, yes, yes.

HEDDA. I cannot quite remember now. But was it not first as housekeeper that you went up there to the sheriff's?

MRS. ELVSTED. More properly as governess. But his wife—his then wife—she was an invalid, and confined to her bed most of the time. So I really had to undertake the housekeeping.

HEDDA. But then, at last, you became the mistress of the house.

MRS. ELVSTED *(dejected).* Yes, I did.

HEDDA. Let me see—about how long is it now, since then?

MRS. ELVSTED. Since my marriage?

HEDDA. Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED. It is now five years.

HEDDA. Ah, yes; it must be.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, those five years! Or, at all events, the last two or three. Oh, if you could realize——

HEDDA *(slaps her hand softly). You?* Fie, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no—I must get used to it. Yes, if you merely could just realize and understand—— *(Tries to use "thou" in the remainder of the conversation, but frequently relapses into "you")*

HEDDA *(casually).* Ejlert Lövborg has also been up there for three years I believe.

MRS. ELVSTED *(looking embarrassed at her).* Ejlert Lövborg? Yes, he has.

HEDDA. Did you know him already, from seeing him in town?

MRS. ELVSTED. Scarcely at all. Yes, that is to say, by name of course.

HEDDA. But up there in the country—he came to your house?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, he came over to us every day. He had to read with the children. For it became at last more than I could manage all by myself.

HEDDA. One can well understand that. And your husband? I suppose that he is often away travelling?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. You can imagine that as sheriff he has to travel around the district.

HEDDA *(leans on the arm of the chair).* Thea—poor, sweet Thea—now you must tell me everything just as it is.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, then you must ask me questions.

HEDDA. What sort of a man is your husband really, Thea? I mean, how is he, socially? Is he good to you?

MRS. ELVSTED *(evasively).* He believes that he does all for the best.

HEDDA. It seems to me that he must be too old for you. More than twenty years older at least.

MRS. ELVSTED *(irritated).* That too. One thing with another. Everything around him is distasteful to me! We do not possess a thought in common. Not one thing in the world, he and I.

HEDDA. But is he fond of you, all the same? In his own way?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh! I don't know what he is. I am certainly just useful to him. And it does not cost much to keep me. I am cheap.

HEDDA. That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELVSTED *(shakes her head)*. Can't be otherwise. Not with him. He is not really fond of anybody but himself. And perhaps of the children a little.

HEDDA. And of Ejlert Lövborg, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED *(looks at her)*. Of Ejlert Lövborg! What makes you think that?

HEDDA. But, dear—I thought that if he sends you right in here to town after him. *(Smiles almost imperceptibly)*—And then you yourself said so to Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED *(with a nervous movement)*. Well! Yes, I did say so. *(Bursts out in a low voice)* No—I may just as well say it first as last! For it is sure to come to the light in any case.

HEDDA. But, my dear Thea——

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, to make a clean breast of it! My husband had no idea I had left home.

HEDDA. Really! Did not your husband know that?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, of course not. Besides, he was not at home. He was travelling, he too. Oh, I could not bear it any longer, Hedda! Absolutely impossible! So lonely as I should be up there after this.

HEDDA. Well? And so?

MRS. ELVSTED. So I packed up some of my things, you see. What was most necessary. Quite quietly. And then I walked away from the house.

HEDDA. Without doing anything else?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. And then I took the train and came to town.

HEDDA. But, my dear Thea—fancy your daring to do it!

MRS. ELVSTED *(rises and crosses the floor)*. Yes, and what else in the world should I do?

HEDDA. But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELVSTED *(at the table, looks at her)*. Up there to him?

HEDDA. Yes, of course!

MRS. ELVSTED. I shall never go up there to him any more.

HEDDA *(rises and approaches her)*. Then you have—in serious earnest—gone away for good?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. I did not think that there was anything else for me to do.

HEDDA. And so—you went so perfectly openly.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, well! such things can't be really concealed, whatever you do.

HEDDA. But what do you suppose that people will say about you, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. They may say exactly whatever they please. *(Sits down wearily and heavily on the sofa)* For I have done nothing more than what I was *obliged* to do.

HEDDA *(after a short silence).* What do you intend to do next? What will you take up?

MRS. ELVSTED. I don't know yet. I only know that I must live here, where Ejlert Lövborg lives—if I *am* going to live.

HEDDA *(moves a chair nearer, away from the table, sits down close to her, and strokes her hands).* Thea—how did it come about—this friendship—between you and Ejlert Lövborg?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, it came about little by little. I got a sort of power over him.

HEDDA. Ah?

MRS. ELVSTED. He gave up his old habits. Not because I begged him to. For I never dared do that. But he noticed that I was vexed at them. And so he left off.

HEDDA *(conceals an involuntary smile).* So you restored him—as people say—you, little Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, at least that is what he says himself. And he—on his side—he has made a kind of real person out of me. Taught me to think—and to understand certain things.

HEDDA. Did he perhaps read with you as well?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not exactly read. But he talked to me. Talked about such an endless quantity of things. And then came the lovely happy time when I was able to take part in his work! was allowed to help him!

HEDDA. So you did that?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes! When he wrote anything, he always wanted me to be with him.

HEDDA. Like two good comrades, I suppose.

MRS. ELVSTED. Comrades! Yes, think, Hedda—that was the very word he used. Oh! I ought to feel so thoroughly happy. But I cannot any longer. For I don't know whether it is going to last.

HEDDA. Are you no surer of him than that?

MRS. ELVSTED *(gloomily).* A woman's shadow stands between Ejlert Lövborg and me.

HEDDA *(looks keenly at her).* Who can *that* be?

MRS. ELVSTED. Don't know. Somebody or other from—from his former life. Someone whom he certainly has never really forgotten.

HEDDA. What has he said—about her?

MRS. ELVSTED. He merely once—in a casual way referred to it.

HEDDA. Well! And what did he say?

MRS. ELVSTED. He said that when they parted she wanted to shoot him with a pistol.

HEDDA *(coldly, with self-command).* Oh, dear me! Nobody does that sort of thing here.

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And therefore I think it must be that red-haired opera-singer, whom he once——

HEDDA. Yes, I should think it might be.

MRS. ELVSTED. For I recollect hearing it said that she went about with loaded firearms.

HEDDA. Well—then of course it is she.

MRS. ELVSTED *(wrings her hands).* Yes, but just think, Hedda—I have been hearing that that singer—she is in town again. Oh!--I am perfectly in despair.

HEDDA *(glances toward the back room).* Hush! There is Tesman coming. *(Rises and whispers)* Thea—all this must be between you and me.

MRS. ELVSTED *(starting up).* Oh, yes! yes! for God's sake!

(GEORGE TESMAN, *with a letter in his hand, comes from the left through the back room)*

TESMAN. There—the letter is finished.

HEDDA. That is all right. But Mrs. Elvsted wants to be going, I think. Wait a moment. I will walk to the garden-gate with you.

TESMAN. Hedda—can't Bertha attend to this?

HEDDA *(takes the letter).* I will tell her to. (BERTHA *comes from the hall)*

BERTHA. Judge Brack is here and says he should so much like to see you and master.

HEDDA. Yes, ask the Judge to be so kind as to come in. And, Bertha, listen —just post this letter.

BERTHA *(takes the letter).* Yes, ma'am.

(She opens the door for JUDGE BRACK *and goes out herself. The* JUDGE *is a gentleman of forty five. Short and well built, and elastic in his movements. Face round, with distinguished profile. Hair cut short, still almost black and carefully brushed. Eyes bright and sparkling; eyebrows thick; mustache the same, with waxed ends. He is dressed in an elegant walking suit, a little too juvenile for his age. Uses an eyeglass, which now and then he lets drop)*

JUDGE BRACK *(bows, with his hat in his hand).* May I venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA. Yes, indeed.

TESMAN *(presses his hand).* You are always welcome. *(Presenting him)* Judge Brack—Miss Rysing——

HEDDA. H'm!

BRACK *(bowing).* Ah—it is a great pleasure——

HEDDA *(looks at him and laughs).* It seems awfully funny to look at you by daylight, Judge!

BRACK. Altered perhaps you find?

HEDDA. Yes, a little younger, I think.

BRACK. Sincerest thanks!

TESMAN. But what do you think of Hedda? Eh? Does not she look well? She positively——

HEDDA. Oh! Do leave off discussing me. Rather thank the Judge for all the trouble he has had——

BRACK. Oh, dear me—it was a positive pleasure——

HEDDA. Yes, you are a loyal soul! But my friend here is standing and all impatience to be off. *Au revoir,* Judge. I shall be back here again in a moment. *(Greetings pass.* MRS. ELVSTED *and* HEDDA *go out through the hall door)*

BRACK. Well—is your wife pleased on the whole?

TESMAN. Yes, thank you so very much. That is to say—a little shifting here and there will be necessary, I understand. And there are a few things wanting. We shall be obliged to order in some little matters.

BRACK. Indeed! Really?

TESMAN. But you must not take any trouble about that. Hedda said that she would attend herself to anything that is wanted. Shall we sit down? Eh?

BRACK. Thanks, just a moment. *(Sits close to the table)* There is something I wanted to speak to you about, my dear Tesman.

TESMAN. Indeed? Ah, of course. *(Sits down)* It is no doubt time to think about the serious part of the feast. Eh?

BRACK. Oh, there is no such great hurry about settling the money affairs. At the same time I can't help wishing that we had made our arrangements a little more economically.

TESMAN. But that would never have done. Think of Hedda! You, who know her so well—I could not possibly have settled her in mean surroundings.

BRACK. No, no. That, of course, was just the difficulty.

TESMAN. And so, fortunately, it cannot be long before I am appointed.

BRACK. Oh, you see, these things often drag on for a long time.

TESMAN. Do you happen to have heard anything more precise? Eh?

BRACK. Not anything absolutely definite. *(Breaking off)* But it is true—I have one piece of news to give you.

TESMAN. Ah?

BRACK. Your old friend, Ejlert Lövborg, has come back to town.

TESMAN. I know that already.

BRACK. Indeed? How did you find out?

TESMAN. She told me—that lady who went out with Hedda.

BRACK. Ah, indeed! What was her name? I did not quite catch——

TESMAN. Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. Aha!—then she's the sheriff's wife. Yes, it is up there with them that he has been staying.

TESMAN. And fancy—I hear, to my great joy, that he is a perfectly respectable member of society again.

BRACK. Yes, they maintain that that is so.

TESMAN. And so he has published a new book. Eh?

BRACK. Bless me, yes!

TESMAN. And it has made a sensation.

BRACK. The sensation it has made is quite extraordinary.

TESMAN. Fancy—is not that good news to hear? He, with his marvelous gifts. I was so painfully certain that he had gone right down for good.

BRACK. And that was the general opinion about him.

TESMAN. But I can scarcely conceive what he will take to now! How in the world will he be able to make a living? Eh?

*(*HEDDA, *during these last words, has entered through the hall door)*

HEDDA *(to* BRACK, *laughs somewhat scornfully).* Tesman is always going about in a fright lest people should not be able to make a living.

TESMAN. Good gracious, my dear, we are talking about poor Ejlert Lövborg.

HEDDA *(looks sharply at him).* Ah? *(Sits in the arm-chair by the stove, and asks, indifferently)* What is the matter with *him?*

TESMAN. Well, he certainly ran through all his property long ago. And he can't write a new book every year. Eh? Well—then I do seriously ask, what is to become of him?

BRACK. Perhaps I can tell you a little about that.

TESMAN. Really?

BRACK. You must remember that he has relatives who have considerable influence.

TESMAN. Oh, unfortunately, his relatives have entirely washed their hands of him.

BRACK. They used to call him the hope of the family.

TESMAN. Yes, they used to, yes! But he has forfeited all that.

HEDDA. Who knows? *(Smiles slightly)* Up there in Sheriff Elvsted's family they have restored him——

BRACK. And then this book that has been published——

TESMAN. Yes, yes, we can only hope that they may be willing to help him in one way or another. I have just written to him, Hedda, dear; I asked him to drop in this evening.

BRACK. But, my dear friend, you are coming to my bachelor party this evening. You promised you would, on the quay last night.

HEDDA. Had you forgotten that, Tesman?

TESMAN. Yes, the truth is I had forgotten it.

BRACK. Besides, you may rest perfectly sure that he will not come.

TESMAN. Why do you think that? Eh?

BRACK *(loitering a little, rises and rests his hands on the back of the chair).* Dear Tesman—and you too, Mrs. Tesman—I am not justified in leaving you in ignorance about a matter which—which——

TESMAN. Which concerns Ejlert?

BRACK. Both you and him.

TESMAN. But, dear Judge, let us know what it is!

BRACK. You must be prepared for your appointment perhaps not taking place quite so soon as you desire and expect.

TESMAN *(jumping up uneasily).* Has anything happened to prevent it? Eh?

BRACK. The possession of the post might possibly depend on the result of a competition——

TESMAN. Competition! Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA *(leans farther back in her chair).* Ah!

TESMAN. But with whom? For you never mean to say with——

BRACK. Yes, that's just it. With Ejlert Lövborg.

TESMAN *(clasps his hands together).* No, no—that is perfectly inconceivable. Absolutely impossible. Eh?

BRACK. H'm—it may come to be a matter of experience with us.

TESMAN. No, but, Judge Brack—that would show the most incredible want of consideration for me! *(Gesticulating)* Yes, for—consider—I am a married man! We married on my prospects, Hedda and I. Gone off and spent a lot of money. Borrowed money from Aunt Julie too. For, good Lord! I had as good as a promise of the appointment. Eh?

BRACK. Well, well, well—and you will get the appointment all the same. But there will be a contest first.

HEDDA *(motionless in the arm-chair).* Think, Tesman—it will be almost like a kind of game.

TESMAN. But, dearest Hedda, how can you sit there and be so calm about it?

HEDDA *(as before).* I am not doing so at all. I am perfectly excited about it.

BRACK. In any case, Mrs. Tesman, it is best that you should know how matters stand. I mean—before you carry out those little purchases that I hear you are intending.

HEDDA. That can make no difference.

BRACK. Really? That is another matter. Good-by. *(To* TESMAN) When I take my afternoon walk, I shall come in and fetch you.

TESMAN. Oh, yes, yes——

HEDDA *(lying back, stretches out her hand).* Good-by, Judge. And come soon again.

BRACK. Many thanks. Good-by, good-by.

TESMAN *(follows him to the door).* Good-by, dear Judge! You must really excuse me. (JUDGE BRACK *goes out through the hall-door)*

TESMAN *(crosses the floor).* Oh, Hedda—one should never venture into fairyland. Eh?

HEDDA *(looks at him and smiles).* Is that what you are doing?

TESMAN. Yes, dear—there is no denying it—it was an adventure in fairyland to go and get married and settle into a house on mere empty prospects.

HEDDA. Perhaps you are right about that.

TESMAN. Well, at all events we have our comfortable home, Hedda! Fancy —the home that we both went and dreamed about. Raved about, I may almost say. Eh?

HEDDA *(rises slowly and wearily).* That was the agreement, that we should be in society. Keep house.

TESMAN. Yes, good Lord! how I have looked forward to that! Fancy, to see you as a hostess—in a select circle! Eh? Yes, yes, yes, for the present we two must keep ourselves very much to ourselves, Hedda. Merely see Aunt Julie now and then. Oh, my dear! it was to have been so very, very different——

HEDDA. Of course I shall not have a liveried servant now, at first.

TESMAN. Oh, no—unfortunately. We can't possibly talk about keeping a man servant, you see.

HEDDA. And the horse for riding, that I was to have——

TESMAN *(horrified).* The horse for riding!

HEDDA. I shall not think of having now.

TESMAN. No, good gracious!—I should rather think not!

HEDDA *(crosses the floor).* Well, *one* thing I have to amuse myself with meanwhile.

TESMAN *(beaming with joy).* Oh, God be praised and thanked for that! And what may that be, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA *(at the doorway, looks at him with her hand concealed).* My pistols, George.

TESMAN *(in an agony).* The pistols!

HEDDA *(with cold eyes).* General Gabler's pistols. *(She goes through the back room out to the left)*

TESMAN *(runs to the doorway and shouts after her).* No, for goodness sake, dearest Hedda, don't touch the dangerous things! For my sake, Hedda! Eh?

ACT II

The room at TESMAN'S, *as in the first act, only that the pianoforte is taken away, and an elegant writing-table, with a book-case, is put in the place of it. A smaller table is placed close to the sofa, to the left. Most of the bouquets of flowers have been removed.* MRS. ELVSTED'S *bouquet stands on the larger table in the front of the floor. It is afternoon.* HEDDA, *dressed to receive callers, is alone in the room. She stands by the open glass door, and loads a revolver. The fellow to it lies in an open pistol-case on the writing-table.*

HEDDA *(looks down the garden, and shouts).* Good-day, again, Judge!

JUDGE BRACK *(is heard from below).* The same to you, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA *(lifts the pistol and aims).* I am going to shoot you, Judge Brack!

BRACK *(shouts out below).* No, no, no—don't stand there aiming at me!

HEDDA. That's the result of coming in the back way. *(She fires)*

BRACK *(near).* Are you perfectly mad?

HEDDA. Oh, my God! Did I hit you?

BRACK *(still outside).* Don't play such silly tricks!

HEDDA. Then come in, Judge.

(JUDGE BRACK, *in morning dress, comes in through the glass door. He carries a light overcoat on his arm)*

BRACK. What the devil are you doing with that revolver? What are you shooting?

HEDDA. Oh, I was only standing and shooting up into the blue sky.

BRACK *(takes the pistol gently out of her hand).* Allow me, Mrs. Tesman. *(Looks at it)* Ah!—I know this well. *(Looks around)* Where is the case? Ah, yes. *(Puts the pistol into it, and closes it)* For we are not going to have any more of that tomfoolery today.

HEDDA. Well, what in the name of goodness would you have me do to amuse myself?

BRACK. Have you had no visitors?

HEDDA *(shuts the glass door).* Not a single one. All our intimate friends are still in the country.

BRACK. And is not Tesman at home, either?

HEDDA *(stands at the writing-table, and shuts the pistol-case up in the drawer).* No. Directly after lunch he ran off to his aunt's, for he did not expect you so early.

BRACK. H'm. I ought to have thought of that. It was stupid of me.

HEDDA *(turns her head and looks at him).* Why stupid?

BRACK. Because, if I had thought of it, I would have come here a little—earlier.

HEDDA *(crosses the floor).* Yes, you would then have found nobody at all. For I have been in and dressed myself for the afternoon.

BRACK. And there is not so much as a little crack of a door that one could have parleyed through?

HEDDA. You forgot to arrange for that.

BRACK. That was stupid of me, too.

HEDDA. Now let us sit down here and wait, for Tesman is sure not to be home for a good while yet.

BRACK. Well, well—good Lord, I shall be patient.

*(*HEDDA *sits in the sofa corner.* BRACK *lays his paletot over the back of the nearest chair and sits down, but keeps his hat in his hand. Short pause. They look at one another)*

HEDDA. Well?

BRACK *(in the same tone).* Well?

HEDDA. It was I who asked first.

BRACK *(bends forward a little).* Yes, let us have a little chat together, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA *(leans farther back in the sofa).* Does it not seem to you a perfect age since we had a talk together last? Oh, yes; that chatter yesterday evening and this morning—I don't count that as anything.

BRACK. But between ourselves? Tête-à-tête, do you mean?

HEDDA. Oh, yes. That sort of thing.

BRACK. Every single day I have been here, longing to have you home again.

HEDDA. And all the time I have been wishing the same thing.

BRACK. You? Really, Mrs. Hedda? And I, who fancied you were having such a delightful time on your journey.

HEDDA. Oh, you can imagine that.

BRACK. But that is what Tesman always said in his letters.

HEDDA. Yes, *he!* For him, the nicest thing in the world is to go and rummage in libraries. And to sit and copy out of old pages of parchment—or whatever it may happen to be.

BRACK *(rather maliciously).* Well, that is his business in the world—or partly, at least.

HEDDA. Yes, it is. And then one may, perhaps—but *I!* Oh, no, dear Judge. I have been horribly bored.

BRACK *(sympathetically).* Do you really mean that? In serious earnest?

HEDDA. Yes. You can fancy for yourself. For a whole half year not to meet a single person who knows anything about *our* set, and whom one can talk to about our own affairs.

BRACK. No, no—that *I* should feel was a great deprivation.

HEDDA. And then, what is the most intolerable of all—

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. Everlastingly to be in the company of—of one and the same——

BRACK *(nods in approval).* Late and early—yes. Fancy—at all possible times.

HEDDA. I said everlastingly.

BRACK. Yes. And yet, with our excellent Tesman, I should have thought that one could have managed——

HEDDA. Tesman is—a professional person, my dear.

BRACK. Can't deny that.

HEDDA. And professional persons are not amusing to travel with. Not in the long run, at least.

BRACK. Not even—the professional person—one is *in love with?*

HEDDA. Ugh!—don't use that hackneyed phrase.

BRACK *(startled).* What now, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA *(half in laughter, half in anger).* Yes, just you try it for yourself! To hear talk about the history of civilization from the first thing in the morning till the last thing at night——

BRACK. Everlastingly——

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes! And then about the domestic industries of the Middle Ages. That is the most hideous of all!

BRACK *(looks searchingly at her).* But tell me, how am I really to understand that——? H'm.

HEDDA. That I and George Tesman made up a pair of us, do you mean?

BRACK. Well, let us express it so.

HEDDA. Good Lord! do you see anything so wonderful in that?

BRACK. Both yes and no, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I had really danced till I was tired, my dear Judge. My time was over. Oh, no; I won't exactly say that—nor think it, either.

BRACK. You have positively no reason whatever for thinking so.

HEDDA. Oh—reason. *(Looks searchingly at him)* And George Tesman—he must be admitted to be a presentable person in every respect.

BRACK. Presentable! I should rather think so.

HEDDA. And I do not discover anything actually ridiculous about him. Do you?

BRACK. Ridiculous? No-o, that is not quite the word I should use.

HEDDA. Well, but he is an awfully industrious collector, all the same! I should think it was possible that in time he would be quite a success.

BRACK *(looks inquiringly at her).* I supposed you thought like everybody else, that he was going to be a very distinguished man.

HEDDA *(with a weary expression).* Yes, I did. And then he would go and make such a tremendous fuss about being allowed to provide for me. I did not know why I should not accept it.

BRACK. No, no. Looked at from that point of view——

HEDDA. It was more than my other friends in waiting were willing to do, Judge.

BRACK *(laughs)*. Yes. I cannot positively answer for all the others; but, as far as regards myself, you know very well that I have always nourished a—a certain respect for the marriage tie. Generally speaking, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA *(mocking)*. I never formed any expectations with respect to you.

BRACK. All that I wish for is to have a pleasant, confidential circle of associates, whom I can serve by word and deed, and be allowed to go in and out among—as a tried friend——

HEDDA. Of the man of the house, do you mean?

BRACK *(bows)*. To say the truth—most of all of the lady. But next to her, of the husband, of course. Do you know that such a—let me say such a three-cornered arrangement—is really a great comfort to all parties.

HEDDA. Yes, I have often realized the want of a third, while we have been travelling. Ugh! to sit tête-à-tête in the coupé.

BRACK. Happily, the wedding journey is over now——

HEDDA *(shakes her head)*. The journey will be a long one—a long one yet. I have merely stopped at a station on the route.

BRACK. Well, then one jumps out. And one amuses one's self a little, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I shall never jump out.

BRACK. Really, never?

HEDDA. No. For there is always somebody here, who——

BRACK *(laughing)*. Who looks at one's legs, do you mean?

HEDDA. Just that.

BRACK. Well, but, dear me——

HEDDA *(with a forbidding gesture)*. Don't like it. So I shall stay there sitting —where I now am. Tête-à-tête.

BRACK. Well, but then a third person gets in and joins the couple.

HEDDA. Ah well! That is another question.

BRACK. A tried, experienced friend——

HEDDA. Entertaining one with all sorts of lively subjects——

BRACK. And not a trace of the professional person!

HEDDA *(audibly drawing in her breath)*. Yes, that certainly is a relief.

BRACK *(hears the outer door opened, and gives a glance)*. The triple alliance is concluded.

HEDDA *(whispers)*. And so the train starts again.

*(*GEORGE TESMAN, *in a gray walking-suit and soft felt hat, comes in from the hall. He has a number of unbound books under his arm and in his pockets)*

TESMAN *(walks up to the table at the settee)*. Puf! It was pretty hot, dragging

all these things here. *(Puts the book down)* I am all in a perspiration, Hedda. Well, well—so you have come, my dear Judge? Eh? Bertha did not tell me that.

BRACK *(rises)*. I came up through the garden.

HEDDA. What books are those you have brought?

TESMAN *(stands and turns over the pages)*. Some new professional publications I was obliged to get.

HEDDA. Professional publications?

BRACK. Aha! they are professional publications, Mrs. Tesman. (BRACK *and* HEDDA *exchange a confidential smile)*

HEDDA. Do you need any more professional publications?

TESMAN. Yes. *My* dear Hedda, one can never have too many. One must follow what is written and printed.

HEDDA. Yes, one must.

TESMAN *(handling the books)*. And look here; I have got Ejlert Lövborg's new book, too. *(Passes it to her)* Do you care to glance at it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, many thanks. Or—yes, perhaps I will presently.

TESMAN. I looked through it a little as I came along.

BRACK. Well, what do you think of it—as a professional man?

TESMAN. I think it is wonderful how thoughtfully it is worked out. He never wrote so well before. *(Collects the books in a heap)* But now I will carry all these in. It will be a pleasure to cut them all open! And I must change my clothes a little. *(To* BRACK) We don't need to start just this moment? Eh?

BRACK. Oh, dear no; there is not the slightest hurry.

TESMAN. Very well, then I will take my time. *(Goes off with the books, but pauses in the doorway and turns)* By the way, Hedda, Aunt Julie is not coming to see you this evening.

HEDDA. Why not? Is it that affair of the hat which prevents her?

TESMAN. Oh, dear no. How can you think such a thing of Aunt Julie? Fancy! But Aunt Rina is so awfully poorly, you see.

HEDDA. She is always that.

TESMAN. Yes, but to-day she was worse than usual, poor thing.

HEDDA. Well, then it was perfectly reasonable that the other should stay with her. I will put up with it.

TESMAN. And you cannot imagine how awfully pleased Aunt Julie was, too, because you looked so well after your journey.

HEDDA *(aside, rises)*. Oh, those everlasting aunts!

TESMAN. What?

HEDDA *(goes to the glass doors)*. Nothing.

TESMAN. By-by, then. *(He goes through the back-room out to the right)*

BRACK. What was that you were saying about a hat?

HEDDA. Oh! it was only something about Miss Tesman yesterday. She threw her hat down upon a chair. *(Looks at him and smiles)* And so I pretended to think it was the servant-maid's.

BRACK *(shakes his head)*. But dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do it? Such a nice old lady!

HEDDA *(nervously, crosses the floor)*. Yes, you see, it just takes me like that all of a sudden. And then I *can't* help doing it. *(Throws herself down into the arm-chair near the stove)* Oh, I don't know how I am to explain it.

BRACK *(behind the arm-chair)*. You are not really happy; that is what is the matter.

HEDDA *(looks in front of her)*. I don't know why I should be—happy. Or can you perhaps tell me?

BRACK. Yes; among other reasons because you have got just the home that you were wishing for.

HEDDA *(looks up at him and laughs)*. Do you, too, believe in that story of the wish?

BRACK. Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA. Yes, to be sure; there is something.

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. There is *this* in it, that I used Tesman to take me home from evening parties last summer.

BRACK. Unfortunately, I lived in the opposite direction.

HEDDA. That is true. You went in the opposite direction last summer.

BRACK *(laughs)*. Shame upon you, Mrs. Hedda! Well, but you and Tesman—?

HEDDA. Yes, well, we came by here one evening. And Tesman, poor fellow, he was at his wit's end to know what to talk about. So I thought it was too bad of such a learned person——

BRACK *(smiling dubiously)*. Did you? H'm——

HEDDA. Yes, I positively did. And so—in order to help him out of his misery I—happened, quite thoughtlessly, to say that I should like to live in this villa.

BRACK. Nothing more than that?

HEDDA. Not that evening.

BRACK. But afterward?

HEDDA. Yes. My thoughtlessness had consequences, dear Judge.

BRACK. Unfortunately, your thoughtlessnesses only too often have, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Thanks! But it was in this enthusiasm for Mr. Falk's villa that George Tesman and I found common ground, do you see? *That* was the cause of engagement, and marriage, and wedding-tour, and all the rest of it. Yes, yes, Judge, one builds one's nest and one has to lie in it, I was almost saying.

BRACK. That is extraordinary. And so you really scarcely cared for this place at all?

HEDDA. No, goodness knows I did not.

BRACK. Yes, but now? Now that you have got it arranged like a home for you?

HEDDA. Ugh! there seems to be a smell of lavender and *pot pourri* in all the rooms. But perhaps Aunt Julie brought that smell with her.

BRACK *(laughing)*. No, I think that must be a relic of Mrs. Falk.

HEDDA. Yes, it belongs to some dead person. It reminds me of flowers at a ball, the day after. *(Folds her hands behind her neck, leans back in the chair and looks at him)* Oh, Judge, you cannot conceive how frightfully bored I shall be out here.

BRACK. Is there no occupation you can turn to to make life interesting to you, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. An occupation in which there might be something attractive?

BRACK. Of course.

HEDDA. Goodness knows what sort of an occupation that might be. I often wonder whether—*(Interrupts herself)* But it will never come to anything, either.

BRACK. Who knows? Let me hear what it is.

HEDDA. Whether I could get Tesman to take to politics, I mean.

BRACK *(laughs)*. Tesman! No, don't you know, such things as politics, they are not the sort of occupation for him, not the least.

HEDDA. No, I believe that is so. But could I not make him take them up all the same?

BRACK. Yes, what satisfaction would that be to you if he is not a success? Why would you have him do that?

HEDDA. Because I am bored, I tell you. *(After a pause)* Do you think it would be absolutely impossible for Tesman to become a cabinet minister?

BRACK. H'm, you see, dear Mrs. Hedda, in order to become that he must, first of all, be a tolerably rich man.

HEDDA *(rising impatiently)*. Yes, there you have it! It is this poverty that I have come into. *(Crosses the floor)* It is that which makes life so miserable! So perfectly ludicrous! For that's what it is.

BRACK. I believe, now, that the fault does not lie there.

HEDDA. Where then?

BRACK. In the fact that you have never lived through anything really stimulating.

HEDDA. Anything serious, you mean?

BRACK. Well, you may call it so, if you like. But now, perhaps, it may be coming.

HEDDA. Oh, you are thinking about the annoyances with regard to this

wretched post of professor! But that is Tesman's own affair. I shall not waste a thought on that, you may be sure.

BRACK. No, no, never mind about that. But, suppose, now there were created what one, in the loftier style, might call more serious and more responsible claims upon you? *(Smiles)* New claims, little Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA *(angry)*. Be quiet. You shall never live to see anything of that sort.

BRACK *(cautiously)*. We will talk about that a year hence, at the very latest.

HEDDA *(shortly)*. I have no plans of that kind, Judge. Nothing that will have any claim upon me.

BRACK. Would you not, like most women, form plans for a vocation, such as——

HEDDA *(away near the glass door)*. Ah, hold your tongue, I tell you! It often seems to me that the only vocation I have in the world is for one single thing.

BRACK *(comes closer to her)*. And what is that, if I may ask?

HEDDA *(stands and looks out)*. To bore the life out of myself. Now you know it. *(Turns, looks toward the back-room and laughs)* Yes, quite right! We have the professor.

BRACK *(softly, in a warning voice)*. Now, now, now, Mrs. Hedda.

*(*GEORGE TESMAN, *in evening dress, with gloves and hat in his hand, comes from right side through back-room)*

TESMAN. Hedda, has anyone come with a message from Ejlert Lövborg? Eh?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Well, you will see that he will be here himself in a little while.

BRACK. Do you really think he will come?

TESMAN. Yes, I am almost sure of it. For those are only flying rumors that you were repeating this morning.

BRACK. Indeed?

TESMAN. Yes, at all events Aunt Julie said that she never would believe that he would stand in my way after to-day. Fancy that!

BRACK. Well, then it is all right.

TESMAN *(puts his hat with his gloves in it on chair to right)*. Yes, but I must really be allowed to wait for him as long as there's a chance.

BRACK. We have plenty of time for that. Nobody comes to me until seven o'clock—half-past seven.

TESMAN. Well, then we can keep Hedda company till then. And keep an eye on the time. Eh?

HEDDA *(carries* BRACK'S *overcoat and hat over to the settee)*. And if the worst comes to the worst Mr. Lövborg can sit here with me.

BRACK *(wishes to carry the things himself)*. Oh, please don't, Mrs.——! What do you mean by the worst?

HEDDA. If he will not go with you and Tesman.

TESMAN *(looks dubiously at her).* But, dear Hedda, do you think it would be quite the thing for him to stay here with you? Eh? Recollect that Aunt Julie can't come.

HEDDA. No, but Mrs. Elvsted is coming. And so we three can have a cup of tea together.

TESMAN. Yes, in *that* case, all right.

BRACK *(smiles).* And that would, perhaps, be the wisest thing for him.

HEDDA. Why?

BRACK. Good gracious, Mrs. Tesman, you have teased me often enough about my little bachelor parties. You ought not to associate with any but men of the highest principles, you used to say.

HEDDA. But Mr. Lövborg has the highest principles possible now. A sinner that repents——

*(*BERTHA *appears at the hall-door.)*

BERTHA. Please, ma'am, there's a gentleman that wishes to——

HEDDA. Yes, show him in.

TESMAN *(aside).* I am certain it is he! Fancy that!

*(*EJLERT LÖVBORG *comes in from the hall. He is slim and thin; the same age as* TESMAN, *but looks older and somewhat worn. Hair and beard dark-brown; face long, pale, but with red patches on the cheek-bones. He is dressed in an elegant, black, perfectly new visiting suit. Dark gloves and tall hat in his hand. He remains standing in the neighborhood of the door and bows hastily. Seems a little embarrassed)*

TESMAN *(goes to him and shakes hands).* Well, dear Ejlert, so we really meet once more!

EJLERT LÖVBORG *(speaking in a low voice).* Thank you for your letter. *(Approaches* HEDDA*)* May I venture to hope that you, too, will shake hands with me, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA *(shakes hands with him).* Welcome, Mr. Lövborg. *(With a gesture)* I don't know whether you two gentlemen——?

LÖVBORG *(bowing slightly).* Mr. Justice Brack, I believe.

BRACK *(in the same way).* Certainly. Some years ago.

TESMAN *(to* LÖVBORG, *with his hands on his shoulders).* And now, Ejlert, you are to feel exactly as if you were at home. Isn't he, Hedda? For I hear you are going to settle down here in town. Eh?

LÖVBORG. I want to.

TESMAN. Well, that is very natural. Listen, I have got your new book. But the truth is, I have not had it long enough to read it through yet.

LÖVBORG. You may spare yourself the trouble.

TESMAN. What do you mean by that?

LÖVBORG. Oh, there is not anything much in it.

TESMAN. No, fancy! you yourself say that?

BRACK. But it is being tremendously praised, I hear.

LÖVBORG. That is what I wanted. And so I wrote the book in such a way that everybody could agree with it.

BRACK. Very sagacious.

TESMAN. Yes, but—dear Ejlert—!

LÖVBORG. For my object now is to rebuild a position for myself. Begin afresh.

TESMAN *(slightly embarrassed).* Ah! You wish to do that? Eh?

LÖVBORG *(smiles, puts his hat down, and takes a packet wrapped up in paper out of his coat pocket).* But when this is published, George Tesman, you must read this. For *this* is the real thing. What I am part of myself.

TESMAN. Indeed! And what may that be?

LÖVBORG. This is the continuation.

TESMAN. The continuation? Of what?

LÖVBORG. Of the book.

TESMAN. Of the new book?

LÖVBORG. Certainly.

TESMAN. Yes; but, Ejlert, that comes down to our days!

LÖVBORG. Yes, it does. And this treats of the future.

TESMAN. Of the future? But, good gracious, we don't know anything about that!

LÖVBORG. No. But there are several things though can be said about it all the same. *(Opens the packet)* You will see here—

TESMAN. That is not your handwriting.

LÖVBORG. I have dictated it. *(Turns over the pages)* It is divided into two sections. The first is about the civilizing forces of the future. And the other *(goes on turning the pages)* is about the civilizing progress of the future.

TESMAN. Extraordinary! It would never have occurred to me to write about that.

HEDDA *(at the glass door. Drums on the panes).* H'm—no, no!

LÖVBORG *(puts the papers back into their envelope and lays the package on the table).* I brought it with me because I thought I would read you a little of it this evening.

TESMAN. That was awfully nice of you. But—this evening—*(Looks at* BRACK*)* I really don't know what to say about that.

LÖVBORG. Well, then, another time. There is no hurry.

BRACK. I must tell you, Mr. Lövborg, there is a little gathering at my house this evening. Chiefly for Tesman, you understand.

LÖVBORG *(looking for his hat).* Ah! then I won't stay any longer.

BRACK. No, just listen. Will you not give me the pleasure of coming too?

LÖVBORG *(short and firm).* No, I can't do that. Thank you so much.

BRACK. Oh, now do! We shall be a little select circle. And you may depend upon it that we shall make it "lively," as Mrs. Hed—, as Mrs. Tesman says.

LÖVBORG. I don't doubt that. But all the same——

BRACK. You might bring your manuscript and read it to Tesman there in my house. For I have rooms enough.

TESMAN. Yes, think, Ejlert, you might do that! Eh?

HEDDA *(joining them).* But, dear, suppose Mr. Lövborg does not wish to. I am certain Mr. Lövborg would like much better to stay here and have dinner with me.

LÖVBORG *(gazes at her).* With you, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. And with Mrs. Elvsted.

LÖVBORG. Ah! *(With a gesture of refusal)* I met her just now in the middle of the day.

HEDDA. Did you? Yes, she is coming. And therefore it is almost a matter of necessity that you should stay, Mr. Lövborg. Or else she will have nobody to see her home.

LÖVBORG. That is true. Yes, many thanks, Mrs. Tesman, then I will stay.

HEDDA. Then I will just give the servant a few directions.

(She goes over to the hall-door and rings. BERTHA *comes in.* HEDDA *talks aside to her and points to the back room.* BERTHA *nods and goes out again)*

TESMAN *(at the same time to* EJLERT LÖVBORG). Tell me, Ejlert, is it this new subject—this about the future—which you intend to lecture about?

LÖVBORG. Yes.

TESMAN. For I heard at the bookseller's that you are to deliver a course of lectures here in the autumn.

LÖVBORG. Yes, I am. You must not blame me for that, Tesman.

TESMAN. No, of course not! But——

LÖVBORG. I can easily understand that it must seem rather provoking to you.

TESMAN. Oh, for my sake I cannot expect that you——

LÖVBORG. But I wait until you have got your nomination.

TESMAN. Are you going to wait? Yes, but—but—then are you not going to contest the post with me? Eh?

LÖVBORG. No. I will merely triumph over you. In the popular judgment.

TESMAN. But, good Lord, then Aunt Julie was right all along! Oh, yes, I knew *that* was how it would be! Hedda! Fancy—Ejlert Lövborg is not going to oppose us after all.

HEDDA *(sharply).* Us? Pray keep me out of it.

(She crosses to the back room, where BERTHA *is standing, and spreading a*

table-cloth with decanters and glasses on the table, HEDDA *nods approvingly and crosses back again.* BERTHA *goes out)*

TESMAN *(at the same time).* But you, Judge Brack, what do you say to this? Eh?

BRACK. Well, I say that honor and victory—h'm—they may be monstrous fine things——

TESMAN. Yes, of course, they may be. At the same time——

HEDDA *(looks at* TESMAN *with a cold smile).* I think that you stand there and look as if you were thunderstruck.

TESMAN. Yes—that's about it—I almost fancy——

BRACK. But that was a thunder-storm that hung over us, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA *(points to the back room).* Won't you gentlemen go in and take a glass of cold punch?

BRACK *(looks at his watch).* As a stirrup-cup? Well, that won't be a bad idea.

TESMAN. Splendid, Hedda! Perfectly splendid! In such a happy mood as I now feel in——

HEDDA. You too, I hope, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖVBORG *(refusing).* No, many thanks. Not for me.

BRACK. But, good Lord, cold punch isn't poison, that I know of.

LÖVBORG. Perhaps not for every one.

HEDDA. I shall keep Mr. Lövborg company while you go in.

TESMAN. Yes, yes, dear Hedda, do that.

(He and BRACK *go into the back room, sit down, drink punch, smoke cigarettes, and talk cheerfully during the following dialogue.* EJLERT LÖVBORG *remains standing near the stove.* HEDDA *goes to the writing-table)*

HEDDA *(raising her voice a little).* Now, I will show you some photographs, if you like. For Tesman and I—we made a tour through the Tyrol as we came home.

(She comes with an album, which she places on the table near the sofa and sits on the upper corner of the latter. EJLERT LÖVBORG *goes closer, stops, and gazes at her. Then he takes a chair and sits down at her left side with his back to the farther room)*

HEDDA *(opens the album).* Do you see this mountain landscape, Mr. Lövborg? This is the Ortler group. Tesman has written it underneath. You see it here: The Ortler Group, near Meran.

LÖVBORG *(who has gazed at her all this time, says slowly in a low tone of voice).* Hedda—Gabler!

HEDDA *(glances quickly at him).* Well! Hush!

LÖVBORG *(repeats softly).* Hedda Gabler!

HEDDA *(looks in the album).* Yes, that used to be my name. Then—when we two knew one another.

LÖVBORG. And henceforward—and all my life long—I must get out of the habit of saying Hedda Gabler.

HEDDA *(goes on turning the leaves).* Yes, you must. And I think you ought to practice it in time. The sooner the better, I think.

LÖVBORG *(with resentful expression).* Hedda Gabler married! And to—George Tesman!

HEDDA. Yes, that's how it is.

LÖVBORG. Oh, Hedda, Hedda! how could you throw yourself away like that?

HEDDA *(looks sharply at him).* Now! None of that here.

LÖVBORG. None of what, do you mean?

(TESMAN *comes in and approaches sofa)*

HEDDA *(hears him coming and says indifferently).* And this, Mr. Lövborg, this is down from the Ampezzo Valley. Just look at the peaks there. *(Looks kindly at* TESMAN*)* What are these wonderful peaks called, dear?

TESMAN. Let me see. Oh! Those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA. So they are, yes. Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lövborg.

TESMAN. Hedda, dear, I was just going to ask whether we should not bring you in a little punch? For yourself at all events? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, thanks. And one or two biscuits as well, perhaps.

TESMAN. No cigarettes?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Very well.

(He goes into the back room and out to right. BRACK *sits there and now and then glances at* HEDDA *and* LÖVBORG*)*

LÖVBORG *(in a low voice, as before).* Answer me, Hedda. How could you go and do all this?

HEDDA *(apparently absorbed in the album).* If you go on saying "thou" to me I shall not talk to you any more.

LÖVBORG. May I not say "thou" when we are by ourselves?

HEDDA. No. You may be allowed to think it. But you must not say it.

LÖVBORG. Ah! I understand. It clashes with your love—for George Tesman.

HEDDA *(glances at him and smiles).* Love? No, that *is* a joke!

LÖVBORG. Not love then?

HEDDA. No sort of unfaithfulness, either! I won't hear of anything of that kind.

LÖVBORG. Hedda, just give me an answer about one thing.

HEDDA. Hush!

(TESMAN, *with a serviette, comes from the back room)*

TESMAN. Come, then! Here are the good things. *(He spreads the cloth on the table)*

HEDDA. Why, do you lay the cloth yourself?

TESMAN *(fills up the glasses).* Yes, because it seems such fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

HEDDA. But now, you have filled both glasses. And Mr. Lövborg does not wish for any.

TESMAN. No, but Mrs. Elvsted is sure to come in a minute.

HEDDA. Yes, that is true—Mrs. Elvsted——

TESMAN. Had you forgotten her? Eh?

HEDDA. We were so absorbed in these photographs. *(Shows him a picture)* Do you recollect this little mountain-village?

TESMAN. Ah, that is the one below the Brenner Pass! It was there that we stayed all night——

HEDDA. And met all those entertaining tourists.

TESMAN. Yes, to be sure, it was *there.* Fancy—if we could have had *you* with us, Ejlert! Well! *(He goes in again and sits down by* BRACK*)*

LÖVBORG. Just give me an answer about one thing, Hedda——

HEDDA. Well?

LÖVBORG. Was there no love in your relation to *me* either? Not a splash—not a gleam of love over that either?

HEDDA. I wonder if there really was? For my part I feel that we were two very good comrades. Two thoroughly intimate friends. *(Smiles)* You especially were awfully frank.

LÖVBORG. It was you who wished it to be so.

HEDDA. When I look back upon it, there was certainly something beautiful, something fascinating—something spirited it seems to me there was about —about that secret intimacy—that comradeship, which no living human being had a suspicion of.

LÖVBORG. Yes, isn't that so, Hedda! Was there not? When I used to come up to see your father of a morning—and the general sat away by the window and read the papers—with his back to us.

HEDDA. And we, on the settee.

LÖVBORG. Always with the same illustrated newspaper in front of us——

HEDDA. For want of an album, yes.

LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda—and when I used to confess to you. Told you about myself, things that nobody else knew in those days. Sat there and admitted that I had been out on the loose for whole days and nights. Ah, Hedda, what power was it in you that forced me to acknowledge things like that?

HEDDA. Do you think it was a power in me?

LÖVBORG. Yes, how else can I explain it? And all those—those mysterious questions that you used to ask me——

HEDDA. And which you understood so thoroughly.

LÖVBORG. That you could sit and ask such things! Quite boldly.

HEDDA. Mysteriously, if you please.

LÖVBORG. Yes, but boldly, all the same. Ask me—about things of that kind.

HEDDA. And that you could answer, Mr. Lövborg.

LÖVBORG. Yes, that is just what I do not understand—now looking back upon it. But tell me then, Hedda—was not love at the basis of that relation? Had not you an idea that you could wash me clean, if only I came to you in confession? Was it not so?

HEDDA. No, not quite.

LÖVBORG. Then what actuated you?

HEDDA. Can't you understand that a young girl—if it can be done in—in secret——

LÖVBORG. Well?

HEDDA. Might want very much to get a peep into a world which——

LÖVBORG. Which——?

HEDDA. Which she is not allowed to know anything about?

LÖVBORG. Then that was it?

HEDDA. That too. That too—I almost fancy.

LÖVBORG. Comradeship in the desire of life. But why could it not be *that* as well?

HEDDA. That was your own fault.

LÖVBORG. It was you who were to blame.

HEDDA. Yes, there was the impending danger that the real thing would assert itself in our relation. You ought to be ashamed, Ejlert Lövborg; how could you take advantage of me—of your bold comrade?

LÖVBORG *(wrings his hands).* Oh, why did you not take it up in earnest! Why did you not shoot me down as you threatened to do?

HEDDA. I was so afraid of the scandal.

LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda, you are a coward at heart.

HEDDA. A frightful coward. *(Moves)* But that was fortunate for you. And now you have found the loveliest consolation up at Elvsted's.

LÖVBORG. I know what Thea has confided to you.

HEDDA. And perhaps you have confided something to her about us two?

LÖVBORG. Not a word. She is too stupid to understand that sort of thing.

HEDDA. Stupid?

LÖVBORG. In that kind of thing she is stupid.

HEDDA. And I am cowardly. *(Bends nearer to him without looking him in the face, and says in a lower tone of voice)* But now I will confide something to *you.*

LÖVBORG *(inquisitive).* Well?

HEDDA. That I dared not shoot you down——

LÖVBORG. Yes?

HEDDA. That was not my most arrant cowardice that evening.

LÖVBORG *(looks at her a moment, understands, and passionately whispers).* Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I catch a glimpse of the hidden reason of our comradeship. You and I! It was the longing for life in you, after all——

HEDDA *(softly, with a keen expression).* Take care! Don't believe anything of that! *(It begins to grow dark. The hall door is opened from outside by* BERTHA. HEDDA *shuts the album and calls out, smiling)* Now, at last! Dearest Thea, come in!

(MRS. ELVSTED *comes from the hall. She is dressed for the evening. The door is closed behind her)*

HEDDA *(from the sofa, holds out her arms to her).* Dear Thea, you can't think how impatient I have been for you!

(During this time MRS. ELVSTED *has exchanged a slight greeting with the gentlemen in the back room, then goes across to the table, and holds out her hand to* HEDDA. EJLERT LÖVBORG *has risen. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *greet one another with a silent nod)*

MRS. ELVSTED. Ought I not to go in and chat a little with your husband?

HEDDA. By no means. Let those two sit there. They will soon be off.

MRS. ELVSTED. Are they going?

HEDDA. Yes, they are going off to a carouse.

MRS. ELVSTED *(rapidly to* LÖVBORG). You as well?

LÖVBORG. No.

HEDDA. Mr. Lövborg—he stays with us.

MRS. ELVSTED *(takes a chair and is going to sit down at his side).* Oh! how nice it is to be here.

HEDDA. No, thanks, my little Thea! Not there! You come right over here to me. I will be between you.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, just as you like. *(She goes round the table and sits down on the sofa on the left side of* HEDDA. LÖVBORG *sits down in the chair again)*

LÖVBORG *(after a short pause, to* HEDDA). Is she not lovely to sit and look at?

HEDDA *(strokes her hair lightly).* Merely to look at?

LÖVBORG. Yes. For we two—she and I—we are two genuine comrades. We believe implicitly in one another. And so we can sit and talk so confidentially to one another——

HEDDA. Without any mystery, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖVBORG. Well——

MRS. ELVSTED *(softly clinging to* HEDDA). Oh, how fortunate I am, Hedda! For, fancy, he says that I inspire him too.

HEDDA *(looks at her with a smile).* No, dear, does he say that?

LÖVBORG. And then the courage in action that she has, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, goodness! *I* courage!

LÖVBORG. Immensely—when it refers to the comrade.

HEDDA. Yes, *courage*, yes! If one only had it.

LÖVBORG. What do you mean, then?

HEDDA. Then one could perhaps manage to live one's life. *(Turns suddenly)* But now, my dearest Thea, now you must drink up a good glass of cold punch.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, thanks, I never drink things of that kind.

HEDDA. Well, then, you at least, Mr. Lövborg.

LÖVBORG. Thanks, nor I either.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, nor he either.

HEDDA *(looks firmly at him)*. But if I wish it?

LÖVBORG. Can't help it!

HEDDA *(laughs)*. Then I have no power over you at all, poor I?

LÖVBORG. Not in that direction.

HEDDA. Seriously speaking, I think you ought to do it all the same. For your own sake.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, but, Hedda—!

LÖVBORG. Why?

HEDDA. Or for other people's sake, I ought to say.

LÖVBORG. Indeed?

HEDDA. Otherwise people might easily get the impression that you did not —really—feel yourself perfectly confident—perfectly sure of yourself.

MRS. ELVSTED *(aside)*. Oh, no, Hedda—!

LÖVBORG. People may get whatever impression they choose for the present.

MRS. ELVSTED *(joyfully)*. Yes, is it not so?

HEDDA. I noticed that so plainly in Judge Brack just now.

LÖVBORG. What did you notice?

HEDDA. He smiled so scornfully when you dared not go in there to the table.

LÖVBORG. Dared not! I preferred, of course, to stay here and talk to you.

MRS. ELVSTED. That was so natural, Hedda!

HEDDA. But the Judge could not possibly know that. And I saw that he gave a smile and glanced at Tesman when you dared not go with them to that wretched little banquet.

LÖVBORG. Dared! Do you say that I did not dare?

HEDDA. Not I. But that is how Judge Brack understood it.

LÖVBORG. Well, let him.

HEDDA. Then you will not go with them?

LÖVBORG. I shall stay here with you and Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, Hedda, you may be sure that is best.

HEDDA *(smiles and nods with approval to* LÖVBORG). Firm as a rock, then!

Rooted in principle for all times and seasons! There, that's what a man should be! *(Turns to* MRS. ELVSTED *and pats her)* Well, was not that what I said when you came here so awfully anxious this morning?

LÖVBORG *(starting)*. Anxious?

MRS. ELVSTED *(terrified)*. Hedda, Hedda, then——

HEDDA. Just look yourself! It is not necessary that you should go about in this mortal dread——*(Interrupting)* Well, now we can all three be in high spirits!

LÖVBORG. Ah! what is the meaning of all this, Mrs. Tesman?

MRS. ELVSTED. Good gracious, Hedda! What are you saying? What are you doing?

HEDDA. Be quiet! That disgusting Judge is sitting there and keeping his eye on you.

LÖVBORG. In mortal dread? For the sake of me?

MRS. ELVSTED *(aside, complaining)*. Oh, Hedda, now you have made me perfectly miserable!

LÖVBORG *(looks steadily at her for a little while. His face is gloomy)*. Then *that* was my comrade's frank faith in me.

MRS. ELVSTED *(beseechingly)*. Ah! dearest friend, you must listen to me first——

LÖVBORG *(takes one full glass of punch, lifts it and says softly, with husky voice)*. Your health, Thea! *(He empties the glass, puts it down and takes the other)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(aside)*. O Hedda, Hedda! how could you wish for this?

HEDDA. Wish! I! Are you mad?

LÖVBORG. And a health to you also, Mrs. Tesman. Thanks for the truth. The living truth! *(He drinks and wishes to refill the glass)*

HEDDA *(lays her hand upon his arm)*. There, there! No more for the moment. Remember, that you are going to the party.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no!

HEDDA. Hush! They are sitting and watching you.

LÖVBORG *(puts the glass away)*. Thea, now tell the truth.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes!

LÖVBORG. Had the Sheriff any idea you were following me?

MRS. ELVSTED *(wringing her hands)*. Oh, Hedda, do you hear what he asks?

LÖVBORG. Was it an agreement between him and you that you should come up to town and spy after me? Perhaps it was the Sheriff himself that made you do it? Aha! Perhaps he thought he could make use of me in his office again! Or was it at the card-table he missed me?

MRS. ELVSTED *(aside, moaning)*. Oh, Lövborg, Lövborg——

LÖVBORG *(snatches a glass and tries to fill it)*. A health to the old Sheriff too!

HEDDA *(refusing).* No more now. Remember, you have to go and read aloud to Tesman.

LÖVBORG *(quieter, pushes the glass away).* That was stupid of me, Thea, that was. To take it up in such a way, I mean. Don't be angry with me, my dear, dear comrade. You shall see—you and other people—that if I was fallen now I am up again! By *your* help, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED *(beaming with delight).* Oh, thank God! *(Meanwhile* BRACK *has looked at his watch. He and* TESMAN *get up and come into the drawing-room).*

BRACK *(takes his hat and overcoat).* Yes, Mrs. Tesman, it is now time for us.

HEDDA. That is all right.

LÖVBORG *(gets up).* For me, too, Mr. Justice.

MRS. ELVSTED *(aside entreating).* Oh, Lövborg, don't do it!

HEDDA *(pinches her arm).* They hear you!

MRS. ELVSTED *(gives a slight scream).* Au!

LÖVBORG *(to* BRACK*).* You were so kind as to invite me.

BRACK. Well, will you come, after all?

LÖVBORG. Yes, many thanks.

BRACK. I shall be most delighted.

LÖVBORG *(draws the packet of MS. toward him, and says to* TESMAN*).* For I should like to submit one or two points to you before I send it off.

TESMAN. No, fancy! that will be amusing! But, dear Hedda, how will Mrs. Elvsted be seen home? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, that can always be managed somehow.

LÖVBORG *(looks toward the ladies).* Mrs. Elvsted? Of course I am coming back to fetch her. *(Closer)* About ten o'clock, Mrs. Tesman? How will that do?

HEDDA. Yes, certainly. That will do splendidly.

TESMAN. Well, then, that is all right. But you must not expect me so early, Hedda.

HEDDA. Oh, my dear, stay as long—as long as ever you like.

MRS. ELVSTED *(in concealed agony).* Mr. Lövborg, I shall be waiting here until you come.

LÖVBORG *(with his hat in his hand).* Of course, Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. And now we are off for a happy day, gentlemen! I hope we shall make it "lively," as a certain lovely lady puts it.

HEDDA. Ah! if only the lovely lady could be present invisibly.

BRACK. Why invisibly?

HEDDA. To hear a little of your unadulterated liveliness, Mr. Justice.

BRACK *(laughs).* I would not advise the lovely lady to do that.

TESMAN *(also laughs).* Well, that is a good joke, Hedda! Fancy that!

BRACK. Now good-by, good-by, ladies.

LÖVBORG *(bows as he goes).* About ten o'clock, then.

(BRACK, LÖVBORG, *and* TESMAN *go out through the hall door. At the same time* BERTHA *comes from the back room with a lighted lamp, which she puts down on the drawing-room table and goes out the same way)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(has risen and walks about uneasily).* Hedda, Hedda, what will be the end of all this?

HEDDA. Ten o'clock—when he is coming to fetch you. I see him before me. With vine-leaves in his hair. Hot and bold—

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, if only it might be so.

HEDDA. And you see he has regained power over himself. He is now a free man for the rest of his life.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, goodness, yes—if he might only come back as you see him.

HEDDA. So, and not otherwise will he come! *(Rises and approaches her)* You may doubt him as long as you will. I believe in him. And now we shall try—

MRS. ELVSTED. There is something mysterious about you, Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, there is. I wish for once in my life to have power over the fate of a human being.

MRS. ELVSTED. Have you not got that?

HEDDA. Haven't—and never have had.

MRS. ELVSTED. But not over your husband?

HEDDA. Oh, that would not be worth taking much trouble about. Oh, if you could only know how poor I am. And you are allowed to be so rich. *(Looks passionately at her)* I believe I shall scorch your hair off, after all.

MRS. ELVSTED. Let me go! let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda.

BERTHA *(in the doorway).* Tea is served in the dining-room, ma'am.

HEDDA. Very well. We are coming.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no! I wish to go home alone! Now, at once!

HEDDA. Nonsense! you shall have tea first, you little simpleton. And then, at ten o'clock, comes Ejlert Lövborg, with vine-leaves in his hair. *(She drags* MRS. ELVSTED *almost by force to the doorway)*

ACT III

The room at TESMAN'S. *The curtains are drawn in front of the doorway and of the glass door. The lamp, with a shade over it, burns, half turned down, on the table. In the stove, the door of which is open, there has been a fire, which is now almost out.*

MRS. ELVSTED, *wrapped in a great beaver cloak, and with her feet on a footstool, sits close to the stove, sunken back in the arm-chair.* HEDDA *lies, dressed, asleep on the sofa, with a rug over her.*

MRS. ELVSTED *(after a pause, sits up quickly in her chair and listens keenly. Then sinks wearily back again and softly murmurs).* Not yet! O God! O God!—not yet!

(BERTHA *comes in cautiously, listening, through the hall door. She has a letter in her hand.)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(turns and whispers sharply).* Well, has anyone been here?

BERTHA *(aside).* Yes, just now a girl came with this letter.

MRS. ELVSTED *(quickly, holding out her hand).* A letter! Give it me!

BERTHA. No, it is for the Doctor, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED. Ah!

BERTHA. It was Miss Tesman's maid who brought it. I will put it here on the table.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, do.

BERTHA *(lays down the letter).* I had better put out the lamp. For it is merely being wasted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, put it out. It will soon be light now.

BERTHA *(puts it out).* It *is* quite light, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, broad daylight! And not come home yet.

BERTHA. Oh, goodness! I thought that that was what would happen.

MRS. ELVSTED. Did you think so?

BERTHA. Yes, when I saw that a certain person was come to town again—and went off with them. We have heard a good deal about that gentleman before now.

MRS. ELVSTED. Don't talk so loud. You'll wake your mistress.

BERTHA *(looks at the sofa and sighs).* No, let her sleep, poor thing. Shall I make up the fire a little?

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks, not for me.

BERTHA. Very well, then. *(She goes out softly through the hall-door)*

HEDDA *(wakes up at the shutting of the door, and looks up).* What is it?

MRS. ELVSTED. It was only the servant.

HEDDA *(looks around).* Ah! in here! yes, I recollect now. *(Sits up on the sofa, stretches herself, and rubs her eyes)* What o'clock is it, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. It is past seven, now.

HEDDA. When did Tesman come?

MRS. ELVSTED. He has not come yet.

HEDDA. Not come home yet?

MRS. ELVSTED *(rises).* Nobody has come.

HEDDA. And we who sat here and watched and waited up till four o'clock—

MRS. ELVSTED *(wrings her hands).* And *what* I expected of him!

HEDDA *(yawns, and says, with her hand before her mouth).* Ah, yes, we might have spared ourselves that trouble.

MRS. ELVSTED. Have you been able to sleep at all?

HEDDA. Oh, yes. I believe I have had a very good sleep. Didn't you?

MRS. ELVSTED. Not one moment. I could not, Hedda. It was absolutely impossible for me.

HEDDA *(rises and goes across to her).* There, there, there! There is nothing to be anxious about. I know perfectly well what has happened.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, what do you suppose, then? Can you tell me?

HEDDA. Well, of course they went on drinking at the Judge's for a frightful time——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, dear, yes—they did to be sure. But at the same time——

HEDDA. And so, you see, Tesman did not like to come home and make a noise and ring us up in the middle of the night. *(Laughs)* Perhaps did not particularly wish to show himself, either, in such a very jovial condition.

MRS. ELVSTED. But, my dear, where can he have gone?

HEDDA. He is gone up to his aunt's, of course, and has had out his sleep there. They keep up his old room.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he can't be there. For a letter has just come for him from Miss Tesman. There it is.

HEDDA. Really? *(Looks at the address)* Yes, it certainly is from Aunt Julie herself. Well, then, he must have stayed all night at the Judge's house. And Ejlert Lövborg—he is sitting, with vine-leaves in his hair, and reading aloud.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, Hedda, you merely go on saying what you don't yourself believe a word of.

HEDDA. You really are a little ninny, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, yes, I am sorry to say I suppose I am.

HEDDA. And so deadly tired out you look.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I am deadly tired, too.

HEDDA. Well, then, you shall do what I tell you. You shall go into my room and lie down on the bed a little.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, no, no, I should not sleep if I did.

HEDDA. Yes, you certainly would.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but your husband is sure to come home soon, now. And then I shall want to know at once.

HEDDA. I will tell you when he comes.

MRS. ELVSTED. Will you promise me that, Hedda?

HEDDA. Yes, you can depend upon that. Just go in and sleep until then.

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks. Well, I will try to. *(She goes in through the back room)*

*(*HEDDA *goes to the glass door and draws back the curtains. Broad daylight enters the room. Thereupon she takes a little hand-mirror which stands on the writing-table, and arranges her hair. Then goes to the hall-door and presses the button of the bell.* BERTHA *soon after appears at the door)*

BERTHA. Do you want anything, ma'am?

HEDDA. Yes, you must make up the fire in the stove. I am chilled to the bone.

BERTHA. The room shall be warm in a minute. *(She draws the embers together, and puts more fuel on)*

BERTHA. That was a ring at the street door, ma'am.

HEDDA. Well, then go and open it. I will attend to the stove.

BERTHA. It will soon burn up. *(She goes out through the hall-door.* HEDDA *kneels on the footstool and puts several pieces of fuel into the stove)*

(GEORGE TESMAN *comes, after a short delay, in from the hall. He looks tired and rather serious. Walks on the tips of his toes toward the doorway and is going to slip in between the curtains)*

HEDDA *(at the stove, without looking up).* Good-morning!

TESMAN *(turns).* Hedda! *(Comes nearer)* But what in the world are you up so early for? Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am up awfully early to-day.

TESMAN. And I, who felt so certain you would be still in bed and asleep! Fancy, Hedda!

HEDDA. Don't talk so loud. Mrs. Elvsted is lying in my room.

TESMAN. Has Mrs. Elvsted been here all night?

HEDDA. Yes, nobody came to fetch her.

TESMAN. No, nobody did.

HEDDA *(shuts the stove-door and rises).* Well, did you amuse yourself at the Judge's?

TESMAN. Have you been anxious about me? Eh?

HEDDA. No, it never occurred to me to be that. But I asked you whether you had amused yourself.

TESMAN. Yes, tolerably. For once. But most at the beginning, I think now. Because then Ejlert read aloud to me. We arrived an hour too soon—fancy! And Brack had so many things to arrange. But then Ejlert read.

HEDDA. Really? Let me hear.

TESMAN *(sits down on an ottoman by the stove).* No, Hedda, you could never believe what a book it is! It is certainly one of the most astonishing things that have been written. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I don't care about that.

TESMAN. I will tell you one thing, Hedda. When he had finished reading—something ugly came over me.

HEDDA. Something ugly?

TESMAN. I sat and envied Ejlert, for having been able to write like that. Fancy that, Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I can understand that.

TESMAN. And then, you know, with all the talent that he has, unfortunately he is utterly irreclaimable all the same.

HEDDA. You mean, I suppose, that he has more of the courage of life than the others?

TESMAN. Good Lord, no! He can scarcely preserve any moderation in his pleasures, you see.

HEDDA. And what came of it all—at last?

TESMAN. Well, I almost think that it might have been called a bacchanalian orgy, Hedda.

HEDDA. Had he vine-leaves in his hair?

TESMAN. Vine-leaves? No, I did not see anything of that sort. But he kept up a long, confused story about the woman who had inspired him in his work. Yes, that was how he expressed himself.

HEDDA. Did he name her?

TESMAN. No, he did not do that. But I can't help thinking that it must be Mrs. Elvsted. Do you agree?

HEDDA. Well, where did you leave him?

TESMAN. On the way back. We broke up—the last of us—at the same time. And Brack walked with us to get a little fresh air. And then, you see, we all agreed to take Ejlert home. Yes, for he was completely overcome.

HEDDA. He was?

TESMAN. But now for the most extraordinary part of it, Hedda! Or the sad part, I ought to say. Oh!—I am almost ashamed—for Ejlert's sake—to tell you about it.

HEDDA. Well? Well?

TESMAN. While coming back, you see, I was by accident a little behind the others. Merely for a minute or two, fancy!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, Good God! But——

TESMAN. And when I was hurrying after the others what do you think I found at the corner of the road? Eh?

HEDDA. No, how can I possibly tell!

TESMAN. Be sure you don't tell anybody, Hedda. Do you hear? Promise me that, for Ejlert's sake. *(Takes a packet wrapped in paper out of his coat pocket)* Fancy—I found this.

HEDDA. Is not that the packet which he had with him when he was here yesterday?

TESMAN. Yes, it is the whole of his precious, irreparable manuscript! And that he had gone and dropped without having noticed it. Just fancy that, Hedda! So sad!

HEDDA. But why did you not give him back the parcel at once?

TESMAN. No, I dared not do that—in the condition in which he was.

HEDDA. Did you not tell any of the others that you had found it, either?

TESMAN. Oh, no, indeed. You may be sure I never would do that, for Ejlert's sake.

HEDDA. So that nobody knows that you have Ejlert Lövborg's papers?

TESMAN. No. And nobody must know either.

HEDDA. What have you said to him since?

TESMAN. I had no more conversation whatever with him. For when we came into the streets he and one or two others went quite away from us. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Ah! Then they must have taken him home.

TESMAN. Yes, they were going to do that. And Brack went back to his own house.

HEDDA. And where have you been racketing since then?

TESMAN. Well, I and some of the others we went up to the rooms of one of these jolly chaps and had an early cup of coffee with him. Or a very late cup of coffee it might more properly be called. Eh? But when I have rested a little—and when I can suppose that Ejlert, poor fellow, has had his sleep out, I must go over to his place to take this back to him.

HEDDA. No, don't give it from yourself. Not at once, I mean. Let me read it first.

TESMAN. No, dear darling Hedda, I really dare not do that.

HEDDA. Do you not dare?

TESMAN. No, for you can well imagine how perfectly in despair he will be when he wakens and misses the manuscript. For he has no copy of it, you must know! He said so himself.

HEDDA *(looks searchingly at him).* Can't a thing of that kind, then, be written over again? Once more?

TESMAN. No, I don't believe that would ever answer. For the inspiration—you see—

HEDDA. Yes, yes—of course there is that. *(Rejecting the idea)* But by the way, there is a letter here for you.

TESMAN. No, fancy that!

HEDDA *(hands him the letter).* It came early this morning.

TESMAN. From Aunt Julie! What can it be? *(Puts the packet of MS. on the other ottoman, opens the letter, runs through it and jumps up)* Oh, Hedda, she writes to say that poor Aunt Rina is dying!

HEDDA. Well, that was to be expected.

TESMAN. And that if I wish to see her once again I must make haste. I will rush off to them at once.

HEDDA *(suppresses a smile).* Must you *rush?*

TESMAN. Oh, dearest Hedda, if you only could make up your mind to come with me! Do!

HEDDA *(rises and says wearily).* No, no, don't ask me to do such a thing.

I don't want to look upon disease and death. Let me be kept from everything that is ugly.

TESMAN. Yes, good Lord, then——! *(Walks about)* My hat?—my overcoat? Ah! in the hall. I do hope that I shall not arrive too late, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. Well, then rush——!

BERTHA. Mr. Justice Brack is outside asking if he may come in.

TESMAN. At this hour! No, I cannot possibly receive him.

HEDDA. But I can. *(To* BERTHA) Show Mr. Brack in. (BERTHA *goes)*

HEDDA *(rapidly, whispering).* The packet, Tesman! *(She snatches it from the ottoman)*

TESMAN. Yes, give it me!

HEDDA. No, no, I will hide it till you come back. *(She goes up to the writing-table and pushes it into the book-case.* TESMAN *fidgets about and cannot get his gloves on)*

(JUDGE BRACK *enters from the hall)*

HEDDA *(nods to him).* Well, you *are* an early bird.

BRACK. Yes, don't you think so? *(To* TESMAN) Are you going out, then?

TESMAN. Yes, it is absolutely necessary I should go over to my aunts'. Fancy! the sick one is dying, poor thing.

BRACK. Oh, dear me, is she really? But in that case you must not let me detain you. At such a serious moment——

TESMAN. Yes, I must really run. Good-by, good-by! *(He hurries out through the hall-door)*

HEDDA. It must have been more than lively at your house last night, Mr. Brack.

BRACK. I have not got out of my clothes, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Haven't you really?

BRACK. No, as you see. But how much has Tesman told you of the night's festivities?

HEDDA. Oh, some tiresome stuff. Merely that he had been up somewhere drinking coffee.

BRACK. I have heard all about that coffee-drinking. Ejlert Lövborg was not of the party, I believe?

HEDDA. No, they had already taken him home.

BRACK. Tesman as well?

HEDDA. No, but some of the others, he said.

BRACK *(smiles).* George Tesman is really an innocent creature, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Oh, my goodness, I should think he was. But is there any mystery in it, then?

BRACK. Yes, there is to a certain extent.

HEDDA. Really! Let us sit down, dear Judge. Then you will talk more comfortably. *(She sits at the left side of the table.* BRACK *close to her)*

HEDDA. Well! now what is it?

BRACK. I had particular reasons for tracking my guests—or, more properly, a portion of my guests last night.

HEDDA. And was Ejlert Lövborg one of them?

BRACK. I must confess that he was.

HEDDA. Now you are making me fearfully inquisitive.

BRACK. Do you know where he and some of the others spent the rest of the night, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. If you are going to tell me, tell me.

BRACK. Dear me, it can be very well told. Yes, they took part in a singularly animated *soirée.*

HEDDA. Of the lively kind?

BRACK. Of the liveliest conceivable.

HEDDA. Let me know a little more about it, Judge.

BRACK. Lövborg had received an invitation beforehand, he too. I knew all about that. But then he had declined to come. For now, as you know, he has become a reformed character.

HEDDA. Up at Sheriff Elvsted's, yes. But then he did go, after all?

BRACK. Yes, you see, Mrs. Hedda, unfortunately the spirit came upon him last evening up at my house——

HEDDA. Yes, I hear he became very inspired.

BRACK. Inspired to a somewhat violent degree. Well, he changed his mind, I suppose. For we men, we are unfortunately not so firm in our principles as we ought to be.

HEDDA. Oh, I am sure you are an exception, Mr. Brack. But now about Lövborg——

BRACK. Well, to make a long story short, he found a haven at last in Miss Diana's parlors.

HEDDA. Miss Diana's?

BRACK. It was Miss Diana who gave the party. To a select circle of admirers and female friends.

HEDDA. Is she a red-haired girl?

BRACK. Just so.

HEDDA. Such a sort of opera-singer?

BRACK. Oh, yes—that as well. And with it all a mighty huntress—after the gentlemen—Mrs. Hedda. You must have heard of her. Ejlert Lövborg was one of her warmest protectors in his influential days.

HEDDA. And how did all this end?

BRACK. Not quite so amiably, I must confess. Miss Diana passed from the tenderest greetings to mere loggerheads——

HEDDA. Toward Lövborg?

BRACK. Yes. He accused her or her friends of having robbed him. He declared that his pocket-book was gone. And other things, too. In short, he made a horrible spectacle of himself.

HEDDA. And what did that lead to?

BRACK. That led to a general rumpus between all the ladies and gentlemen. Happily, the police came up at last.

HEDDA. What, did the police come?

BRACK. Yes. But it was a costly joke for that mad fellow, Ejlert Lövborg.

HEDDA. How?

BRACK. He made a violent resistance. Then he struck one of the constables in the ear, and tore his coat to pieces. So then he was walked off to the police-station.

HEDDA. How do you know all this?

BRACK. From the police themselves.

HEDDA *(looks before her).* So that is how it has all happened. Then he did not have vine-leaves in his hair?

BRACK. Vine-leaves, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA *(changes her tone).* But now, tell me, Judge, why, really, do you go about in this way, tracking and spying after Ejlert Lövborg?

BRACK. In the first place, it can be no matter of indifference to me that when it comes before the magistrates, it should appear that he came straight from my house.

HEDDA. Then it will come before the magistrates?

BRACK. Of course. Besides, whatever my reason may have been, I thought that it was only my duty, as a friend of the house, to let you and Tesman have a full account of his nocturnal exploits.

HEDDA. But precisely why, Mr. Brack?

BRACK. Well, because I have a lively suspicion that he will use you as a sort of screen.

HEDDA. No, but how can you think of such a thing?

BRACK. Oh, good Lord, we are not blind, Mrs. Hedda. Just look here! This Mrs. Elvsted, she is in no hurry to leave town.

HEDDA. Well, if there was anything between those two, there are many other places where they can meet.

BRACK. No family. Every respectable house will from this time forth be closed to Ejlert Lövborg.

HEDDA. And so ought mine to be, you think?

BRACK. Yes. I confess that it will be more than distressing for me if this gentleman fixes himself here. If he, as a superfluous and an irrelevant element should force himself into——

HEDDA. Into the triple alliance?

BRACK. Just so. It would be the same for me as being homeless.

HEDDA. So, to be sole cock of the walk, that is your object?

BRACK *(nods slowly and lowers his voice).* Yes, that is my object. And that object I will fight for with all the means I have at my disposal.

HEDDA *(while her smile fades away).* You are certainly a dangerous person, when it comes to the point.

BRACK. Do you think so?

HEDDA. Yes, I begin to think so now. And I am glad of it with all my heart—so long as you do not in any way get a hold over me.

BRACK *(laughs ambiguously).* Yes, yes, Mrs. Hedda, you are perhaps right about that. Who knows whether I may not be man enough to get such a hold.

HEDDA. No, but listen to me, Mr. Brack! It is almost as though you were sitting there and threatening me.

BRACK *(rises).* Oh, far from it! The triple alliance you see is best confirmed and defended by voluntary action.

HEDDA. That is my opinion, too.

BRACK. Yes, and now I have said what I wanted to say, and I must be getting back. Good-by, Mrs. Hedda. *(He goes to the glass door)*

HEDDA. Are you going through the garden?

BRACK. Yes, it is the nearer way for me.

HEDDA. Yes, and then it is the back way too.

BRACK. Very true. I have no objection to back ways. At the proper moment they may be piquant enough.

HEDDA. When there is firing with shot going on.

BRACK *(in the door, laughs to her).* Oh! one does not shoot one's domestic fowls!

HEDDA *(laughs also).* Oh, no! if one has not more than the one, then——

(They nod, as they laugh, and say good-by. He goes. She shuts the door after him. HEDDA *stands for a while, gravely, and looks out. Then she goes and peeps in through the curtains to the back room. Then goes to the writing-table, takes* LÖVBORG'S *packet down from the book-case, and begins to turn the pages.* BERTHA'S *voice is heard loud in the hall.* HEDDA *turns and listens. Then rapidly locks the packet up in the drawer and puts the key in the plate of the inkstand.* EJLERT LÖVBORG, *with his overcoat on and his hat in his hand, bursts the hall-door open. He looks somewhat confused and excited)*

LÖVBORG *(turning toward the hall).* And I tell you I must and I will go in! There! *(He shuts the door, turns, sees* HEDDA; *he immediately regains his self-command and bows)*

HEDDA *(at the writing-table).* Well, Mr. Lövborg, you are pretty late in coming to fetch Thea.

LÖVBORG. Or else it is pretty early to be calling on you. I hope you will excuse me.

HEDDA. How do you know she is still here?

LÖVBORG. They told me at her lodgings that she had been out all night.

HEDDA *(crosses to the drawing-room table).* Did you notice how the people looked when they said that?

LÖVBORG *(looks inquiringly at her).* How the people looked?

HEDDA. I mean whether they seemed to think it was odd?

LÖVBORG *(suddenly comprehending).* Oh, yes, that is quite true! I drag her down with me! At the same time I did not notice anything. Has Tesman not got up yet?

HEDDA. No, I don't think so.

LÖVBORG. When did he get home?

HEDDA. Awfully late.

LÖVBORG. Did he tell you anything?

HEDDA. Yes, I heard that you had had a very jolly time at Mr. Brack's.

LÖVBORG. Nothing else?

HEDDA. No, I don't think so. Besides I was so fearfully sleepy.

(MRS. ELVSTED *comes in through the curtains in the background)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(goes toward him).* Ah, Lövborg! At last——!

LÖVBORG. Yes, at last! And too late!

MRS. ELVSTED *(sees the anguish in his face).* What is too late?

LÖVBORG. All is too late now. It is all over with me.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, no, no—don't say that!

LÖVBORG. You will say it yourself, when you have heard—

MRS. ELVSTED. I will hear nothing!

HEDDA. Perhaps you would like best to talk to her alone? If so, I'll go.

LÖVBORG. No, stay—you too. I beg you to stay.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I don't wish to hear anything, I tell you.

LÖVBORG. It is not last night's adventures that I wish to speak about.

MRS. ELVSTED. What is it, then?

LÖVBORG. It is about this—that our paths must now be parted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Parted?

HEDDA *(involuntarily).* I knew it!

LÖVBORG. For I have no more use for you, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. And you can stand here and say that! No more use for me! Can't I help you just as I did before? Can't we go on working together?

LÖVBORG. I don't mean to do any work after to-day.

MRS. ELVSTED *(in despair).* Then what shall I do with my life?

LÖVBORG. You must try to live your life as if you had never known me.

MRS. ELVSTED. But I cannot do that!

LÖVBORG. Try whether you can, Thea. You must go home again.

MRS. ELVSTED *(in agitation).* Never in this world! Where are you, there will I also be! I will not allow myself to be hunted away like that! I will stay here where I am! Be with you, when the book comes out.

HEDDA *(aside, in suspense).* Ah! the book—yes!

LÖVBORG *(looks at her).* My book and Thea's. For that's what it is.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. I feel it is that. And therefore I have a right to be with you when it comes out! I wish to see to it that esteem and honor are poured out over you again. And the joy—the joy, that I will share with you.

LÖVBORG. Thea—our book will never come out.

HEDDA. Ah!

MRS. ELVSTED. Never come out?

LÖVBORG. Can never come out.

MRS. ELVSTED *(in agonized foreboding).* Lövborg—what have you done with the sheets?

HEDDA *(looks excitedly at him).* Yes, the sheets——?

MRS. ELVSTED. Where have you put them?

LÖVBORG. Oh, Thea—don't ask me that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I will know. I have a right to be told at once.

LÖVBORG. The sheets! Well then—the sheets, I have torn them into a thousand fragments.

MRS. ELVSTED *(screams).* Oh, no, no——!

HEDDA *(involuntarily).* But it is not——

LÖVBORG *(looks at her).* Not true, do you think?

HEDDA *(recovers herself).* Yes, indeed. Of course. When you yourself say it. But it sounded so improbable.

LÖVBORG. True all the same.

MRS. ELVSTED *(wrings her hands).* Oh, God! Oh, God! Hedda—torn his own work to pieces.

LÖVBORG. I have torn my own life to pieces. So that I might as well tear my life's work to pieces too——

MRS. ELVSTED. And did you do that last night?

LÖVBORG. Yes, I tell you! Into a thousand pieces. And scattered them on the fjord. Far out! There is, in any case, fresh salt water there. Let them drift out into it. Drift in the tide and wind. And then in a little while they sink. Deeper and deeper. As I am doing, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Do you know, Lövborg, that this about the book—all my life it will present itself to me, as if you had killed a little child.

LÖVBORG. You are right in that. It is a sort of infanticide.

MRS. ELVSTED. But how could you then——? I had my part, too, in the child.

HEDDA *(almost inaudible).* Ah, the child——

MRS. ELVSTED *(breathing heavily).* It's all over. Yes, yes, now I am going, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you are not going away from town?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh! I don't know myself what I shall do. Everything is dark before me now. *(She goes out through the hall door)*

HEDDA *(stands and waits a little).* You are not going to go home with her, then, Lövborg?

LÖVBORG. I? Through the streets? Do you suppose people ought to see her walking with me?

HEDDA. I don't know what else happened last night. But is it so absolutely irretrievable?

LÖVBORG. It is not merely last night. I know that perfectly well. But it is *this,* that I don't want to live that kind of life either. Not now over again. It is the courage of life and the defiance of life that she has snapped in me.

HEDDA *(looking in front of her).* The sweet little simpleton has had her fingers in the destinies of a man. *(Looks at him)* But how could you be so heartless to her, all the same?

LÖVBORG. Oh, don't say that it was heartless!

HEDDA. Go and destroy what has filled her thoughts for such a long, long time! You don't call that heartless?

LÖVBORG. To you I can speak the truth, Hedda.

HEDDA. The truth?

LÖVBORG. Promise me first—give me your word upon it, that what I now confide to you, you will never let Thea know.

HEDDA. You have my word upon it.

LÖVBORG. Good. Then I will tell you that that was not true which I stood here and declared.

HEDDA. That about the sheets?

LÖVBORG. Yes. I have not torn them into fragments. I have not thrown them into the fjord either.

HEDDA. No, no—But—where are they, then?

LÖVBORG. I have destroyed them all the same! To all intents and purposes, Hedda.

HEDDA. I don't understand that.

LÖVBORG. Thea said that what I had done was the same to her as murdering a child.

HEDDA. Yes, that's what she said.

LÖVBORG. But, to kill one's child—that is not the worst thing you can do to it.

HEDDA. *That* not the worst?

LÖVBORG. No. That is the worse which I wished to shield Thea from hearing about.

HEDDA. And what then is this worst?

LÖVBORG. Suppose now, Hedda, that a man—about such an hour in the morning as this—after a wild night of carouse, came home to the mother

of his child and said: Listen—I have been here and there. In this place and that place. And I have taken your child with me. To this place and that place. I have lost the child. Utterly lost it. The Devil knows into whose hands it has fallen. Who may have had their fingers in it.

HEDDA. Ah! but, after all—this was nothing more than a book——

LÖVBORG. The pure soul of Thea was in that book.

HEDDA. Yes, I understand that.

LÖVBORG. And therefore you understand also that between her and me there is no future henceforward.

HEDDA. And which way will you go?

LÖVBORG. No way. Merely see how I can make an end altogether. The sooner the better.

HEDDA *(a step nearer).* Ejlert Lövborg—now listen to me. Could you not contrive—that it should be done beautifully?

LÖVBORG. Beautifully? *(Smiles)* With vine-leaves in my hair, as you used to fancy——

HEDDA. Oh, no! The vine-leaf—I don't think anything more about that! But, beautifully, all the same! Just for once—Good-by! You must go now. And don't come here any more.

LÖVBORG. Good-by, Mrs. Tesman. And give a message to George Tesman from me. *(He is going)*

HEDDA. No, wait! You shall take with you a keepsake from me. *(She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and pistol-case. Comes back to Lövborg with one of the pistols)*

LÖVBORG *(looking at her).* This? Is *this* the keepsake?

HEDDA *(nods slowly).* Do you recollect it? It was aimed at you once.

LÖVBORG. You should have used it then.

HEDDA. Look here! *You* use it now.

LÖVBORG *(puts the pistol into his breast pocket).* Thanks!

HEDDA. And do it beautifully, Ejlert Lövborg. Only promise me that!

LÖVBORG. Good-by, Hedda Gabler.

(He goes out through the hall door. She then goes to the writing-table and takes out the packet with the manuscript, peeps into the envelope, pulls one or two of the leaves half out, and glances at them. She then takes the whole of it and sits down in the arm-chair by the stove. She holds the packet in her lap. After a pause, she opens the door of the stove, and then the packet also)

HEDDA *(throws one of the sheets into the fire and whispers to herself).* Now I am burning your child, Thea! You with your curly hair! *(Throws several sheets into the fire)* Your child and Ejlert Lövborg's child. *(Throws the rest in)* Now I am burning—am burning the child.

ACT IV

Same room at TESMAN'S. *It is evening. The drawing-room is in darkness. The back-room is lighted up by the chandelier over the table. The curtains in front of the glass door are drawn.*

HEDDA, *in black, goes to and fro over the floor in the darkened room. Then she passes into the back-room, and crosses over to the left side. There are heard some chords on the piano. Then she comes in again and enters the drawing-room.* BERTHA *comes from the left, through the back-room, with a lighted lamp, which she puts on the table in front of the settee in the drawing-room. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribands in her cap. She walks quietly and carefully out to the left.* HEDDA *goes to the glass door, moves the curtain a little to one side, and looks out into the darkness. Soon after,* MISS TESMAN *arrives, in black, with hat and veil on, in from the hall.* HEDDA *goes toward her with her hands outstretched.*

MISS TESMAN. Yes, Hedda, I come in the colors of sorrow. For at last my poor sister has found rest.

HEDDA. I know it already, as you see. Tesman sent me a card.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, he promised me he would. But I thought, all the same, that to Hedda, here—in the house of life—I ought myself to be the herald of death.

HEDDA. That was very kind of you.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, Rina ought not to have left us just *now*. Hedda's house ought not to be weighed down with grief at such a time as this.

HEDDA *(diverting her).* She died very quietly, didn't she, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, so exquisitely—so peacefully she departed. And then, the unspeakable joy that she saw George once more, and was able really to say good-by to him! Has he not come home yet?

HEDDA. No. He wrote that I must not expect him at once. But do sit down.

MISS TESMAN. No, thanks, dear, blessed Hedda! I should so like to. But I have so little time. Now I have to lay her out and adorn her as well as I can. She shall go down to her grave looking really nice.

HEDDA. Can't I help you with anything?

MISS TESMAN. Oh! don't you think of that! Hedda Tesman must not touch such work! Nor let her thoughts fasten upon it either. Not at this time, no!

HEDDA. Oh! one's thoughts—they don't obey such masters——

MISS TESMAN *(continuing).* Yes, dear Lord, that is how the world goes. At home with me we must now be sewing linen for Rina. And here there will soon be seen sewing too, I can very well imagine. But that will be of another sort, that will, thank God!

(GEORGE TESMAN *enters through the hall-door)*

HEDDA. Well, that is a good thing, you have come at last.

TESMAN. Are you here, Aunt Julie? With Hedda? Fancy that!

MISS TESMAN. I was just going away, my dear boy. Well, have you arranged everything as you promised me?

TESMAN. No, I am really afraid I have forgotten half of it, dear. I shall rush over to you again to-morrow. For to-day my head seems absolutely bewildered. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TESMAN. But, dear George, you must not take it in this way.

TESMAN. What? How do you mean?

MISS TESMAN. You must rejoice even in grief. Glad for what has happened. As I am.

TESMAN. Oh! yes, yes. You are thinking about Aunt Rina.

HEDDA. It will be lonesome for you now, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. The first few days, yes. But that won't last very long; dear Rina's little room will not always be empty, that I know.

TESMAN. Indeed? Who is going to move into it? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, there is always some poor invalid or other, who needs to be looked after and tended, unfortunately.

HEDDA. Will you really take such a burden upon you?

MISS TESMAN. Burden? God forgive you, child, that has never been a burden to me.

HEDDA. But now if a stranger should come, then surely——

MISS TESMAN. Oh! one soon becomes friends with sick people. And I haven't any such great need to have anyone to live for, either. No, God be praised and thanked—here in the house there will be this and that going on that an old aunt may have a hand in.

HEDDA. Oh, don't speak about our house.

TESMAN. Yes, fancy, what a lovely time we three can have together, if——

HEDDA. If——?

TESMAN *(unquiet).* Oh, nothing. That will arrange itself all right. Let us hope so. Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes. You two have something to chat about, I can well understand. *(Smiles)* And Hedda has also something to tell you, perhaps, George. Good-by! Now I must go home to Rina. *(Turns at the door)* Goodness, how strange it is to think that Rina is at home with me and is with poor Jochum as well!

TESMAN. Yes, fancy that, Aunt Julie! Eh?

(MISS TESMAN *goes out through the hall-door)*

HEDDA *(follows* TESMAN *coldly and critically with her eyes).* I almost think that the death upsets you more than it does her.

TESMAN. Oh, it is not the death alone. It is Ejlert whom I am so uneasy about.

HEDDA *(quickly).* Is there anything new about him?

TESMAN. I wanted to run up and tell him this afternoon that the manuscript was in safe-keeping.

HEDDA. Well? Did you not find him?

TESMAN. No. He was not at home. But afterward I met Mrs. Elvsted, and she told me he had been here early this morning.

HEDDA. Yes, directly after you went.

TESMAN. And he had said that he had torn his manuscript to bits. Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, that's what he declared.

TESMAN. Well, but he must have been completely out of his mind. And then did you not give it back to him either, Hedda?

HEDDA. No, he did not get it.

TESMAN. But you told him that we had it?

HEDDA. No. *(Quickly)* Did you tell Mrs. Elvsted?

TESMAN. No, I would not do that. But you ought to have told him himself. Fancy if, in despair, he should go away and do himself an injury! Let me have the manuscript, Hedda! I will rush round with it to him at once. Where is the package?

HEDDA *(cold and immovable, supported by the arm-chair)* I haven't got it any longer.

TESMAN. Haven't got it? What in the world do you mean?

HEDDA. I have burned it all up—the whole of it.

TESMAN *(breaks into a shriek).* Burned! Burned, Ejlert's manuscript!

HEDDA. Don't shriek so. The servant might hear you.

TESMAN. Burned! But, good God——! No, no, no—this is absolutely impossible.

HEDDA. Well, it is so, anyhow.

TESMAN. But do you know what you have been doing, Hedda? It is an illegal proceeding with goods found. Think of that! Yes, if you only ask Judge Brack, he will tell you what it is.

HEDDA. It is certainly best that you should say nothing about it, neither to the Judge nor to anyone else.

TESMAN. Yes, but how could you go and do anything so monstrous? How could such a thing come into your mind? How could it occur to you? Answer me that. Eh?

HEDDA *(suppresses an almost imperceptible smile).* I did it for your sake, George.

TESMAN. For my sake!

HEDDA. When you came home yesterday and said that he had been reading aloud to you——

TESMAN. Yes, yes, well?

HEDDA. Then you acknowledged that you envied him the work.

TESMAN. Oh, my goodness, I didn't mean that literally.

HEDDA. All the same, I could not bear the idea that anyone else should put you into the shade.

TESMAN *(in an outburst between doubt and joy).* Hedda, oh! is that the truth you are saying! Yes, but—yes, but—I never noticed that your love took that form before. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, it is best that you should know—that just at this time—*(Breaks off)* No, no—you can ask Aunt Julie for yourself. She will give you information enough.

TESMAN. Oh, I almost believe that I understand you, Hedda! *(Clasps his hands together)* No, good lord, is *that* possible! Eh?

HEDDA. Don't shout so. The servant might hear.

TESMAN *(laughing in excess of joy).* The servant! No, you really are fun, Hedda! The servant—is just Bertha! I will go out and tell Bertha myself.

HEDDA *(wrings her hands as if in despair).* Oh, it's killing me, it's killing me, all this!

TESMAN. What is, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA *(coldly, in self-command).* All this ridiculous nonsense, George.

TESMAN. Ridiculous? That I am so intensely happy! But at the same time—perhaps it is not worth while that I should say anything to Bertha.

HEDDA. Oh, no, why should you not do so?

TESMAN. No, no, not yet. But Aunt Julie must undoubtedly be told. And then, that you begin to call me George as well! Fancy that! Oh, Aunt Julie, she will be so happy, so happy!

HEDDA. When she hears that I have burned Ejlert Lövborg's papers for your sake?

TESMAN. No, that's true too! That affair with the papers, of course nobody must know about that. But that you burned for me, Hedda—Aunt Julie must really have her share in that! But now I should like to know whether that sort of thing is usual with young wives? Eh?

HEDDA. You ought to ask Aunt Julie about *that* too, it seems to me.

TESMAN. Yes, I really will do so when I have an opportunity. *(Looks uneasy and pensive again)* No, but—no, but the manuscript then! Good lord, it is frightful to think of poor Ejlert, all the same.

(MRS. ELVSTED, *dressed as during her first visit, with hat and mantle, comes in through the hall-door)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(greets them hurriedly and says, with agitation).* Oh, dear Hedda, don't be angry with me for coming again.

HEDDA. What has happened to you, Thea?

TESMAN. Is there anything wrong again with Ejlert Lövborg? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, yes—I am so dreadfully afraid that a misfortune has happened to him.

HEDDA *(seizes her arm).* Ah!—do you think so?

TESMAN. No, but good lord—how can you imagine such a thing, Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, for I heard them talking about him in the *pension,* just as I came in. Oh, the most hideous rumors about him are going around the town to-day.

TESMAN. Yes, fancy, I heard that too! And I can bear witness that he walked straight home and went to bed. Fancy!

HEDDA. Well, what did they say in the *pension?*

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh! I could not get any clear account. Either they knew nothing exact, or else—They stopped talking when they saw me. And I did not dare to ask.

TESMAN *(uneasily about the floor).* We must hope—we must hope that you heard wrong, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, I am certain that it was him they were talking about. And then I heard them say something about the hospital or——

TESMAN. The hospital!

HEDDA. No—that is quite impossible!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I was so deadly frightened about him. And then I went up to his lodgings and asked for him there.

HEDDA. *Could* you persuade yourself to do that, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, what else could I do? For it did not seem to me that I could endure the uncertainty any longer.

TESMAN. But you did not find him, even there? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And the people knew nothing about his movements. He had not been home since yesterday afternoon, they said.

TESMAN. Yesterday! Fancy their saying that!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I think that nothing else is possible but that something wrong must have happened to him!

TESMAN. What do you say, Hedda—to my going and making inquiries at various places——

HEDDA. No, no—don't you mix yourself up in this affair.

(JUDGE BRACK, *with his hat in his hand, comes in through the hall-door, which* BERTHA *opens and closes behind him. He looks grave, and bows in silence)*

TESMAN. Oh, is that you, dear Judge? Eh?

BRACK. Yes, of course I felt obliged to come to you this evening.

TESMAN. I can see that you have had a message from Aunt Julie.

BRACK. Yes, I have.

TESMAN. Isn't it sad? Eh?

BRACK. Well, dear Tesman, that depends on the way in which one takes it.

TESMAN *(looks inquiringly at him).* Has anything else happened?

BRACK. Yes, there has.

HEDDA *(eagerly).* Anything distressing, Mr. Brack?

BRACK. Again, that depends on how one takes it, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED *(in an involuntary outburst)*. Oh! it has something to do with Ejlert Lövborg!

BRACK *(looks slightly at her)*. What makes you think that, madame? Perhaps you already know something?

MRS. ELVSTED *(distracted)*. No, no, I don't in any way; but——

TESMAN. But, good gracious, do tell us what it is!

BRACK. Well, unhappily, Ejlert Lövborg has been taken to the hospital. He lies there at the point of death.

MRS. ELVSTED *(shrieks)*. O God! O God!

TESMAN. To the hospital! And at the point of death!

HEDDA *(involuntarily)*. So quickly too!

MRS. ELVSTED *(wailing)*. And we, who parted in anger, Hedda!

HEDDA *(whispers)*. But Thea—Thea there!

MRS. ELVSTED *(paying no attention to her)*. I must go to him. I must see him alive!

BRACK. It is of no use, madame. No one may see him.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, but only tell me, what has happened to him? What is it?

TESMAN. Yes, you don't mean to say that he has—himself—Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am certain that he has.

TESMAN. Hedda, how can you know?

BRACK *(keeps his eyes fixed upon her)*. Perhaps you have guessed quite correctly, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how horrible!

TESMAN. Himself too! Fancy that!

HEDDA. Shot himself!

BRACK. Guessed right again, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED *(tries to be calm)*. When did it happen, Mr. Brack?

BRACK. This afternoon, between three and four.

TESMAN. But, good lord—where did he do it, then! Eh?

BRACK *(a little hesitating)*. Where? Yes, my dear Tesman—he must have done it in his own lodgings.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, that can't be right. For I was there between six and seven.

BRACK. Well, then somewhere else. I don't exactly know. I only know he was found—He had shot himself—through the breast.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how terrible to think of! That he should come to such an end.

HEDDA *(to* BRACK). Was it through the breast?

BRACK. Yes, as I say.

HEDDA. Then not through the temple?

BRACK. Through the breast, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA. Yes, yes—the breast is also a good place.

BRACK. What, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA *(evasively)*. Oh, no, nothing.

TESMAN. And the wound is dangerous, you say? Eh?

BRACK. The wound is absolutely mortal. It is probably all over with him by this time.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I have a foreboding! It is all over! All over! Oh, Hedda—!

TESMAN. But tell me—where did you learn all this?

BRACK *(shortly)*. Through one of the police. One whom I had to speak to.

HEDDA *(half aloud)*. At last a positive act!

TESMAN *(terrified)*. God save us—Hedda, what are you saying?

HEDDA. I say that there is something beautiful in this.

BRACK. Hum, Mrs. Tesman—

TESMAN. Beautiful. No, fancy that!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, Hedda, how can you talk about beauty in such a matter?

HEDDA. Ejlert Lövborg has settled the account with himself. He has had the courage to do what—what had to be done.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, never believe that that is what has happened. What he has done, he has done in his delirium.

TESMAN. In despair he has done it!

HEDDA. That he has not. I am certain of that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, he has! In delirium! Just as when he tore our sheets to fragments.

BRACK *(starting)*. The sheets? The manuscript, do you mean? Has he torn that into fragments?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, he did that last night.

TESMAN *(whispers softly)*. Oh, Hedda, we shall never get clear of this.

BRACK. H'm, that was extraordinary.

TESMAN *(crosses the floor)*. Only to think of Ejlert's going out of the world in this way! And not to leave behind him what would have given such a lasting reputation to his name—

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if it only could be put together again!

TESMAN. Yes, think, if it only could! I don't know what I would give—

MRS. ELVSTED. Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.

TESMAN. What do you mean?

MRS. ELVSTED *(searches in the pocket of her mantle)*. Look here. I hid the loose scraps which he used when he dictated.

HEDDA *(a step closer)*. Ah—!

TESMAN. You have kept them, Mrs. Elvsted? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I have them here, I took them with me when I left home. And they have been lying here in my pocket——

TESMAN. Oh, do just let me see them!

MRS. ELVSTED *(passes him a bundle of small pages).* But they are in such disorder! All higgledy-piggledy.

TESMAN. Fancy, if we could only arrange them. Perhaps if we two set our heads together——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, let us try, at all events.

TESMAN. It *shall* come right! It must come right! I will dedicate my life to this task!

HEDDA. You, George? Your life?

TESMAN. Yes, or more properly speaking, all the time I can spare. Lord, there is no use in wailing over what has happened. Eh? We will try to quiet ourselves down as much as possible and——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, Mr. Tesman, I will do the best I can.

TESMAN. Well, then come here. We must see about the notices at once. Where shall we sit? Here? No, in there in the back-room. Excuse us, my dear Brack! Come with me, then, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, God—if it only might be possible!

(TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *come into the back-room. She takes off her hat and mantle. They both sit down at the table under the chandelier, and become absorbed in an eager examination of the papers.* HEDDA *crosses to the stove and sits down in the arm-chair. A little later* BRACK *crosses to her)*

HEDDA *(in a low voice).* Oh, Judge—what a relief this is about Ejlert Lövborg.

BRACK. Relief, Mrs. Hedda? Yes, indeed, it is a relief for him——

HEDDA. I mean, for me. A relief to know that it is still possible for an act of voluntary courage to take place in this world. Some over which there falls a veil of unintentional beauty.

BRACK *(smiles).* H'm—dear Mrs. Hedda——

HEDDA. Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of professional person, you too, like—well!

BRACK *(looks firmly at her).* Ejlert Lövborg has been more to you than, perhaps, you are willing to admit to yourself. Or is that a mistake of mine?

HEDDA. I don't answer you such questions as that. I only know that Ejlert Lövborg has had the courage to live his life after his own fashion. And then now—the great act! That over which the sense of beauty falls! That he had force and will enough to break away from the banquet of life—so early.

BRACK. I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda—but I am obliged to destroy this pretty piece of imagination of yours.

HEDDA. Imagination?

BRACK. Which in any case you would soon abandon for yourself.

HEDDA. And what is it then?

BRACK. He has not shot himself—voluntarily.

HEDDA. Not voluntarily?

BRACK. No. The affair about Ejlert Lövborg does not run on quite the same lines that I drew just now.

HEDDA *(excitedly)*. Have you concealed something? What is it?

BRACK. For poor Mrs. Elvsted's sake I used a few small circumlocutions.

HEDDA. What are they?

BRACK. First, that he is really already dead.

HEDDA. At the hospital?

BRACK. Yes. And without regaining consciousness.

HEDDA. What more have you concealed?

BRACK. This, that the event did not occur in his room.

HEDDA. Well, that is of no particular consequence.

BRACK. You are mistaken. For I have to tell you—Ejlert Lövborg was found shot in—in Miss Diana's boudoir.

HEDDA *(will jump up, but sinks back again)*. That is impossible, Mr. Brack! He cannot have been there again to-day!

BRACK. He was there this afternoon. He came to beg for something, he said, which had been taken away from him. Talked wildly about a child, that was lost—

HEDDA. Ah!

BRACK. I thought that perhaps it might be his manuscript. But that, I hear, he himself destroyed. So that it must have been the pocketbook.

HEDDA. Yes, no doubt. And there—so there he was found.

BRACK. Yes, there. With a discharged pistol in his breast pocket. The shot had been fatal.

HEDDA. In the breast—yes.

BRACK. No—it struck him in the abdomen.

HEDDA *(looks up at him with an expression of disgust)*. That too! Oh, what a curse of ridicule and of vulgarity hangs over everything that I merely touch.

BRACK. There is one point more, Mrs. Hedda. Something which also may be looked upon as rather squalid.

HEDDA. And what is that?

BRACK. The pistol which he carried—

HEDDA *(breathless)*. Well! What then?

BRACK. He must have stolen it.

HEDDA *(leaps up)*. Stolen! That is not true! He did not steal it!

BRACK. No other solution is possible. He *must* have stolen it. Hush!

(TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *have risen from the table in the back-room, and enter the drawing-room)*

TESMAN *(with the papers in both his hands).* Hedda, dear, it is hardly possible for me to see there under the chandelier. Think of that!

BRACK. Yes, I am thinking.

TESMAN. Would you mind our sitting for a little while at your writing-table? Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, as far as I am concerned. *(Rapidly)* Now, wait! Let me clear it first!

TESMAN. Oh, that doesn't matter at all, Hedda. There is plenty of room.

HEDDA. No, no, let me just clear it first, I say. Carry all these things in, and put them on the piano. There!

(She has pushed an object, covered with note-paper, under the bookcase, puts several other papers on, and carries the whole into the back-room. TESMAN *lays the scraps of manuscript on the writing-table and moves the lamp then from the corner table. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *sit down and proceed with their work.* HEDDA *returns)*

HEDDA *(behind* MRS. ELVSTED'S *chair, gently strokes her hair).* Well, my sweet Thea, how goes it with Ejlert Lövborg's monument?

MRS. ELVSTED *(looks dispiritedly up at her).* Oh, goodness, it will be awfully hard to make it all out.

TESMAN. It *must* be done. There is nothing else for it. And this, to set other people's papers in order, is just the work I am fitted for.

(HEDDA *goes over to the stove and seats herself on one of the ottomans.* BRACK *stands over her, leaning on the arm-chair)*

HEDDA *(whispers).* What was that you said about the pistol?

BRACK *(softly).* That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA. Why must he have stolen it?

BRACK. Because no other explanation can be possible, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Ah, really!

BRACK *(glances at her).* Ejlert Lövborg was here this morning, of course. Isn't that so?

HEDDA. Yes.

BRACK. Were you alone with him?

HEDDA. Yes, part of the time.

BRACK. Did you leave this room while he was here?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Just consider. Were you not out of the room a moment?

HEDDA. Yes, perhaps just a moment—out in the hall.

BRACK. And where was your pistol-case during that time?

HEDDA. I had that down in—

BRACK. Well, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. The case stood there away on the writing-table.

BRACK. Have you looked there since to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. There is no need. I saw the pistol Lövborg had carried. And I knew it again at once from yesterday. And from before that too.

HEDDA. Have you got it with you, perhaps?

BRACK. No, the police have it.

HEDDA. What will the police do with the pistol?

BRACK. Search till they find out who was the proprietor.

HEDDA. Do you think that that can be discovered?

BRACK *(bends over her and whispers).* No, Hedda Gabler—not so long as I hold my tongue.

HEDDA *(looks shyly at him).* And if you do *not* hold your tongue—what then?

BRACK *(shrugs his shoulders).* There is always the theory that the pistol was stolen.

HEDDA *(rapidly).* Rather die!

BRACK *(smiles).* That's what people *say.* But nobody *does* it.

HEDDA *(without replying).* And supposing that the pistol was not stolen, and the proprietor is discovered. What will happen then?

BRACK. Yes, Hedda—then the scandal comes.

HEDDA. The scandal—?

BRACK. Yes, the scandal, about which you are now in such a mortal terror. You will, of course, be brought into court. Both you and Miss Diana. She will have to explain what the whole matter was about. Whether it was an accidental shot or murder. Was he trying to take the pistol out of his pocket to fire at her? And then did the shot go off? Or did she tear the pistol out of his hand, shoot him, and then push the pistol back into his pocket? That would be quite like her. For she is a stout wench, this same Miss Diana.

HEDDA. But all this repulsive business does not affect *me.*

BRACK. No. But you will have to answer the question: Why did you give Ejlert Lövborg the pistol? And what conclusions will people form from the fact that you did give it to him?

HEDDA *(lets her head sink).* That is true. I did not think of that.

BRACK. Well, fortunately there is no danger, so long as I hold my tongue.

HEDDA *(looks up at him).* So I am in your power, Judge. You have me bound hand and foot from this time forward.

BRACK *(whispers softly).* Dearest Hedda—believe me—I shall not misuse my position.

HEDDA. All the same—entirely in your power. Subject to your desire and will. A slave. A slave, then! *(Rises impetuously)* No—I will not endure the thought of that! Never.

BRACK *(looks half-mockingly at her).* One gets used to the inevitable.

HEDDA *(returns his look).* Yes, perhaps. *(She crosses to the writing-table)*

HEDDA *(suppresses an involuntary smile and imitates* TESMAN'S *tone of voice)* Well? is it a success, George? Eh?

TESMAN. Lord knows, dear. In any case it will be the work of entire months.

HEDDA *(as before).* No, fancy that! *(Passes her hands softly through* MRS. ELVSTED'S *hair)* Is it not a strange thing, Thea? You are sitting here with Tesman just in the same way as you used to sit with Ejlert Lövborg.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, goodness, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way.

HEDDA. Oh, that will come—in time.

TESMAN. Yes, do you know, Hedda—it really does seem as if I was beginning to perceive something of that kind. But go and sit down again with Brack!

HEDDA. Is there nothing I can do here to make myself useful to you two?

TESMAN. No, nothing in the world. *(Turns his head)* For the rest of the evening *you* must be kind enough, dear Judge, to supply Hedda with society.

BRACK *(with a glance at* HEDDA). It will be an immense pleasure to me.

HEDDA. Thanks. But I am tired this evening. I will go in and lie down on the sofa a little.

TESMAN. Yes, do so, dear. Eh?

(HEDDA *goes into the back-room and draws the curtains to behind her. Short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance-music within on the piano)*

MRS. ELVSTED *(rises from her chair).* Ugh, what is that?

TESMAN *(runs to the doorway).* But, dearest Hedda—don't play dance-music this evening! Just think of Aunt Rina! And of Ejlert too!

HEDDA *(puts her head out between the curtains).* And of Aunt Julie. And of all the rest of them. I will be quiet after this. *(Closes the curtains again)*

TESMAN *(at the writing-table).* She does not like to see us at this distressing work. I tell you what, Mrs. Elvsted, you shall move in to Aunt Julie's, and then I shall be able to come up in the evenings. And then we can sit and work *there.* Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, perhaps that would be best——

HEDDA *(in the back-room).* I hear what you are saying, Tesman. But how am I to get through the evenings out here?

TESMAN *(turning over the papers).* Oh, Mr. Brack is so kind, that I have no doubt he will look after you.

BRACK *(in the arm-chair, shouts vivaciously).* Every blessed evening, with all my heart, Mrs. Tesman. We will have great fun here together, we two!

HEDDA *(clearly and firmly).* Yes, do you not cherish that hope, Judge? You,

as sole cock of the walk. *(A shot is heard within.* TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED, *and* BRACK *leap to their feet)*

TESMAN. Oh, now she is fingering those pistols again. *(He throws the curtains aside, and runs in, followed by* MRS. ELVSTED. HEDDA *lies extended lifeless on the sofa. Confusion and noise.* BERTHA *comes in from the right)*

TESMAN *(shrieks to* BRACK). Shot herself! She shot herself in the temple. Fancy that!

BRACK *(half-fainting in the arm-chair).* But, may God take pity on us, people don't *do* such things as that.

EUGENE O'NEILL Anna Christie

Only a few dramas produced in America during the twentieth century seem vital one year—let alone ten or twenty—after their first presentation. Only a few such works may be read after plays by Sophocles, Molière, and Ibsen without giving the reader a woeful sense of complete anticlimax. One of the few is Anna Christie *(1921), an outstanding work by a playwright generally considered the finest our country has brought forth.*

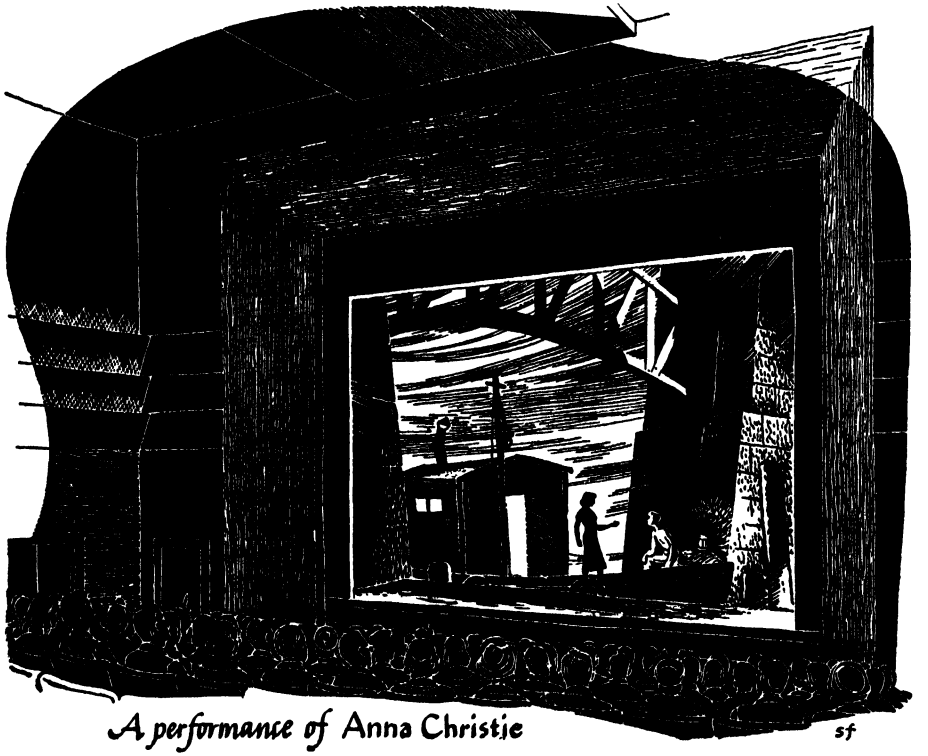
Eugene O'Neill was a product of a movement in the American theater which had begun less than a decade before Anna Christie *appeared. Distressed by the commercialization of our theater and stimulated by productions which they had seen in experimental theaters abroad, a number of young playwrights and directors had founded "Little Theaters" or "Art Theaters" in many parts of the country and had begun presenting plays in them. The plays which they staged were often more serious in intention and more experimental in method than those presented in commercial theaters.*

Amateur though it was, the movement in time profoundly influenced the commercial stage. It battled against stale techniques. It cultivated a taste on the part of at least some theatergoers for the unusual in playwriting, acting, and producing. And it trained theatrical groups which could satisfy such a taste. One such group was the Provincetown Players, founded in 1915. When this group brought to New York some of its authors, directors, and actors from the Cape Cod fish-house which it had been using for a theater, its dramatic productions won immediate attention and respect. Eugene O'Neill was the most notable playwright active in the Provincetown Players. His first produced play, Bound East for Cardiff, *was presented in Provincetown in 1916. This was followed by others such as* The Moon of the Caribbees, The Long Voyage Home, Ile, *and* Where the Cross Is Made *before* Beyond the Horizon *and* Emperor Jones, *in 1920, established him as a successful writer for the commercial theater.*

Anna Christie *was staged by Arthur*

Hopkins, a commercial producer, at the Vanderbilt Theater in New York beginning November 2, 1921. It was one of its author's more popular plays, although its audiences were drawn from a rather limited segment of the public. By 1921, motion-picture theaters had become the purveyors of drama to most laborers and white-collar workers, replacing "flesh-and-blood" playhouses. The patrons of the legitimate theater, relatively few, themselves were divided into several groups. One group, for instance, chiefly enjoyed the more obvious allurements of the theater—the gaiety of farce or musical comedy, or the thrills of melodrama. Another group included those who took the drama quite seriously, and who preferred that plays it saw have a theme as well as a plot, artistry as well as intrinsic interest. It was this group which patronized this play.

Critics in general were favorably impressed by Anna Christie. *They admired the characterization, the interplay of character and action, the struggle of the confused characters with important problems. Their chief complaint was that, since the play was essentially tragic in tone, it should not have "a happy ending." O'Neill, in reply, held that his drama "has no ending"—that it concludes with a comma, so to speak, and that as the final curtain falls, a continuation of the tragedy is plainly foreshadowed. "Old Chris," wrote O'Neill in*



A performance of Anna Christie

a letter to the New York Times, *"makes his gloomy, foreboding comment on the new set of coincidences which to him reveal the old devil sea (fate) up to her tricks again. More importantly, Burke, for the first time in the play, overcome by a superstitious dread himself, agrees with the old man. And more important still, Anna shows how significant she feels this to be by her alarmed protest. . . ." If the tragic tone is, indeed, projected beyond the conclusion of the play, the final scene is a fitting one for a tragedy.*

CHARACTERS

JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST
FIRST LONGSHOREMAN
SECOND LONGSHOREMAN
LARRY
THE POSTMAN
CHRISTOPHER CHRISTOPHERSON (CHRIS)
MARTHY
ANNA CHRISTOPHERSON (ANNA CHRISTIE)
JOHNSON, *a deckhand*
MAT BURKE

ACT I

Scene: "JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST'S" *saloon near South Street, New York City. The stage is divided into two sections, showing a small back room on the right. On the left, forward, of the barroom, a large window looking out on the street. Beyond it, the main entrance—a double swinging door. Farther back, another window. The bar runs from left to right nearly the whole length of the rear wall. In back of the bar, a small showcase displaying a few bottles of case goods, for which there is evidently little call. The remainder of the rear space in front of the large mirrors is occupied by half-barrels of cheap whisky of the "nickel-a-shot" variety, from which the liquor is drawn by means of spigots. On the right is an open doorway leading to the back room. In the back room are four round wooden tables with five chairs grouped about each. In the rear, a family entrance opening on a side street.*

It is late afternoon of a day in fall.

As the curtain rises, JOHNNY *is discovered.* "JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST" *deserves his nickname. With his pale, thin, clean-shaven face, mild blue eyes and white*

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hair, a cassock would seem more suited to him than the apron he wears. Neither his voice nor his general manner dispels this illusion which has made him a personage of the water front. They are soft and bland. But beneath all his mildness one senses the man behind the mask—cynical, callous, hard as nails. He is lounging at ease behind the bar, a pair of spectacles on his nose, reading an evening paper.

Two longshoremen enter from the street, wearing their working aprons, the button of the union pinned conspicuously on the caps pulled sideways on their heads at an aggressive angle.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN *(as they range themselves at the bar).* Gimme a shock. Number Two. *(He tosses a coin on the bar)*

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN. Same here. (JOHNNY *sets two glasses of barrel whisky before them)*

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN. Here's luck! *(The other nods. They gulp down their whisky)*

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN *(putting money on the bar).* Give us another.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN. Gimme a scoop this time—lager and porter. I'm dry.

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN. Same here.

(JOHNNY *draws the lager and porter and sets the big, foaming schooners before them. They drink down half the contents and start to talk together hurriedly in low tones. The door on the left is swung open and* LARRY *enters. He is a boyish, red-cheeked, rather good-looking young fellow of twenty or so)*

LARRY *(nodding to* JOHNNY*—cheerily).* Hello, boss.

JOHNNY. Hello, Larry. *(With a glance at his watch)* Just on time.

(LARRY *goes to the right behind the bar, takes off his coat, and puts on an apron)*

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN *(abruptly).* Let's drink up and get back to it.

(They finish their drinks and go out left. THE POSTMAN *enters as they leave. He exchanges nods with* JOHNNY *and throws a letter on the bar)*

THE POSTMAN. Addressed care of you, Johnny. Know him?

JOHNNY *(picks up the letter, adjusting his spectacles.* LARRY *comes and peers over his shoulders.* JOHNNY *reads very slowly).* Christopher Christopherson.

THE POSTMAN *(helpfully).* Squarehead name.

LARRY. Old Chris—that's who.

JOHNNY. Oh, sure. I was forgetting Chris carried a hell of a name like that. Letters come here for him sometimes before, I remember now. Long time ago, though.

THE POSTMAN. It'll get him all right then?

JOHNNY. Sure thing. He comes here whenever he's in port.

THE POSTMAN *(turning to go).* Sailor, eh?

JOHNNY *(with a grin)*. Captain of a coal barge.

THE POSTMAN *(laughing)*. Some job! Well, s'long.

JOHNNY. S'long. I'll see he gets it. (THE POSTMAN *goes out.* JOHNNY *scrutinizes the letter)* You got good eyes, Larry. Where's it from?

LARRY *(after a glance)*. St. Paul. That'll be in Minnesota, I'm thinkin'. Looks like a woman's writing, too, the old divil!

JOHNNY. He's got a daughter somewheres out West, I think he told me once. *(He puts the letter on the cash register)* Come to think of it, I ain't seen old Chris in a dog's age. *(Putting his overcoat on, he comes around the end of the bar)* Guess I'll be gettin' home. See you tomorrow.

LARRY. Good-night to ye, boss.

(As JOHNNY *goes toward the street door, it is pushed open and* CHRISTOPHER CHRISTOPHERSON *enters. He is a short, squat, broad-shouldered man of about fifty, with a round, weather-beaten, red face from which his light blue eyes peer short-sightedly, twinkling with a simple good humor. His large mouth, overhung by a thick, drooping, yellow mustache, is childishly self-willed and weak, of an obstinate kindliness. A thick neck is jammed like a post into the heavy trunk of his body. His arms with their big, hairy, freckled hands, and his stumpy legs terminating in large flat feet, are awkwardly short and muscular. He walks with a clumsy, rolling gait. His voice, when not raised in a hollow boom, is toned down to a sly, confidential half-whisper with something vaguely plaintive in its quality. He is dressed in a wrinkled, ill-fitting dark suit of shore clothes, and wears a faded cap of gray cloth over his mop of grizzled, blond hair. Just now his face beams with a too-blissful happiness, and he has evidently been drinking. He reaches his hand out to* JOHNNY)

CHRIS. Hello, Yohnny! Have drink on me. Come on, Larry. Give us drink. Have one yourself. *(Putting his hand in his pocket)* Ay gat money—plenty money....

JOHNNY *(shakes* CHRIS *by the hand)*. Speak of the devil. We was just talkin' about you.

LARRY *(coming to the end of the bar)*. Hello, Chris. Put it there. *(They shake hands)*

CHRIS *(beaming)*. Give us drink.

JOHNNY *(with a grin)*. You got a half-snootful now. Where'd you get it?

CHRIS *(grinning)*. Oder fallar on oder barge—Irish fallar—he gat bottle vhisky and we drank it, yust us two. Dot vhisky gat kick, by yingo! Ay yust come ashore. Give us drink, Larry. Ay vas little drunk, not much. Yust feel good. *(He laughs and commences to sing in a nasal, high-pitched quaver)*

"My Yosephine, come aboard de ship.
Long time Ay vait for you.

De moon, she shi-i-i-ine. She looka yus like you.
Tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee."
(To the accompaniment of this last he waves his hand as if he were conducting an orchestra)

JOHNNY *(with a laugh)*. Same old Yosie, eh Chris?

CHRIS. You don' know good song when you hear him. Italian fallar on oder barge, he learn me dat. Give us drink. *(He throws change on the bar)*

LARRY *(with a professional air)*. What's your pleasure, gentlemen?

JOHNNY. Small beer, Larry.

CHRIS. Vhisky—Number Two.

LARRY *(as he gets their drinks)*. I'll take a cigar on you.

CHRIS *(lifting his glass)*. Skoal! *(He drinks)*

JOHNNY. Drink hearty.

CHRIS *(immediately)*. Have oder drink.

JOHNNY. No. Some other time. Got to go home now. So you've just landed? Where are you in from this time?

CHRIS. Norfolk. Ve make slow voyage—dirty vedder—yust fog, fog, fog, all bloody time! *(There is an insistent ring from the doorbell at the family entrance in the back room.* CHRIS *gives a start—hurriedly)* Ay go open, Larry. Ay forgat. It vas Marthy. She come with me. *(He goes into the back room)*

LARRY *(with a chuckle)*. He's still got that same cow livin' with him, the old fool!

JOHNNY *(with a grin)*. A sport, Chris is. Well, I'll beat it home. S'long. *(He goes to the street door)*

LARRY. So long, boss.

JOHNNY. Oh—don't forget to give him his letter.

LARRY. I won't.

(JOHNNY *goes out. In the meantime,* CHRIS *has opened the family entrance door, admitting* MARTHY. *She might be forty or fifty. Her jowly, mottled face, with its thick red nose, is streaked with interlacing purple veins. Her thick, gray hair is piled anyhow in a greasy mop on top of her round head. Her figure is flabby and fat; her breath comes in wheezy gasps; she speaks in a loud, mannish voice, punctuated by explosions of hoarse laughter. But there still twinkles in her blood-shot blue eyes a youthful lust for life which hard usage has failed to stifle, a sense of humor mocking, but good-tempered. She wears a man's cap, doublebreasted man's jacket, and a grimy, calico skirt. Her bare feet are encased in a man's brogans several sizes too large for her, which gives her a shuffling, wobbly gait)*

MARTHY *(grumblingly)*. What yuh tryin' to do, Dutchy—keep me standin' out there all day? *(She comes forward and sits at the table in the right corner, front)*

CHRIS *(mollifyingly).* Ay'm sorry, Marthy. Ay talk to Yohnny. Ay forgat. What you goin' take for drink?

MARTHY *(appeased).* Gimme a scoop of lager and ale.

CHRIS. Ay go bring him back. *(He returns to the bar)* Lager and ale for Marthy, Larry. Vhisky for me. *(He throws change on the bar)*

LARRY. Right you are. *(Then remembering, he takes the letter from in back of the bar)* Here's a letter for you—from St. Paul, Minnesota—and a lady's writin'. *(He grins)*

CHRIS *(quickly—taking it).* Oh, den it come from my daughter, Anna. She live dere. *(He turns the letter over in his hands uncertainly)* Ay don't gat letter from Anna—must be a year.

LARRY *(jokingly).* That's a fine fairy tale to be tellin'—your daughter! Sure I'll bet it's some bum.

CHRIS *(soberly).* No. Dis come from Anna. *(Engrossed by the letter in his hand—uncertainly)* By golly, Ay tank Ay'm too drunk for read dis letter from Anna. Ay tank Ay sat down for a minute. You bring drinks in back room, Larry. *(He goes into the room on right)*

MARTHY *(angrily).* Where's my lager an' ale, yuh big stiff?

CHRIS *(preoccupied).* Larry bring him.

(He sits down opposite her. LARRY *brings in the drinks and sets them on the table. He and* MARTHY *exchange nods of recognition.* LARRY *stands looking at* CHRIS *curiously.* MARTHY *takes a long draught of her schooner and heaves a huge sigh of satisfaction, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand.* CHRIS *stares at the letter for a moment—slowly opens it, and, squinting his eyes, commences to read laboriously, his lips moving as he spells out the words. As he reads his face lights up with an expression of mingled joy and bewilderment)*

LARRY. Good news?

MARTHY *(her curiosity also aroused).* What's that yuh got—a letter, fur Gawd's sake?

CHRIS *(pauses for a moment, after finishing the letter, as if to let the news sink in—then suddenly pounds his fist on the table with happy excitement).* Py yiminy! Yust tank, Anna say she's comin' here right avay! She gat sick on yob in St. Paul, she say. It's short letter, don't tal me much more'n dat. *(Beaming)* Py golly, dat's good news all at one time for ole faller! *(Then turning to* MARTHY, *rather shamefacedly)* You know, Marthy, Ay've tole you Ay don't see my Anna since she vas little gel in Sveden five year ole.

MARTHY. How old'll she be now?

CHRIS. She must be—lat me see—she must be twenty year ole, py Yo!

LARRY *(surprised).* You've not seen her in fifteen years?

CHRIS *(suddenly growing somber—in a low tone).* No. Ven she vas little gel, Ay vas bo'sun on vindjammer. Ay never gat home only few time dem year.

Ay'm fool sailor fallar. My voman—Anna's mother—she gat tired vait all time Sveden for me ven Ay don't never come. She come dis country, bring Anna, dey go out Minnesota, live with her cousins on farm. Den ven her mo'der die ven Ay vas on voyage, Ay tank it's better dem cousins keep Anna. Ay tank it's better Anna live on farm, den she don't know dat ole davil sea, she don't know fa'der like me.

LARRY *(with a wink at* MARTHY*).* This girl, now, 'll be marryin' a sailor herself, likely. It's in the blood.

CHRIS *(suddenly springing to his feet and smashing his fist on the table in a rage).* No, py God! She don't do dat!

MARTHY *(grasping her schooner hastily—angrily).* Hey, look out, yuh nut! Wanta spill my suds for me?

LARRY *(amazed).* Oho, what's up with you? Ain't you a sailor yourself now, and always been?

CHRIS *(slowly).* Dat's yust vhy Ay say it. *(Forcing a smile)* Sailor vas all right fallar, but not for marry gel. No. Ay know dat. Anna's mo'der, she know it, too.

LARRY *(as* CHRIS *remains sunk in gloomy reflection).* When is your daughter comin'? Soon?

CHRIS *(roused).* Py yiminy, Ay forgat. *(Reads through the letter hurriedly).* She say she come right avay, dat's all.

LARRY. She'll maybe be comin' here to look for you, I s'pose.

(He returns to the bar, whistling. Left alone with MARTHY*, who stares at him with a twinkle of malicious humor in her eyes,* CHRIS *suddenly becomes desperately ill-at-ease. He fidgets, then gets up hurriedly)*

CHRIS. Ay gat speak with Larry. Ay be right back. *(Mollifyingly)* Ay bring you oder drink.

MARTHY *(emptying her glass).* Sure. That's me. *(As he retreats with the glass she guffaws after him derisively)*

CHRIS *(to* LARRY *in an alarmed whisper).* Py yingo, Ay gat gat Marthy shore off barge before Anna come! Anna raise hell if she find dat out. Marthy raise hell, too, for go, py golly!

LARRY *(with chuckle).* Serve ye right, ye old divil—havin' a woman at your age!

CHRIS *(scratching his head in a quandary).* You tal me lie for tal Marthy, Larry, so's she gat off barge quick.

LARRY. She knows your daughter's comin'. Tell her to get the hell out of it.

CHRIS. No. Ay don't like make her feel bad.

LARRY. You're an old mush! Keep your girl away from the barge, then. She'll likely want to stay ashore anyway. *(Curiously)* What does she work at, your Anna?

CHRIS. She stay on dem cousins' farm till two year ago. Dan she gat yob nurse

gel in St. Paul. *(Then shaking his head resolutely)* But Ay don't vant for her gat yob now. Ay vant for her stay with me.

LARRY *(scornfully).* On a coal barge! She'll not like that, I'm thinkin'.

MARTHY *(shouts from next room).* Don't I get that bucket o' suds, Dutchy?

CHRIS *(startled—in apprehensive confusion).* Yes, Ay come, Marthy.

LARRY *(drawing the lager and ale, hands it to* CHRIS—*laughingly).* Now you're in for it! You'd better tell her straight to get out!

CHRIS *(shaking in his boots).* Py golly. *(He takes her drink in to* MARTHY *and sits down at the table. She sips it in silence.* LARRY *moves quietly close to the partition to listen, grinning with expectation.* CHRIS *seems on the verge of speaking, hesitates, gulps down his whisky desperately as if seeking for courage. He attempts to whistle a few bars of "Yosephine" with careless bravado, but the whistle peters out futilely.* MARTHY *stares at him keenly, taking in his embarrassment with a malicious twinkle of amusement in her eye.* CHRIS *clears his throat)* Marthy—

MARTHY *(aggressively).* Wha's that? *(Then, pretending to fly into a rage, her eyes enjoying* CHRIS' *misery)* I'm wise to what's in back of your nut, Dutchy. Yuh want to git rid o' me, huh?—now she's comin'. Gimme the bum's rush ashore, huh? Lemme tell yuh, Dutchy, there ain't a square-head workin' on a boat man enough to git away with that. Don't start nothin' yuh can't finish!

CHRIS *(miserably).* Ay don't start nutting, Marthy.

MARTHY *(glares at him for a second—then cannot control a burst of laughter).* Ho-ho! yuh're a scream, Square-head—an honest-ter-Gawd knockout! Ho-ho! *(She wheezes, panting for breath)*

CHRIS *(with childish pique).* Ay don't see nutting for laugh at.

MARTHY. Take a slant in the mirror and yuh'll see. Ho-ho! *(Recovering from her mirth—chuckling, scornfully)* A square-head tryin' to kid Marthy Owen at this late day!—after me campin' with barge men the last twenty years. I'm wise to the game, up, down and sideways. I ain't been born and dragged up on the water front for nothin'. Think I'd make trouble, huh? Not me! I'll pack up me duds an' beat it. I'm quittin' yuh, get me? I'm tellin' yuh I'm sick of stickin' with yuh, and I'm leavin' yuh flat, see? There's plenty of other guys on other barges waitin' for me. Always was, I always found. *(She claps the astonished* CHRIS *on the back)* So cheer up, Dutchy! I'll be offen the barge before she comes. You'll be rid o' me for good—and me o' you—good riddance for both of us. Ho-ho!

CHRIS *(seriously).* Ay don' tank dat. You vas good gel, Marthy.

MARTHY *(grinning).* Good girl? Aw, can the bull! Well, yuh treated me square, yuhself. So it's fifty-fifty. Nobody's sore at nobody. We're still good frien's, huh?

(LARRY *returns to bar)*

CHRIS *(beaming now that he sees his troubles disappearing).* Yes, py golly.

MARTHY. That's the talkin'! In all my time I tried never to split with a guy with no hard feelin's. But what was yuh so scared about—that I'd kick up a row? That ain't Marthy's way. *(Scornfully)* Think I'd break my heart to lose yuh? Commit suicide, huh? Ho-ho! Gawd! The world's full o' men if that's all I'd worry about! *(Then with a grin, after emptying her glass)* Blow me to another scoop, huh? I'll drink your kid's health for yuh.

CHRIS *(eagerly).* Sure tang. Ay go gat him. *(He takes the two glasses into the bar)* Oder drink. Same for both.

LARRY *(getting the drinks and putting them on the bar).* She's not such a bad lot, that one.

CHRIS *(jovially).* She's good gel, Ay tal you! Py golly, Ay calabrate now! Give me vhisky here at bar, too. *(He puts down money.* LARRY *serves him)* You have drink, Larry.

LARRY *(virtuously).* You know I never touch it.

CHRIS. You don't know what you miss. Skoal! *(He drinks—then begins to sing loudly)* "My Yosephine, come board de ship—" *(He picks up the drinks for* MARTHY *and himself and walks unsteadily into the back room, singing)*

"De moon, she shi-i-i-ine. She looks yust like you.
Tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee."

MARTHY *(grinning, hands to ears).* Gawd!

CHRIS *(sitting down).* Ay'm good singer, yes? Ve drink, eh? Skoal! Ay calabrate! *(He drinks)* Ay calabrate 'cause Anna's coming home. You know, Marthy, Ay never write for her to come, 'cause Ay tank Ay'm no good for her. But all time Ay hope like hell some day she vant for see me and den she come. And dat's vay it happen now, py yimminy! *(His face beaming)* What you tank she look like, Marthy? Ay bet you she's fine, good, strong gel, pooty like hell! Living on farm made her like dat. And Ay bet you some day she marry good, steady land fallar here in East, have home all her own, have kids—and dan Ay'm ole grandfader, py golly! And Ay go visit dem every time Ay gat in port near! *(Bursting with joy)* By yiminy crickens, Ay calabrate dat! *(Shouts)* Bring oder drink, Larry! *(He smashes his fist on the table with a bang)*

LARRY *(coming in from bar—irritably).* Easy there! Don't be breakin' the table, you old goat!

CHRIS *(by way of reply, grins foolishly and begins to sing).* "My Yosephine, come board de ship—"

MARTHY (*touching* CHRIS' *arm persuasively*). You're soused to the ears, Dutchy. Go out and put a feed into you. It'll sober you up. *(Then as* CHRIS *shakes his head obstinately)* Listen, yuh old nut! Yuh don't know what time your kid's liable to show up. Yuh want to be sober when she comes, don't yuh?

CHRIS *(aroused—gets unsteadily to his feet).* Py golly, yes.

LARRY. That's good sense for you. A good beef stew'll fix you. Go round the corner.

CHRIS. All right. Ay be back soon, Marthy. (CHRIS *goes through the bar and out the street door)*

LARRY. He'll come round all right with some grub in him.

MARTHY. Sure.

(LARRY *goes back to the bar and resumes his newspaper.* MARTHY *sips what is left of her schooner reflectively. There is the ring of the family entrance bell.* LARRY *comes to the door and opens it a trifle—then, with a puzzled expression, pulls it wide.* ANNA CHRISTOPHERSON *enters. She is a tall, blond, fully-developed girl of twenty, handsome after a large, Viking-daughter fashion but now run down in health and plainly showing all the outward evidences of belonging to the world's oldest profession. Her youthful face is already hard and cynical beneath its layer of make-up. Her clothes are the tawdry finery of peasant stock turned prostitute. She comes and sinks wearily in a chair by the table, left front)*

ANNA. Gimme a whisky—ginger ale on the side. *(Then, as* LARRY *turns to go, forcing a winning smile at him)* And don't be stingy, baby.

LARRY *(sarcastically).* Shall I serve it in a pail?

ANNA *(with a hard laugh).* That suits me down to the ground. (LARRY *goes into the bar. The two women size each other up with frank stares.* LARRY *comes back with the drink which he sets before* ANNA *and returns to the bar again.* ANNA *downs her drink at a gulp. Then, after a moment, as the alcohol begins to rouse her, she turns to* MARTHY *with a friendly smile)* Gee, I needed that bad, all right, all right!

MARTHY *(nodding her head sympathetically).* Sure—yuh look all in. Been on a bat?

ANNA. No—traveling—day and a half on the train. Had to sit up all night in the dirty coach, too. Gawd, I thought I'd never get here!

MARTHY *(with a start—looking at her intently).* Where'd yuh come from, huh?

ANNA. St. Paul—out in Minnesota.

MARTHY *(staring at her in amazement—slowly).* So—yuh're— *(She suddenly bursts out into hoarse, ironical laughter)* Gawd!

ANNA. All the way from Minnesota, sure. *(Flaring up)* What you laughing at? Me?

MARTHY *(hastily).* No, honest, kid. I was thinkin' of somethin' else.

ANNA *(mollified—with a smile).* Well, I wouldn't blame you, at that. Guess I do look rotten—yust out of the hospital two weeks. I'm going to have another 'ski. What d'you say? Have something on me?

MARTHY. Sure I will. T'anks. *(She calls)* Hey, Larry! Little service! *(He comes in)*

ANNA. Same for me.

MARTHY. Same here.

(LARRY *takes their glasses and goes out)*

ANNA. Why don't you come sit over here, be sociable. I'm a dead stranger in this burg—and I ain't spoke a word with no one since day before yesterday.

MARTHY. Sure thing. *(She shuffles over to* ANNA'S *table and sits down opposite her.* LARRY *brings the drinks and* ANNA *pays him)*

ANNA. Skoal! Here's how! *(She drinks)*

MARTHY. Here's luck! *(She takes a gulp from her schooner)*

ANNA *(taking a package of Sweet Caporal cigarettes from her bag).* Let you smoke in here, won't they?

MARTHY *(doubtfully).* Sure. *(Then with evident anxiety)* On'y trow it away if yuh hear someone comin.'

ANNA *(lighting one and taking a deep inhale).* Gee, they're fussy in this dump, ain't they? *(She puffs, staring at the table top.* MARTHY *looks her over with a new penetrating interest, taking in every detail of her face.* ANNA *suddenly becomes conscious of this appraising stare—resentfully)* Ain't nothing wrong with me, is there? You're looking hard enough.

MARTHY *(irritated by the other's tone—scornfully).* Ain't got to look much. I got your number the minute you stepped in the door.

ANNA *(her eyes narrowing).* Ain't you smart! Well, I got yours, too, without no trouble. You're me forty years from now. That's you! *(She gives a hard little laugh)*

MARTHY *(angrily).* Is that so? Well, I'll tell you straight, kiddo, that Marthy Owen never— *(She catches herself up short—with a grin)* What are you and me scrappin' over? Let's cut it out, huh? Me, I don't want no hard feelin's with no one. *(Extending her hand)* Shake and forget it, huh?

ANNA *(shakes her hand gladly).* Only too glad to. I ain't looking for trouble. Let's have 'nother. What d'you say?

MARTHY *(shaking her head).* Not for mine. I'm full up. And you— Had anythin' to eat lately?

ANNA. Not since this morning on the train.

MARTHY. Then yuh better go easy on it, hadn't yuh?

ANNA *(after a moment's hesitation).* Guess you're right. I got to meet someone, too. But my nerves is on edge after that rotten trip.

MARTHY. Yuh said yuh was just outa the hospital?

ANNA. Two weeks ago. *(Leaning over to* MARTHY *confidentially).* The joint I was in out in St. Paul got raided. That was the start. The judge give all us girls thirty days. The others didn't seem to mind being in the cooler much. Some of 'em was used to it. But me, I couldn't stand it. It got my goat right—couldn't eat or sleep or nothing. I never could

stand being caged up nowheres. I got good and sick and they had to send me to the hospital. It was nice there. I was sorry to leave it, honest!

MARTHY *(after a slight pause).* Did yuh say yuh got to meet someone here?

ANNA. Yes. Oh, not what you mean. It's my Old Man I got to meet. Honest! It's funny, too. I ain't seen him since I was a kid—don't even know what he looks like—yust had a letter every now and then. This was always the only address he give me to write him back. He's yanitor of some building here now—used to be a sailor.

MARTHY *(astonished).* Janitor!

ANNA. Sure. And I was thinking maybe, seeing he ain't never done a thing for me in my life, he might be willing to stake me to a room and eats till I get rested up. *(Wearily)* Gee, I sure need that rest! I'm knocked out. *(Then resignedly)* But I ain't expecting much from him. Give you a kick when you're down, that's what all men do. *(With sudden passion)* Men, I hate 'em—all of 'em! And I don't expect he'll turn out no better than the rest. *(Then with sudden interest)* Say, do you hang out around this dump much?

MARTHY. Oh, off and on.

ANNA. Then maybe you know him—my Old Man—or at least seen him?

MARTHY. It ain't old Chris, is it?

ANNA. Old Chris?

MARTHY. Chris Christopherson, his full name is.

ANNA *(excitedly).* Yes, that's him! Anna Christopherson—that's my real name —only out there I called myself Anna Christie. So you know him, eh?

MARTHY *(evasively).* Seen him about for years.

ANNA. Say, what's he like, tell me, honest?

MARTHY. Oh, he's short and——

ANNA *(impatiently).* I don't care what he looks like. What kind is he?

MARTHY *(earnestly).* Well, yuh can bet your life, kid, he's as good an old guy as ever walked on two feet. That goes!

ANNA *(pleased).* I'm glad to hear it. Then you think he'll stake me to that rest cure I'm after?

MARTHY *(emphatically).* Surest thing you know. *(Disgustedly)* But where'd yuh get the idea he was a janitor?

ANNA. He wrote me he was himself.

MARTHY. Well, he was lyin'. He ain't. He's captain of a barge—five men under him.

ANNA *(disgusted in her turn).* A barge? What kind of a barge?

MARTHY. Coal, mostly.

ANNA. A coal barge! *(With a harsh laugh)* If that ain't a swell job to find your long lost Old Man working at! Gee, I knew something'd be bound

to turn out wrong—always does with me. That puts my idea of his giving me a rest on the bum.

MARTHY. What d'yuh mean?

ANNA. I s'pose he lives on the boat, don't he?

MARTHY. Sure. What about it? Can't you live on it, too?

ANNA *(scornfully).* Me? On a dirty coal barge! What d'you think I am?

MARTHY *(resentfully).* What d'yuh know about barges, huh? Bet yuh ain't ever seen one. That's what comes of his bringing yuh up inland—away from the old devil sea—where yuh'd be safe—Gawd! *(The irony of it strikes her sense of humor and she laughs hoarsely)*

ANNA *(angrily).* His bringing me up! Is that what he tells people! I like his nerve! He let them cousins of my Old Woman's keep me on their farm and work me to death like a dog.

MARTHY. Well, he's got queer notions on some things. I've heard him say a farm was the best place for a kid.

ANNA. Sure. That's what he'd always answer back—and a lot of crazy stuff about staying away from the sea—stuff I couldn't make head or tail to. I thought he must be nutty.

MARTHY. He is on that one point. *(Casually)* So yuh didn't fall for life on the farm, huh?

ANNA. I should say not! The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons —I had to slave for all of 'em. I was only a poor relation, and they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl! *(After a moment's hesitation—somberly)* It was one of the sons—the youngest—started me—when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away—to St. Paul.

MARTHY *(who has been listening sympathetically).* I've heard Old Chris talkin' about your bein' a nurse girl out there. Was that all a bluff yuh put up when yuh wrote him?

ANNA. Not on your life, it wasn't. It was true for two years. I didn't go wrong all at one jump. Being a nurse girl was yust what finished me. Taking care of other people's kids, always listening to their bawling and crying, caged in, when you're only a kid yourself and want to go out and see things. At last I got the chance—to get into that house. And you bet your life I took it! *(Defiantly)* And I ain't sorry neither. *(After a pause —with bitter hatred)* It was all men's fault—the whole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me—and giving me the wrong start. Then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering me, trying to see what they could get. *(She gives a hard laugh)* And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em! Don't you?

MARTHY. Oh, I dunno. There's good ones and bad ones, kid. You've just

had a run of bad luck with 'em, that all. Your Old Man, now—old Chris—he's a good one.

ANNA *(skeptically).* He'll have to show me.

MARTHY. Yuh kept right on writing him yuh was a nurse girl still, even after yuh was in the house, didn't yuh?

ANNA. Sure. *(Cynically)* Not that I think he'd care a darn.

MARTHY. Yuh're all wrong about him, kid. *(Earnestly)* I know Old Chris well for a long time. He's talked to me 'bout you lots o' times. He thinks the world o' you, honest he does.

ANNA. Aw, quit the kiddin'!

MARTHY. Honest! Only, he's a simple old guy, see? He's got nutty notions. But he means well, honest. Listen to me, kid— *(She is interrupted by the opening and shutting of the street door in the bar and by hearing* CHRIS' *voice)* Ssshh!

ANNA. What's up?

CHRIS *(who has entered the bar. He seems considerably sobered up).* Py golly, Larry, dat grub tasted good. Marthy in back?

LARRY. Sure—and another tramp with her. (CHRIS *starts for the entrance to the back room)*

MARTHY *(to* ANNA *in a hurried, nervous whisper).* That's him now. He's comin' in here. Brace up!

ANNA. Who? (CHRIS *opens the door)*

MARTHY *(as if she were greeting him for the first time).* Why hello, Old Chris. *(Then before he can speak, she shuffles hurriedly past him into the bar, beckoning him to follow her)* Come here. I wanta tell yuh somethin'. *(He goes out to her. She speaks hurriedly in a low voice)* Listen! I'm goin' to beat it down to the barge—pack up me duds and blow. That's her in there—your Anna—just come—waitin' for yuh. Treat her right, see? She's been sick. Well, s'long. *(She goes into the back room—to* ANNA*)* S'long, kid. I gotta beat it now. See yuh later.

ANNA *(nervously).* So long. (MARTHY *goes quickly out of the family entrance)*

LARRY *(looking at the stupefied* CHRIS *curiously).* Well, what's up now?

CHRIS *(vaguely).* Nutting—nutting. *(He stands before the door to the back room in an agony of embarrassed emotion—then he forces himself to a bold decision, pushes open the door and walks in. He stands there, casts a shy glance at* ANNA*, whose brilliant clothes, and, to him, high-toned appearance, awe him terribly. He looks about him with pitiful nervousness as if to avoid the appraising look with which she takes in his face, his clothes, etc.—his voice seeming to plead for her forbearance)* Anna!

ANNA *(acutely embarrassed in her turn).* Hello—father. She told me it was you. I yust got here a little while ago.

CHRIS *(goes slowly over to her chair).* It's good—for see you—after all dem

years, Anna. *(He bends down over her. After an embarrassed struggle they manage to kiss each other)*

ANNA *(a trace of genuine feeling in her voice).* It's good to see you, too.

CHRIS *(grasps her arms and looks into her face—then overcome by a wave of fierce tenderness).* Anna lilla! Anna lilla! *(Takes her in his arms)*

ANNA *(shrinks away from him, half-frightened).* What's that—Swedish? I don't know it. *(Then as if seeking relief from the tension in a voluble chatter)* Gee, I had an awful trip coming here. I'm all in. I had to sit up in the dirty coach all night—couldn't get no sleep, hardly—and then I had a hard job finding this place. I never been in New York before, you know, and——

CHRIS *(who has been staring down at her face admiringly, not hearing what she says—impulsively).* You know you vas awful pooty gel, Anna? Ay bet all men see you fall in love with you, py yimminy!

ANNA *(repelled—harshly).* Cut it! You talk same as they all do.

CHRIS *(hurt—humbly).* Ain't no harm for your fader talk dat vay, Anna.

ANNA *(forcing a short laugh).* No—course not. Only—it's funny to see you and not remember nothing. You're like—a stranger.

CHRIS *(sadly).* Ay s'pose. Ay never come home only few times ven you vas kit in Sveden. You don't remember dat?

ANNA. No. *(Resentfully)* But why didn't you never come home them days? Why didn't you never come out West to see me?

CHRIS *(slowly).* Ay tank, after your mo'der die, ven Ay vas away on voyage, it's better for you you don't never see me! *(He sinks down in the chair opposite her dejectedly—then turns to her—sadly)* Ay don't know, Anna, vhy Ay never come home Sveden in old year. Ay vant come home end of every voyage. Ay vant see your mo'der, your two bro'der before dey vas drowned, you ven you vas born—but—Ay—don't go. Ay sign on oder ships—go South America, go Australia, go China, go every port all over world many times—but Ay never go aboard ship sail for Sveden. Ven Ay gat money for pay passage home as passenger den— *(He bows his head guiltily)* Ay forgat and Ay spend all money. Ven Ay tank again, it's too late. *(He sighs)* Ay don't know why but dat's vay with most sailor fallar, Anna. Dat ole davil sea make dem crazy fools with her dirty tricks. It's so.

ANNA *(who has watched him keenly while he has been speaking—with a trace of scorn in her voice).* Then you think the sea's to blame for everything, eh? Well, you're still workin' on it, ain't you, spite of all you used to write me about hating it. That dame was here told me you was captain of a coal barge—and you wrote me you was yanitor of a building!

CHRIS *(embarrassed but lying glibly).* Oh, Ay vork on land long time as

yanitor. Yust short time ago Ay got dis yob cause Ay vas sick, need open air.

ANNA *(skeptically).* Sick? You? You'd never think it.

CHRIS. And, Anna, dis ain't real sailor yob. Dis ain't real boat on sea. She's yust old tub—like piece of land with house on it dat float. Yob on her ain't sea yob. No. Ay don't gat yob on sea, Anna, if Ay die first. Ay swear dat ven your mo'der die. Ay keep my word, py yingo!

ANNA *(perplexed).* Well, I can't see no difference. *(Dismissing the subject)* Speaking of being sick, I been there myself—yust out of the hospital two weeks ago.

CHRIS *(immediately all concern).* You, Anna? Py golly! *(Anxiously)* You feel better now, dough, don't you? You look little tired, dat's all!

ANNA *(wearily).* I am. Tired to death. I need a long rest and I don't see much chance of getting it.

CHRIS. What you mean, Anna?

ANNA. Well, when I made up my mind to come to see you, I thought you was a yanitor—that you'd have a place where, maybe, if you didn't mind having me, I could visit a while and rest up—till I felt able to get back on the job again.

CHRIS *(eagerly).* But Ay gat place, Anna—nice place. You rest all you want, py yiminy! You don't never have to vork as nurse gel no more. You stay with me, py golly!

ANNA *(surprised and pleased by his eagerness—with a smile).* Then you're really glad to see me—honest?

CHRIS *(pressing one of her hands in both of his).* Anna, Ay like see you like hell, Ay tal you! And don't you talk no more about gatting yob. You stay with me. Ay don't see you for long time, you don't forgat dat. *(His voice trembles)* Ay'm gatting ole. Ay gat no one in world but you.

ANNA *(touched—embarrassed by this unfamiliar emotion).* Thanks. It sounds good to hear someone—talk to me that way. Say, though—if you're so lonely—it's funny—why ain't you ever married again?

CHRIS *(shaking his head emphatically—after a pause).* Ay love your mo'der too much for ever do dat, Anna.

ANNA *(impressed—slowly).* I don't remember nothing about her. What was she like? Tell me.

CHRIS. Ay tal you all about everytang—and you tal me all tangs happen to you. But not here now. Dis ain't good place for young gel, anyway. Only no good sailor fallar come here for gat drunk. *(He gets to his feet quickly and picks up her bag)* You come with me, Anna. You need lie down, gat rest.

ANNA *(half rises to her feet, then sits down again).* Where're you going?

CHRIS. Come. Ve gat on board.

ANNA *(disappointedly).* On board your barge, you mean? *(Dryly)* Nix for mine! *(Then seeing his crestfallen look—forcing a smile)* Do you think that's a good place for a young girl like me—a coal barge?

CHRIS *(dully).* Yes, Ay tank. *(He hesitates—then continues more and more pleadingly)* You don't know how nice it's on barge, Anna. Tug come and ve gat towed out on voyage—yust water all round, and sun, and fresh air, and good grub for make you strong, healthy gel. You see many tangs you don't see before. You gat moonlight at night, maybe; see steamer pass; see schooner make sail—see everytang dat's pooty. You need take rest like dat. You work too hard for young gel already. You need vacation, yes!

ANNA *(who has listened to him with a growing interest—with an uncertain laugh).* It sounds good to hear you tell it. I'd sure like a trip on the water, all right. It's the barge idea has me stopped. Well, I'll go down with you and have a look—and maybe I'll take a chance. Gee, I'd do anything once.

CHRIS *(picks up her bag again).* Ve go, eh?

ANNA. What's the rush? Wait a second. *(Forgetting the situation for a moment, she relapses into the familiar form and flashes one of her winning trade smiles at him)* Gee, I'm thirsty.

CHRIS *(sets down her bag immediately—hastily).* Ay'm sorry, Anna. What you tank you like for drink, eh?

ANNA *(promptly).* I'll take a— *(Then suddenly reminded—confusedly)* I don't know. What'a they got here?

CHRIS *(with a grin).* Ay don't tank dey got much fancy drink for young gel in dis place, Anna. Yinger ale—sas-prilla, maybe.

ANNA *(forcing a laugh herself).* Make it sas, then.

CHRIS *(coming up to her—with a wink).* Ay tal you, Anna, ve calabrate, yes—dis one time because ve meet after many year. *(In a half whisper, embarrassedly)* Dey gat good port wine, Anna. It's good for you, Ay tank—little bit—for give you appetite. It ain't strong, neider. One glass don't go to your head, Ay promise.

ANNA *(with a half hysterical laugh).* All right. I'll take port.

CHRIS. Ay go gat him. *(He goes to the bar. As soon as the door closes,* ANNA *starts to her feet)*

ANNA *(picking up her bag—half-aloud—stammeringly).* Gawd, I can't stand this! I better beat it. *(Then she lets her bag drop, stumbles over to her chair again, and covering her face with her hands, begins to sob)*

LARRY *(putting down his paper as* CHRIS *comes up—with a grin).* Well, who's the blond?

CHRIS *(proudly).* Dat vas Anna, Larry.

LARRY *(in amazement).* Your daughter, Anna? *(CHRIS nods. LARRY lets a long, low whistle escape him and turns away embarrassedly)*

CHRIS. Don't you tank she vas pooty gel, Larry?

LARRY *(rising to the occasion).* Sure! A peach!

CHRIS. You bet you! Give me drink for take back—one port vine for Anna—she calabrate dis one time with me—and small beer for me.

LARRY *(as he gets the drinks).* Small beer for you, eh? She's reformin' you already.

CHRIS *(pleased).* You bet! *(He takes the drinks. As she hears him coming,* ANNA *hastily dries her eyes, tries to smile.* CHRIS *comes in and sets the drinks down on the table—stares at her for a second anxiously—patting her hand)* You look tired, Anna. Vell, Ay make you take good long rest now. *(Picking up his beer)* Come, you drink vine. It put new life in you. *(She lifts her glass—he grins)* Skoal, Anna! You know dat Svedish word?

ANNA. Skoal! *(Downing her port at a gulp like a drink of whisky—her lips trembling)* Skoal? Guess I know that word, all right!

ACT II

Scene: Ten days later. The stern of the deeply-laden barge, Simeon Winthrop, *at anchor in the outer harbor of Provincetown, Mass. It is ten o'clock at night. Dense fog shrouds the barge on all sides, and she floats motionless on a calm. A lantern set up on an immense coil of thick hawser sheds a dull, filtering light on objects near it—the heavy steel bits for making fast the tow lines, etc. In the rear is the cabin, its misty windows glowing wanly with the light of a lamp inside. The chimney of the cabin stove rises a few feet above the roof. The doleful tolling of bells, on Long Point, on ships at anchor, breaks the silence at regular intervals.*

As the curtain rises, ANNA *is discovered standing near the coil of rope on which the lantern is placed. She looks healthy, transformed, the natural color has come back to her face. She has on a black oilskin coat, but wears no hat. She is staring out into the fog astern with an expression of awed wonder. The cabin door is pushed open and* CHRIS *appears. He is dressed in yellow oilskins—coat, pants, sou'wester—and wears high sea-boots.*

CHRIS *(the glare from the cabin still in his eyes, peers blinkingly astern).* Anna! *(Receiving no reply, he calls again, this time with apparent apprehension).* Anna!

ANNA *(with a start—making a gesture with her hand as if to impose silence—in a hushed whisper).* Yes, here I am. What d'you want?

CHRIS *(walks over to her—solicitously).* Don't you come turn in, Anna? It's late—after four bells. It ain't good for you stay out here in fog, Ay tank.

ANNA. Why not? *(With a trace of strange exultation)* I love this fog! Honest! It's so— *(She hesitates, groping for a word)* Funny and still. I feel as if I was—out of things altogether.

CHRIS *(spitting disgustedly).* Fog's vorst one of her dirty tricks, py yingo!

ANNA *(with a short laugh).* Beefing about the sea again? I'm getting so's I love it, the little I've seen.

CHRIS *(glancing at her moodily).* Dat's foolish talk, Anna. You see her more, you don't talk dat vay. *(Then seeing her irritation, he hastily adopts a more cheerful tone)* But Ay'm glad you like it on barge. Ay'm glad it makes you feel good again. *(With a placating grin)* You like live like dis alone with ole fa'der, eh?

ANNA. Sure I do. Everything's been so different from anything I ever come across before. And now—this fog— Gee, I wouldn't have missed it for nothing. I never thought living on ships was so different from land. Gee, I'd yust love to work on it, honest I would, if I was a man. I don't wonder you always been a sailor.

CHRIS *(vehemently).* Ay ain't sailor, Anna. And dis ain't real sea. You only see nice part. *(Then as she doesn't answer, he continues hopefully)* Vell, fog lift in morning, Ay tank.

ANNA *(the exultation again in her voice).* I love it! I don't give a rap if it never lifts! *(CHRIS fidgets from one foot to the other worriedly. ANNA continues slowly, after a pause)* It makes me feel clean—out here—'s if I'd taken a bath.

CHRIS *(after a pause).* You better go in cabin read book. Dat put you to sleep.

ANNA. I don't want to sleep. I want to stay out here—and think about things.

CHRIS *(walks away from her toward the cabin—then comes back).* You act funny tonight, Anna.

ANNA *(her voice rising angrily).* Say, what're you trying to do—make things rotten? You been kind as kind can be to me and I certainly appreciate it—only don't spoil it all now. *(Then, seeing the hurt expression on her father's face she forces a smile)* Let's talk of something else. Come. Sit down here. *(She points to the coil of rope)*

CHRIS *(sits down beside her with a sigh).* It's gatting pooty late in night, Anna. Must be near five bells.

ANNA *(interestedly).* Five bells? What time is that?

CHRIS. Half past ten.

ANNA. Funny I don't know nothing about sea talk—but those cousins was always talking crops and that stuff. Gee, wasn't I sick of it—and of them!

CHRIS. You don't like live on farm, Anna?

ANNA. I've told you a hundred times I hated it. *(Decidedly)* I'd rather have one drop of ocean than all the farms in the world! Honest! And you wouldn't like a farm, neither. Here's where you belong. *(She makes a sweeping gesture seaward)* But not on a coal barge. You belong on a real ship, sailing all over the world.

CHRIS *(moodily)*. Ay've done dat many year, Anna, when Ay vas damn fool.

ANNA *(disgustedly)*. Oh, rats! *(After a pause she speaks musingly)* Was the men in our family always sailors—as far back as you know about?

CHRIS *(shortly)*. Yes. Damn fools! All men in our village on coast, Sveden, go to sea. Ain't nutting else for dem to do. My fa'der die on board ship in Indian Ocean. He's buried at sea. Ay don't never know him only little bit. Den my tree bro'der, older'n me, dey go on ships. Den Ay go, too. Den my mo'der she's left all 'lone. She die pooty quick after dat—all 'lone. Ve vas all avay on voyage when she die. *(He pauses sadly)* Two my bro'der dey gat lost on fishing boat same like your bro'ders vas drowned. My oder bro'der, he save money, give up sea, den he die home in bed. He's only one dat ole davil don't kill. *(Defiantly)* But me, Ay bet you Ay die ashore in bed, too!

ANNA. Were all of 'em yust plain sailors?

CHRIS. Able body seaman, most of dem. *(With a certain pride)* Dey vas all smart seaman, too—A one. *(Then after hesitating a moment—shyly)* Ay vas bo'sun.

ANNA. Bo'sun?

CHRIS. Dat's kind of officer.

ANNA. Gee, that was fine. What does he do?

CHRIS *(after a second's hesitation, plunged into gloom again by his fear of her enthusiasm)*. Hard vork all time. It's rotten, Ay tal you, for go to sea. *(Determined to disgust her with sea life—volubly)* Dey're all fool fallar, dem fallar in our family. Dey all vork rotten yob on sea for nutting, don't care nutting but yust gat big pay day in pocket, gat drunk, gat robbed, ship avay again on oder voyage. Dey don't come home. Dey don't do anytang like good man do. And dat ole davil, sea, sooner, later she svallow dem up.

ANNA *(with an excited laugh)*. Good sports, I'd call 'em. *(Then hastily)* But say—listen—did all the women of the family marry sailors?

CHRIS *(eagerly—seeing a chance to drive home his point)*. Yes—and it's bad on dem like hell vorst of all. Dey don't see deir men only once in long while. Dey set and vait all 'lone. And vhen deir boys grows up, go to sea, dey sit and vait some more. *(Vehemently)* Any gel marry sailor, she's crazy fool! Your mo'der she tal you same tang if she vas alive. *(He relapses into an attitude of somber brooding)*

ANNA *(after a pause—dreamily).* Funny! I do feel sort of—nutty, tonight. I feel old.

CHRIS *(mystified).* Ole?

ANNA. Sure—like I'd been living a long, long time—out here in the fog. *(Frowning perplexedly)* I don't know how to tell you yust what I mean. It's like I'd come home after a long visit away some place. It all seems like I'd been here before lots of times—on boats—in this same fog. *(With a short laugh)* You must think I'm off my base.

CHRIS *(gruffly).* Anybody feel funny dat vay in fog.

ANNA *(persistently).* But why d'you s'pose I feel so—so—like I'd found something I'd missed and been looking for—'s if this was the right place for me to fit in? And I seem to have forgot—everything that's happened—like it didn't matter no more. And I feel clean, somehow—like you feel yust after you've took a bath. And I feel happy for once—yes, honest!—happier than I ever have been anywhere before! *(As* CHRIS *makes no comment but a heavy sigh, she continues wonderingly)* It's nutty for me to feel that way, don't you think?

CHRIS *(a grim foreboding in his voice).* Ay tank Ay'm damn fool for bring you on voyage, Anna.

ANNA *(impressed by his tone).* You talk—nutty tonight yourself. You act 's if you was scared something was going to happen.

CHRIS. Only God know dat, Anna.

ANNA *(half-mockingly).* Then it'll be Gawd's will, like the preachers say—what does happen.

CHRIS *(starts to his feet with fierce protest).* No! Dat ole davil sea, she ain't God! *(In the pause of silence that comes after his defiance a hail in a man's husky, exhausted voice comes faintly out of the fog to port)* "Ahoy!" (CHRIS *gives a startled exclamation)*

ANNA *(jumping to her feet).* What's that?

CHRIS *(who has regained his composure—sheepishly).* Py golly, dat scare me for minute. It's only some fallar hail, Anna—loose his course in fog. Must be fisherman's power boat. His engine break down, Ay guess. *(The "ahoy" comes again through the wall of fog sounding much nearer this time.* CHRIS *goes over to the port bulwark)* Sound from dis side. She come in from open sea. *(He holds his hands to his mouth, megaphone-fashion, and shouts back)* Ahoy, dere! What's trouble?

THE VOICE *(this time sounding nearer but up forward toward the bow).* Heave a rope when we come alongside. *(Then irritably)* Where are ye, ye scut?

CHRIS. Ay hear dem rowing. Dey come up by bow, Ay tank. *(Then shouting out again)* Dis vay!

THE VOICE. Right ye are!

(There is a muffled sound of oars in oar-locks)

ANNA *(half to herself—resentfully).* Why don't that guy stay where he belongs?

CHRIS *(hurriedly).* Ay go up bow. All hands asleep 'cepting fallar on vatch. Ay gat heave line to dat fallar. *(He picks up a coil of rope and hurries off toward the bow.* ANNA *walks back toward the extreme stern as if she wanted to remain as much isolated as possible. She turns her back on the proceedings and stares out into the fog.* THE VOICE *is heard again shouting "Ahoy" and* CHRIS *answering "Dis vay." Then there is a pause—the murmur of excited voices—then the scuffling of feet.* CHRIS *appears from around the cabin to port. He is supporting the limp form of a man dressed in dungarees, holding one of the man's arms around his neck. The deckhand,* JOHNSON, *a young blond Swede, follows him, helping along another exhausted man similar fashion.* ANNA *turns to look at them.* CHRIS *stops for a second—volubly)* Anna! You come help, vill you? You find vhisky in cabin. Dese fallars need drink for fix dem. Dey vas near dead.

ANNA *(hurrying to him).* Sure—but who are they? What's the trouble?

CHRIS. Sailor fallars. Deir steamer gat wrecked. Dey been five days in open boat—four fallars—only one left able stand up. Come, Anna. *(She precedes him into the cabin, holding the door open while he and* JOHNSON *carry in their burdens. The door is shut, then opened again as* JOHNSON *comes out.* CHRIS' *voice shouts after him)* Go gat oder fallar, Yohnson.

JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

(He goes. The door is closed again. MAT BURKE *stumbles in around the port side of the cabin. He moves slowly, feeling his way uncertainly, keeping hold of the port bulwark with his right hand to steady himself. He is stripped to the waist, has on nothing but a pair of dirty dungaree pants. He is a powerful, broad-chested six-footer, his face handsome in a hard, rough, bold, defiant way. He is about thirty, in the full power of his heavy-muscled immense strength. His dark eyes are bloodshot and wild for sleeplessness. The muscles of his arms and shoulders are lumped in knots and bunches, the veins of his fore-arms stand out like blue cords. He finds his way to the coil of hawser and sits down on it facing the cabin, his back bowed, head in his hands, in an attitude of spent weariness)*

BURKE *(talking aloud to himself).* Row, ye divil! Row! *(Then lifting his head and looking about him)* What's this tub? Well, we're safe anyway—with the help of God. *(He makes the sign of the cross mechanically.* JOHNSON *comes along the deck to port, supporting the fourth man, who is babbling to himself incoherently.* BURKE *glances at him disdainfully)*

Is it losing the small wits ye iver had, ye are? Deck-scrubbing scut! *(They pass him and go into the cabin, leaving the door open.* BURKE *sags forward wearily)* I'm bate out—bate out entirely.

ANNA *(comes out of the cabin with a tumbler quarter-full of whisky in her hand. She gives a start when she sees* BURKE *so near her, the light from the open door falling full on him. Then, overcoming what is evidently a feeling of repulsion, she comes up beside him).* Here you are. Here's a drink for you. You need it, I guess.

BURKE *(lifting his head slowly—confusedly).* Is it dreaming, I am?

ANNA *(half smiling).* Drink it and you'll find it ain't no dream.

BURKE. To hell with the drink—but I'll take it just the same. *(He tosses it down)* Ahah! I'm needin' that—and 'tis fine stuff. *(Looking up at her with frank, grinning admiration)* But 'twasn't the booze I meant when I said, was I dreaming. I thought you was some mermaid out of the sea come to torment me. *(He reaches out to feel of her arm)* Aye, rale flesh and blood, divil a less.

ANNA *(coldly. Stepping back from him).* Cut that.

BURKE. But tell me, isn't this a barge I'm on—or isn't it?

ANNA. Sure.

BURKE. And what is a fine handsome woman the like of you doing on this scow?

ANNA *(coldly).* Never you mind. *(Then half-amused in spite of herself)* Say, you're a great one, honest—starting right in kidding after what you been through.

BURKE *(delighted—proudly).* Ah, it was nothing—aisy for a rale man with guts to him, the like of me. *(He laughs)* All in the day's work, darlin'. *(Then, more seriously but still in a boastful tone, confidentially)* But I won't be denying 'twas a damn narrow squeak. We'd all ought to be with Davy Jones at the bottom of the sea, be rights. And only for me, I'm telling you, and the great strength and guts is in me, we'd be being scoffed by the fishes this minute!

ANNA *(contemptuously).* Gee, you hate yourself, don't you? *(Then turning away from him indifferently)* Well, you'd better come in and lie down. You must want to sleep.

BURKE *(stung—rising unsteadily to his feet with chest out and head thrown back—resentfully).* Lie down and sleep, is it? Divil a wink I'm after having for two days and nights and divil a bit I'm needing now. Let you not be thinking I'm the like of them three weak scuts come in the boat with me. I could lick the three of them sitting down with one hand tied behind me. They may be bate out, but I'm not—and I've been rowing the boat with them lying in the bottom not able to raise a hand for the last two days

we was in it. *(Furiously, as he sees this is making no impression on her)* And I can lick all hands on this tub, wan be wan, tired as I am!

ANNA *(sarcastically).* Gee, ain't you a hard guy! *(Then, with a trace of sympathy, as she notices him swaying from weakness)* But never mind that fight talk. I'll take your word for all you've said. Go on and sit down out here, anyway, if I can't get you to come inside. *(He sits down weakly)* You're all in, you might as well own up to it.

BURKE *(fiercely).* The hell I am!

ANNA *(coldly).* Well, be stubborn then for all I care. And I must say I don't care for your language. The men I know don't pull that rough stuff when ladies are around.

BURKE *(getting unsteadily to his feet again—in a rage).* Ladies! Ho-ho! Divil mend you! Let you not be making game of me. What would ladies be doing on this bloody hulk? *(As* ANNA *attempts to go to the cabin, he lurches into her path)* Aisy, now! You're not the old Squarehead's woman, I suppose you'll be telling me next—living in his cabin with him, no less! *(Seeing the cold, hostile expression on* ANNA'S *face, he suddenly changes his tone to one of boisterous joviality)* But I do be thinking, iver since the first look my eyes took at you, that it's a fool you are to be wasting yourself—a fine, handsome girl—on a stumpy runt of a man like that old Swede. There's too many strapping great lads of the sea would give their heart's blood for one kiss of you!

ANNA *(scornfully).* Lads like you, eh?

BURKE *(grinning).* Ye take the words out o' my mouth. I'm the proper lad for you, if it's meself do be saying it. *(With a quick movement he puts his arms about her waist)* Whisht, now, me daisy! Himself's in the cabin. It's wan of your kisses I'm needing to take the tiredness from me bones. Wan kiss, now! *(He presses her to him and attempts to kiss her)*

ANNA *(struggling fiercely).* Leggo of me, you big mutt!

(She pushes him away with all her might. BURKE, *weak and tottering, is caught off his guard. He is thrown down backward and, in falling, hits his head a hard thump against the bulwark. He lies there still, knocked out for the moment.* ANNA *stands for a second, looking down at him frightenedly. Then she kneels down beside him and raises his head to her knee, staring into his face anxiously for some sign of life)*

BURKE *(stirring a bit—mutteringly).* God stiffen it! *(He opens his eyes and blinks up at her with vague wonder)*

ANNA *(letting his head sink back on the deck, rising to her feet with a sigh of relief).* You're coming to all right, eh? Gee, I was scared for a moment I'd killed you.

BURKE *(with difficulty rising to a sitting position—scornfully).* Killed, is it?

It'd take more than a bit of a blow to crack my thick skull. *(Then looking at her with the most intense admiration)* But, glory be, it's a power of strength is in them two fine arms of yours. There's not a man in the world can say the same as you, that he seen Mat Burke lying at his feet and him dead to the world.

ANNA *(rather remorsefully).* Forget it. I'm sorry it happened, see? (BURKE *rises and sits on bench. Then severely)* Only you had no right to be getting fresh with me. Listen, now, and don't go getting any more wrong notions. I'm on this barge because I'm making a trip with my father. The captain's my father. Now you know.

BURKE. The old square—the old Swede, I mean?

ANNA. Yes.

BURKE *(rising—peering at her face).* Sure I might have known it if I wasn't a bloody fool from birth. Where else'd you get that fine yellow hair is like a golden crown on your head.

ANNA *(with an amused laugh).* Say, nothing stops you, does it? *(Then attempting a severe tone again)* But don't you think you ought to be apologizing for what you said and done yust a minute ago, instead of trying to kid me with that mush?

BURKE *(indignantly).* Mush! *(Then bending forward toward her with very intense earnestness)* Indade and I will ask your pardon a thousand times—and on my knees, if ye like. I didn't mean a word of what I said or did. *(Resentful again for a second)* But divil a woman in all the ports of the world has iver made a great fool of me that way before!

ANNA *(with amused sarcasm).* I see. You mean you're a lady-killer and they all fall for you.

BURKE *(offended. Passionately).* Leave off your fooling! 'Tis that is after getting my back up at you. *(Earnestly)* 'Tis no lie I'm telling you about the women. *(Ruefully)* Though it's a great jackass I am to be mistaking you, even in anger, for the like of them cows on the waterfront is the only women I've met up with since I was growed to a man. *(As* ANNA *shrinks away from him at this, he hurries on pleadingly)* I'm a hard, rough man and I'm not fit, I'm thinking, to be kissing the shoe-soles of a fine, dacent girl the like of yourself. 'Tis only the ignorance of your kind made me see you wrong. So you'll forgive me, for the love of God, and let us be friends from this out. *(Passionately)* I'm thinking I'd rather be friends with you than have any wish for anything else in the world. *(He holds out his hand to her shyly)*

ANNA *(looking queerly at him, perplexed and worried, but moved and pleased in spite of herself—takes his hand uncertainly).* Sure.

BURKE *(with boyish delight).* God bless you! *(In his excitement he squeezes her hand tight)*

ANNA. Ouch!

BURKE *(hastily dropping her hand—ruefully).* Your pardon, Miss. 'Tis a clumsy ape I am. *(Then simply—glancing down his arm proudly)* It's great power I have in my hand and arm, and I do be forgetting it at times.

ANNA *(nursing her crushed hand and glancing at his arm, not without a trace of his own admiration).* Gee, you're some strong, all right.

BURKE *(delighted).* It's no lie, and why shouldn't I be, with me shoveling a million tons of coal in the stokeholes of ships since I was a lad only. *(He pats the coil of hawser invitingly)* Let you sit down, now, Miss, and I'll be telling you a bit of myself, and you'll be telling me a bit of yourself, and in an hour we'll be as old friends as if we was born in the same house. *(He pulls at her sleeve shyly)* Sit down now, if you plaze.

ANNA *(with a half laugh).* Well— *(She sits down)* But we won't talk about me, see? You tell me about yourself and about the wreck.

BURKE *(flattered).* I'll tell you, surely. But can I be asking you one question, Miss, has my head in a puzzle?

ANNA *(guardedly).* Well—I dunno—what is it?

BURKE. What is it you do when you're not taking a trip with the Old Man? For I'm thinking a fine girl the like of you ain't living always on this tub.

ANNA *(uneasily).* No—of course I ain't. *(She searches his face suspiciously, afraid there may be some hidden insinuation in his words. Seeing his simple frankness, she goes on confidently)* Well, I'll tell you. I'm a governess, see? I take care of kids for people and learn them things.

BURKE *(impressed).* A governess, is it? You must be smart, surely.

ANNA. Let's not talk about me. Tell me about the wreck, like you promised me you would.

BURKE *(importantly).* 'Twas this way, Miss. Two weeks out we ran into the divil's own storm, and she sprang wan hell of a leak up for'ard. The skipper was hoping to make Boston before another blow would finish her, but ten days back we met up with another storm the like of the first, only worse. Four days we was in it with green seas raking over her from bow to stern. That was a terrible time, God help us. *(Proudly)* And if 'twasn't for me and my great strength, I'm telling you—and it's God's truth—there'd been mutiny itself in the stokehole. 'Twas me held them to it, with a kick to wan and a clout to another, and they not caring a damn for the engineers any more, but fearing a clout of my right arm more than they'd fear the sea itself. *(He glances at her anxiously, eager for her approval)*

ANNA *(concealing a smile—amused by this boyish boasting of his).* You did some hard work, didn't you?

BURKE *(promptly).* I did that! I'm a divil for sticking it out when them that's weak give up. But much good it did anyone! 'Twas a mad, fightin'

scramble in the last seconds with each man for himself. I disremember how it come about, but there was the four of us in wan boat and when we raised high on a great wave I took a look about and divil a sight there was of ship or men on top of the sea.

ANNA *(in a subdued voice).* Then all the others was drowned?

BURKE. They was, surely.

ANNA *(with a shudder).* What a terrible end!

BURKE *(turns to her).* A terrible end for the like of them swabs does live on land, maybe. But for the like of us does be roaming the seas, a good end, I'm telling you—quick and clane.

ANNA *(struck by the word).* Yes, clean. That's yust the word for—all of it—the way it makes me feel.

BURKE. The sea, you mean? *(Interestedly)* I'm thinking you have a bit of it in your blood, too. Your Old Man wasn't only a barge rat—begging your pardon—all his life, by the cut of him.

ANNA. No, he was bo'sun on sailing ships for years. And all the men on both sides of the family have gone to sea as far back as he remembers, he says. All the women have married sailors, too.

BURKE *(with intense satisfaction).* Did they, now? They had spirit in them. It's only on the sea you'd find rale men with guts is fit to wed with fine, high-tempered girls *(then he adds half-boldly)* the like of yourself.

ANNA *(with a laugh).* There you go kiddin' again. *(Then seeing his hurt expression—quickly)* But you was going to tell me about yourself. You're Irish, of course I can tell that.

BURKE *(stoutly).* Yes, thank God, though I've not seen a sight of it in fifteen years or more.

ANNA *(thoughtfully).* Sailors never do go home hardly, do they? That's what my father was saying.

BURKE. He wasn't telling no lie. *(With sudden melancholy)* It's a hard and lonesome life, the sea is. The only women you'd meet in the ports of the world who'd be willing to speak you a kind word isn't woman at all. You know the kind I mane and they're a poor, wicked lot, God forgive them. They're looking to steal the money from you only.

ANNA *(her face averted—rising to her feet—agitatedly).* I think—I guess I'd better see what's doing inside.

BURKE *(afraid he has offended her—beseechingly).* Don't go, I'm saying! Is it I've given you offense with the talk of the like of them? Don't heed it at all! I'm clumsy in my wits when it comes to talking proper with a girl the like of you. And why wouldn't I be? Since the day I left home for to go to sea punching coal, this is the first time I've had a word with a rale, dacent woman. So don't turn your back on me now, and we beginning to be friends.

ANNA *(turning to him again—forcing a smile).* I'm not sore at you, honest.

BURKE *(gratefully).* God bless you!

ANNA *(changing the subject abruptly).* But if you honestly think the sea's such a rotten life, why don't you get out of it?

BURKE *(surprised).* Work on land, is it? *(She nods. He spits scornfully)* Digging spuds in the muck from dawn to dark, I suppose? *(Vehemently)* I wasn't made for it, Miss.

ANNA *(with a laugh).* I thought you'd say that.

BURKE *(argumentatively).* But there's good jobs and bad jobs at sea, like there'd be on land. I'm thinking if it's in the stoke-hole of a proper liner I was, I'd be able to have a little house and be home to it wan week out of four. And I'm thinking that maybe then I'd have the luck to find a fine dacent girl—the like of yourself, now—would be willing to wed with me.

ANNA *(turning away from him with a short laugh—uneasily).* Why, sure. Why not?

BURKE *(edging up close to her—exultantly).* Then you think a girl the like of yourself might maybe not mind the past at all but only be seeing the good herself put in me?

ANNA *(in the same tone).* Why, sure.

BURKE *(passionately).* She'd not be sorry for it, I'd take my oath! 'Tis no more drinking and roving about I'd be doing then, but giving my pay day into her hand and staying at home with her as meek as a lamb each night of the week I'd be in port.

ANNA *(moved in spite of herself and troubled by this half-concealed proposal —with a forced laugh).* All you got to do is find the girl.

BURKE. I have found her!

ANNA *(half-frightenedly—trying to laugh it off).* You have? When? I thought you was saying——

BURKE *(boldly and forcefully).* This night. *(Hanging his head—humbly)* If she'll be having me. *(Then raising his eyes to hers—simply)* 'Tis you I mean.

ANNA *(is held by his eyes for a moment—then shrinks back from him with a strange, broken laugh).* Say—are you—going crazy? Are you trying to kid me? Proposing—to me?—for Gawd's sake! on such short acquaintance?

*(*CHRIS *comes out of the cabin and stands staring blinkingly astern. When he makes out* ANNA *in such intimate proximity to this strange sailor, an angry expression comes over his face).*

BURKE *(following her—with fierce, pleading insistence).* I'm telling you there's the will of God in it that brought me safe through the storm and fog to the wan spot in the world where you was! Think of that now, and isn't it queer——

CHRIS. Anna! *(He comes toward them, raging, his fists clenched)* Anna, you gat in cabin, you hear!

ANNA *(all her emotions immediately transformed into resentment at his bullying tone).* Who d'you think you're talking to—a slave?

CHRIS *(hurt—his voice breaking—pleadingly).* You need gat rest, Anna. You gat sleep. *(She does not move. He turns on* BURKE *furiously)* What you doing here, you sailor fallar? You ain't sick like oders. You gat in fo'c'stle. Dey give you bunk. *(Threateningly)* You hurry, Ay tal you!

ANNA *(impulsively).* But he is sick. Look at him. Look at him. He can hardly stand up.

BURKE *(straightening and throwing out his chest—with a bold laugh).* Is it giving me orders ye are, me bucko? Let you look out, then! With wan hand, weak as I am, I can break ye in two and fling the pieces over the side—and your crew after you. *(Stopping abruptly)* I was forgetting. You're her Old Man and I'd not raise a fist to you for the world. *(His knees sag, he wavers and seems about to fall.* ANNA *utters an exclamation of alarm and hurries to his side)*

ANNA *(taking one of his arms over her shoulder).* Come on in the cabin. You can have my bed if there ain't no other place.

BURKE *(with jubilant happiness—as they proceed toward the cabin).* Glory be to God, is it holding my arm about your neck you are! Anna! Anna! Sure it's a sweet name is suited to you.

ANNA *(guiding him carefully).* Sssh! Sssh!

BURKE. Whisht, is it? Indade, and I'll not. I'll be roaring it out like a fog horn over the sea! You're the girl of the world and we'll be marrying soon and I don't care who knows it!

ANNA *(as she guides him through the cabin door).* Ssshh! Never mind that talk. You go to sleep. *(They go out of sight in the cabin.* CHRIS, *who has been listening to* BURKE'S *last words with open-mouthed amazement, stands looking after them desperately)*

CHRIS *(turns suddenly and shakes his fist out at the sea—with bitter hatred).* Dat's your dirty trick, damn ole davil, you! *(Then in a frenzy of rage)* But, py God, you don't do dat! Not vhile Ay'm living! No, py God, you don't!

ACT III

Scene: The interior of the cabin on the barge, Simeon Winthrop *(at dock in Boston)—a narrow, low-ceilinged compartment the walls of which are painted a light brown with white trimmings. In the rear on the left, a door leading to the sleeping quarters. In the far left corner, a large locker-closet, painted white, on the door of which a mirror hangs on a nail. In the rear wall, two small square windows and a door opening out on*

the deck toward the stern. In the right wall, two more windows looking out on the port deck. White curtains, clean and stiff, are at the windows. A table with two cane-bottomed chairs stands in the center of the cabin. A dilapidated wicker rocker, painted brown, is also by the table.

It is afternoon of a sunny day about a week later. From the harbor and docks outside, muffled by the closed door and windows, comes the sound of steamers' whistles and the puffing snort of the donkey engines of some ship unloading nearby.

As the curtain rises, CHRIS *and* ANNA *are discovered.* ANNA *is seated in the rocking-chair by the table, with a newspaper in her hands. She is not reading but staring straight in front of her. She looks unhappy, troubled, frowningly concentrating on her thoughts.* CHRIS *wanders about the room, casting quick, uneasy side glances at her face, then stopping to peer absent-mindedly out of the window. His attitude betrays an overwhelming, gloomy anxiety which has him on tenterhooks. He pretends to be engaged in setting things ship-shape, but this occupation is confined to picking up some object, staring at it stupidly for a second, then aimlessly putting it down again. He clears his throat and starts to sing to himself in a low, doleful voice: "My Yosephine, come board de ship. Long time Ay vait for you."*

ANNA *(turning to him, sarcastically).* I'm glad someone's feeling good. *(Wearily)* Gee, I sure wish we was out of this dump and back in New York.

CHRIS *(with a sigh).* Ay'm glad vhen ve sail again, too. *(Then, as she makes no comment, he goes on with a ponderous attempt at sarcasm)* Ay don't see vhy you don't like Boston, dough. You have good time here, Ay tank. You go ashore all time, every day and night veek ve've been here. You go to movies, see show, gat all kinds fun— *(His eyes hard with hatred)* All with that damn Irish fallar!

ANNA *(with weary scorn).* Oh, for heaven's sake, are you off on that again? Where's the harm in his taking me around? D'you want me to sit all day and night in this cabin with you—and knit? Ain't I got a right to have as good a time as I can?

CHRIS. It ain't right kind of fun—not with that fallar, no.

ANNA. I been back on board every night by eleven, ain't I? *(Then struck by some thought—looks at him with keen suspicion—with rising anger)* Say, look here, what d'you mean by what you yust said?

CHRIS *(hastily).* Nutting but what Ay say, Anna.

ANNA. You said "ain't right" and you said it funny. Say, listen, here, you ain't trying to insinuate that there's something wrong between us, are you?

CHRIS *(horrified).* No, Anna! No, Ay svear to God, Ay never tank dat!

ANNA *(mollified by his very evident sincerity—sitting down again).* Well, don't you never think it neither if you want me ever to speak to you again. *(Angrily again)* If I ever dreamt you thought that, I'd get the hell out of this barge so quick you couldn't see me for dust.

CHRIS *(soothingly).* Ay wouldn't never dream— *(Then after a second's pause, reprovingly)* You vas getting learn to svear. Dat ain't nice for young gel, you tank?

ANNA *(with a faint trace of a smile).* Excuse me. You ain't used to such language, I know. *(Mockingly)* That's what your taking me to sea has done for me.

CHRIS *(indignantly).* No, it ain't me. It's dat damn sailor fallar learn you bad tangs.

ANNA. He ain't a sailor. He's a stoker.

CHRIS *(forcibly).* Dat vas million times vorse, Ay tal you! Dem fellars dat vork below shoveling coal vas de dirtiest, rough gang of no-good fallars in vorld!

ANNA. I'd hate to hear you say that to Mat.

CHRIS. Oh, Ay tal him same tang. You don't gat it in head Ay'm scared of him yust 'cause he vas stronger'n Ay vas. *(Menacingly)* You don't gat for fight with fists with dem fallars. Dere's oder vay for fix him.

ANNA *(glancing at him with sudden alarm).* What d'you mean?

CHRIS *(sullenly).* Nutting.

ANNA. You'd better not. I wouldn't start no trouble with him if I was you. He might forget some time that you was old and my father—and then you'd be out of luck.

CHRIS *(with smoldering hatred).* Vell, yust let him! Ay'm ole bird maybe, but Ay bet Ay show him trick or two.

ANNA *(suddenly changing her tone—persuasively).* Aw come on, be good. What's eating you, anyway? Don't you want no one to be nice to me except yourself?

CHRIS *(placated—coming to her—eagerly).* Yes, Ay do, Anna—only not fallar on sea. But Ay like for you marry steady fallar got good yob on land. You have little home in country all your own——

ANNA *(rising to her feet—brusquely).* Oh, cut it out! *(Scornfully)* Little home in the country! I wish you could have seen the little home in the country where you had me in jail till I was sixteen! *(With rising irritation)* Some day you're going to get me so mad with that talk, I'm going to turn loose on you and tell you—a lot of things that'll open your eyes.

CHRIS *(alarmed).* Ay don't vant——

ANNA. I know you don't; but you keep on talking yust the same.

CHRIS. Ay don't talk no more den, Anna.

ANNA. Then promise me you'll cut out saying nasty things about Mat Burke every chance you get.

CHRIS *(evasive and suspicious).* Vhy? You like dat fallar—very much, Anna?

ANNA. Yes, I certainly do! He's a regular man, no matter what faults he's got. One of his fingers is worth all the hundreds of men I met out there—inland.

CHRIS *(his face darkening).* Maybe you tank you love him, den?

ANNA *(defiantly).* What of it if I do?

CHRIS *(scowling and forcing out the words).* Maybe—you tank you—marry him?

ANNA *(shaking her head).* No! (CHRIS' *face lights up with relief.* ANNA *continues slowly, a trace of sadness in her voice)* If I'd met him four years ago—or even two years ago—I'd have jumped at the chance, I tell you that straight. And I would now—only he's such a simple guy—a big kid—and I ain't got the heart to fool him. *(She breaks off suddenly)* But don't never say again he ain't good enough for me. It's me ain't good enough for him.

CHRIS *(snorts scornfully).* Py yiminy, you go crazy, Ay tank!

ANNA *(with mournful laugh).* Well, I been thinking I was myself the last few days. *(She goes and takes a shawl from a hook near the door and throws it over her shoulders)* Guess I'll take a walk down to the end of the dock for a minute and see what's doing. I love to watch the ships passing. Mat'll be along before long, I guess. Tell him where I am, will you?

CHRIS *(despondently).* All right, Ay tal him.

(ANNA *goes out the doorway in rear.* CHRIS *follows her out and stands on the deck outside for a moment looking after her. Then he comes back inside and shuts the door. He stands looking out of the window—mutters—"Dirty ole davil, you." Then he goes to the table, sets the cloth straight mechanically, picks up the newspaper* ANNA *has let fall to the floor and sits down in the rocking-chair. He stares at the paper for a while, then puts it on table, holds his head in his hands and sighs drearily. The noise of a man's heavy footsteps comes from the deck outside and there is a loud knock on the door.* CHRIS *starts, making a move as if to get up and go to the door, then thinks better of it and sits still. The knock is repeated—then as no answer comes, the door is flung open and* MAT BURKE *appears.* CHRIS *scowls at the intruder and his hand instinctively goes back to the sheath knife on his hip.* BURKE *is dressed up—wears a cheap blue suit, a striped cotton shirt with a black tie, and black shoes newly shined. His face is beaming with good humor)*

BURKE *(as he sees* CHRIS*—in a jovial tone of mockery).* Well, God bless who's here! *(He bends down and squeezes his huge form through the narrow doorway)* And how is the world treating you this afternoon, Anna's father?

CHRIS *(sullenly).* Pooty goot—if it ain't for some fallars.

BURKE *(with a grin).* Meaning me, do you? *(He laughs)* Well, if you ain't the funny old crank of a man! *(Then soberly)* Where's herself? (CHRIS *sits dumb, scowling, his eyes averted.* BURKE *is irritated by this silence)* Where's Anna, I'm after asking you?

CHRIS *(hesitating—then grouchily).* She go down end of dock.

BURKE. I'll be going down to her, then. But first I'm thinking I'll take this chance when we're alone to have a word with you. *(He sits down opposite* CHRIS *at the table and leans over toward him)* And that word is soon said. I'm marrying your Anna before this day is out, and you might as well make up your mind to it whether you like it or no.

CHRIS *(glaring at him with hatred and forcing a scornful laugh).* Ho-ho! Dat's easy for say!

BURKE. You mean I won't? *(Scornfully)* Is it the like of yourself will stop me, are you thinking?

CHRIS. Yes, Ay stop it, if it come to vorst.

BURKE *(with scornful pity).* God help you!

CHRIS. But ain't no need for me do dat. Anna——

BURKE *(smiling confidently).* Is it Anna you think will prevent me?

CHRIS. Yes.

BURKE. And I'm telling you she'll not. She knows I'm loving her, and she loves me the same, and I know it.

CHRIS. Ho-ho! She only have fun. She make big fool of you, dat's all!

BURKE *(unshaken—pleasantly).* That's a lie in your throat, divil mend you!

CHRIS. No, it ain't lie. She tal me yust before she go out she never marry fallar like you.

BURKE. I'll not believe it. 'Tis a great old liar you are, and a divil to be making a power of trouble if you had your way. But 'tis not trouble I'm looking for, and me sitting down here. *(Earnestly)* Let us be talking it out now as man to man. You're her father, and wouldn't it be a shame for us to be at each other's throats like a pair of dogs, and I married with Anna? So out with the truth, man alive. What is it you're holding against me at all?

CHRIS *(a bit placated, in spite of himself, by* BURKE's *evident sincerity—but puzzled and suspicious).* Vell—Ay don't vant for Anna get married. Listen, you fallar. Ay'm a ole man. Ay don't see Anna for fifteen year. She vas all Ay gat in vorld. And now ven she come on first trip—you tank Ay vant her leave me 'lone again?

BURKE *(heartily).* Let you not be thinking I have no heart at all for the way you'd be feeling.

CHRIS *(astonished and encouraged—trying to plead persuasively).* Den you

do right tang, eh? You ship avay again, leave Anna alone. *(Cajolingly)* Big fallar like you dat's on sea, he don't need vife. He gat new gel in every port, you know dat.

BURKE *(angrily for a second).* God stiffen you! *(Then controlling himself—calmly)* I'll not be giving you the lie on that. But divil take you, there's a time comes to every man, on sea or land, that isn't a born fool, when he's sick of the lot of them cows, and wearing his heart out to meet up with a fine dacent girl, and have a home to call his own and be rearing up children in it. 'Tis small use you're asking me to leave Anna. She's the wan woman of the world for me, and I can't live without her now, I'm thinking.

CHRIS. You forgat all about her in one veek out of port, Ay bet you!

BURKE. You don't know the like I am. Death itself wouldn't make me forget her. So let you not be making talk to me about leaving her. I'll not, and be damned to you! It won't be so bad for you as you'd make out at all. She'll be living here in the States, and her married to me. And you'd be seeing her often so—a sight more often than ever you saw her the fifteen years she was growing up in the West. It's quare you'd be the one to be making great trouble about her leaving you when you never laid eyes on her once in all them years.

CHRIS *(guiltily).* Ay taught it vas better Anna stay away, grow up inland vhere she don't ever know ole davil, sea.

BURKE *(scornfully).* Is it blaming the sea for your troubles ye are again, God help you? Well, Anna knows it now. 'Twas in her blood, anyway.

CHRIS. And Ay don't vant she ever know no-good fallar on sea——

BURKE. She knows one now.

CHRIS *(banging the table with his fist—furiously).* Dat's yust it! Dat's yust what you are—no-good sailor fallar! You tank Ay lat her life be made sorry by you like her mo'der's vas by me! No, Ay svear! She don't marry you if Ay gat kill you first!

BURKE *(looks at him a moment, in astonishment—then laughing uproariously).* Ho-ho! Glory be to God, it's bold talk you have for a stumpy runt of a man!

CHRIS *(threateningly).* Vell—you see!

BURKE *(with grinning defiance).* I'll see, surely! I'll see myself and Anna married this day, I'm telling you. *(Then with contemptuous exasperation)* It's quare fool's blather you have about the sea done this and the sea done that. You'd ought to be 'shamed to be saying the like, and you an old sailor yourself. I'm after hearing a lot of it from you and a lot more that Anna's told me you do be saying to her, and I'm thinking it's a poor weak thing you are, and not a man at all!

CHRIS *(darkly).* You see if Ay'm man—maybe quicker'n you tank.

BURKE *(contemptuously).* Yerra, don't be boasting. I'm thinking 'tis out of your wits you've got with fright of the sea. You'd be wishing Anna married to a farmer, she told me. That'd be a swate match, surely! Would you have a fine girl the like of Anna lying down at nights with a muddy scut stinking of pigs and dung? Or would you have her tied for life to the like of them skinny, shriveled swabs does be working in cities?

CHRIS. Dat's lie, you fool!

BURKE. 'Tis not. 'Tis your own mad notions I'm after telling. But you know the truth in your heart, if great fear of the sea has made you a liar and coward itself. *(Pounding the table)* The sea's the only life for a man with guts in him isn't afraid of his own shadow! 'Tis only on the sea he's free, and him roving the face of the world, seeing all things, and not giving a damn for saving up money, or stealing from his friends, or any of the black tricks that a landlubber'd waste his life on. 'Twas yourself knew it once, and you a bo'sun for years.

CHRIS *(sputtering with rage).* You vas crazy fool, Ay tal you!

BURKE. You've swallowed the anchor. The sea gives you a clout once, knocked you down, and you're not man enough to get up for another, but lie there for the rest of your life howling bloody murder. *(Proudly)* Isn't it myself the sea has nearly drowned, and me battered and bate till I was that close to hell I could hear the flames roaring, and never a groan out of me till the sea gave up and it seeing the great strength and guts of a man was in me?

CHRIS *(scornfully).* Yes, you vas hell of fallar, hear you tal it!

BURKE *(angrily).* You'll be calling me a liar once too often, me old bucko! Wasn't the whole story of it and my picture itself in the newspapers of Boston a week back? *(Looking* CHRIS *up and down belittlingly)* Sure I'd like to see you in the best of your youth do the like of what I done in the storm and after. 'Tis a mad lunatic, screeching with fear, you'd be this minute!

CHRIS. Ho-ho! You vas young fool! In ole years when Ay vas on windyammer, Ay vas through hundred storms vorse'n dat! Ships vas ships den—and men dat sail on dem vas real men. And now what you gat on steamers? You gat fallars on deck don't know ship from mud-scow. *(With a meaning glance at* BURKE) And below deck you gat fallars yust know how for shovel coal—might yust as vell vork on coal vagon ashore!

BURKE *(stung—angrily).* Is it casting insults at the men in the stokehole ye are, ye old ape? God stiffen you! Wan of them is worth any ten stock-fish-swilling Squareheads ever shipped on a windbag!

CHRIS *(his face working with rage, his hand going back to the sheath-knife on his hip).* Irish svine, you!

BURKE *(tauntingly).* Don't ye like the Irish, ye old baboon? 'Tis that you're needing in your family, I'm telling you—an Irishman and a man of the stokehole—to put guts in it so that you'll not be having grandchildren would be fearful cowards and jackasses the like of yourself!

CHRIS *(half rising from his chair—in a voice choked with rage).* You look out!

BURKE *(watching him intently—a mocking smile on his lips).* And it's that you'll be having, no matter what you'll do to prevent; for Anna and me'll be married this day, and no old fool the like of you will stop us when I've made up my mind.

CHRIS *(with a hoarse cry).* You don't! *(He throws himself at* BURKE, *knife in hand, knocking his chair over backwards.* BURKE *springs to his feet quickly in time to meet the attack. He laughs with the pure love of battle. The old Swede is like a child in his hands.* BURKE *does not strike or mistreat him in any way, but simply twists his right hand behind his back and forces the knife from his fingers. He throws the knife into a far corner of the room—tauntingly)*

BURKE. Old men is getting childish shouldn't play with knives. *(Holding the struggling* CHRIS *at arm's length—with a sudden rush of anger, drawing back his fist)* I've half a mind to hit you a great clout will put sense in your square head. Kape off me now, I'm warning you! *(He gives* CHRIS *a push with the flat of his hand which sends the old Swede staggering back against the cabin wall, where he remains standing, panting heavily, his eyes fixed on* BURKE *with hatred, as if he were only collecting his strength to rush at him again)*

BURKE *(warningly).* Now don't be coming at me again, I'm saying, or I'll flatten you on the floor with a blow, if 'tis Anna's father you are itself! I've not patience left for you. *(Then with an amused laugh)* Well, 'tis a bold old man you are just the same, and I'd never think it was in you to come tackling me alone. *(A shadow crosses the cabin windows. Both men start.* ANNA *appears in the doorway)*

ANNA *(with pleased surprise as she sees* BURKE). Hello, Mat. Are you here already? I was down— *(She stops, looking from one to the other, sensing immediately that something has happened)* What's up? *(Then noticing the overturned chair—in alarm)* How'd that chair get knocked over? *(Turning on* BURKE *reproachfully)* You ain't been fighting with him, Mat—after you promised?

BURKE *(his old self again).* I've not laid a hand on him, Anna. *(He goes and picks up the chair, then turning on the still questioning* ANNA—*with a reassuring smile)* Let you not be worried at all. 'Twas only a bit of an argument we was having to pass the time till you'd come.

ANNA. It must have been some argument when you got to throwing chairs. *(She turns on* CHRIS) Why don't you say something? What was it about?

CHRIS *(relaxing at last—avoiding her eyes—sheepishly).* Ve vas talking about ships and fallars on sea.

ANNA *(with a relieved smile).* Oh—the old stuff, eh?

BURKE *(suddenly seeming to come to a bold decision—with a defiant grin at* CHRIS). He's not after telling you the whole of it. We was arguing about you mostly.

ANNA *(with a frown).* About me?

BURKE. And we'll be finishing it out right here and now in your presence if you're willing. *(He sits down at the left of table)*

ANNA *(uncertainly—looking from him to her father).* Sure. Tell me what it's all about.

CHRIS *(advancing toward the table—protesting to* BURKE). No! You don't do dat, you! You tal him you don't vant for hear him talk, Anna.

ANNA. But I do. I want this cleared up.

CHRIS *(miserably afraid now).* Vell, not now, anyway. You vas going ashore, yes? You ain't got time—

ANNA *(firmly).* Yes, right here and now. *(She turns to* BURKE) You tell me, Mat, since he don't want to.

BURKE *(draws a deep breath—then plunges in boldly).* The whole of it's in a few words only. So's he'd make no mistake, and him hating the sight of me, I told him in his teeth I loved you. *(Passionately)* And that's God's truth, Anna, and well you know it!

CHRIS *(scornfully—forcing a laugh).* Ho-ho! He tal same tang to gel every port he go!

ANNA *(shrinking from her father with repulsion—resentfully).* Shut up, can't you? *(Then to* BURKE—*feelingly)* I know it's true, Mat. I don't mind what he says.

BURKE *(humbly grateful).* God bless you!

ANNA: And then what?

BURKE. And then— *(Hesitatingly)* And then I said— *(He looks at her pleadingly)* I said I was sure—I told him I thought you have a bit of love for me, too. *(Passionately)* Say you do, Anna! Let you not destroy me entirely, for the love of God! *(He grasps both her hands in his two)*

ANNA *(deeply moved and troubled—forcing a trembling laugh).* So you told him that, Mat? No wonder he was mad. *(Forcing out the words)* Well, maybe it's true, Mat. Maybe I do. I been thinking and thinking—I didn't want to, Mat, I'll own up to that—I tried to cut it out—but— *(She laughs helplessly)* I guess I can't help it anyhow. So I guess I do, Mat. *(Then with a sudden joyous defiance)* Sure I do! What's the use of kidding myself different? Sure I love you, Mat!

CHRIS *(with a cry of pain).* Anna! *(He sits crushed)*

BURKE *(with a great depth of sincerity in his humble gratitude).* God be praised!

ANNA *(assertively).* And I ain't never loved a man in my life before, you can always believe that—no matter what happens.

BURKE *(goes over to her and puts his arms around her).* Sure I do be believing ivery word you iver said or iver will say. And 'tis you and me will be having a grand, beautiful life together to the end of our days! *(He tries to kiss her. At first she turns away her head—then, overcome by a fierce impulse of passionate love, she takes his head in both her hands and holds his face close to hers, staring into his eyes. Then she kisses him full on the lips)*

ANNA *(pushing him away from her—forcing a broken laugh).* Good-by. *(She walks to the doorway in rear—stands with her back toward them, looking out. Her shoulders quiver once or twice as if she were fighting back her sobs)*

BURKE *(too in the seventh heaven of bliss to get any correct interpretation of her word—with a laugh).* Good-by, is it? The divil you say! I'll be coming back at you in a second for more of the same! *(To* CHRIS, *who has quickened to instant attention at his daughter's good-by, and has looked back at her with a stirring of foolish hope in his eyes)* Now, me old bucko, what'll you be saying? You heard the words from her own lips. Confess I've bate you. Own up like a man when you're bate fair and square. And here's my hand to you— *(Holds out his hand)* And let you take it and we'll shake and forget what's over and done, and be friends from this out.

CHRIS *(with implacable hatred).* Ay don't shake hands with you fallar—not vhile Ay live!

BURKE *(offended).* The back of my hand to you then, if that suits you better. *(Growling)* 'Tis a rotten bad loser you are, divil mend you!

CHRIS. Ay don't lose. *(Trying to be scornful and self-convincing)* Anna say she like you little bit but you don't hear her say she marry you, Ay bet. *(At the sound of her name* ANNA *has turned round to them. Her face is composed and calm again, but it is the dead calm of despair)*

BURKE *(scornfully).* No, and I wasn't hearing her say the sun is shining either.

CHRIS *(doggedly).* Dat's all right. She don't say it, yust same.

ANNA *(quietly—coming forward to them).* No, I didn't say it, Mat.

CHRIS *(eagerly).* Dere! You hear!

BURKE *(misunderstanding her—with a grin).* You're waiting till you do be asked, you mane? Well, I'm asking you now. And we'll be married this day, with the help of God!

ANNA *(gently).* You heard what I said, Mat—after I kissed you?

BURKE *(alarmed by something in her manner).* No—I disremember.

ANNA. I said good-by. *(Her voice trembling)* That kiss was for good-by, Mat.

BURKE *(terrified).* What d'you mane?

ANNA. I can't marry you, Mat—and we've said good-by. That's all.

CHRIS *(unable to hold back his exultation).* Ay know it! Ay know dat vas so!

BURKE *(jumping to his feet—unable to believe his ears).* Anna! Is it making game of me you'd be? 'Tis a quare time to joke with me, and don't be doing it, for the love of God.

ANNA *(looking him in the eyes—steadily).* D'you think I'd kid you? No, I'm not joking, Mat. I mean what I said.

BURKE. Ye don't! Ye can't! 'Tis mad you are, I'm telling you!

ANNA *(fixedly).* No, I'm not.

BURKE *(desperately).* But what's come over you so sudden? You was saying you loved me——

ANNA. I'll say that as often as you want me to. It's true.

BURKE *(bewilderedly).* Then why—what, in the divil's name— Oh, God help me, I can't make head or tail to it at all!

ANNA. Because it's the best way out I can figure, Mat. *(Her voice catching)* I been thinking it over and thinking it over day and night all week. Don't think it ain't hard on me, too, Mat.

BURKE. For the love of God, tell me then, what is it that's preventing you wedding me when the two of us has love? *(Suddenly getting an idea and pointing at* CHRIS*—exasperatedly)* Is it giving heed to the like of that old fool ye are, and him hating me and filling your ears full of bloody lies against me?

CHRIS *(getting to his feet—raging triumphantly before* ANNA *has a chance to get in a word).* Yes, Anna believe me, not you! She know her old fa'der don't lie like you.

ANNA *(turning on her father angrily).* You sit down, d'you hear? Where do you come in butting in and making things worse? You're like a devil, you are! *(Harshly)* Good Lord, and I was beginning to like you, beginning to forget all I've got held up against you!

CHRIS *(crushed feebly).* You ain't got nutting for hold against me, Anna.

ANNA. Ain't I yust! Well, lemme tell you— *(She glances at* BURKE *and stops abruptly)* Say, Mat, I'm s'prised at you. You didn't think anything he said——

BURKE *(glumly).* Sure, what else would it be?

ANNA. Think I've ever paid any attention to all his crazy bull? Gee, you must take me for a five-year-old kid.

BURKE *(puzzled and beginning to be irritated at her too).* I don't know how to take you, with your saying this one minute and that the next.

ANNA. Well, he has nothing to do with it.

BURKE. Then what is it has? Tell me, and don't keep me waiting and sweating blood.

ANNA *(resolutely).* I can't tell you—and I won't. I got a good reason—and that's all you need to know. I can't marry you, that's all there is to it. *(Distractedly)* So, for Gawd's sake, let's talk of something else.

BURKE. I'll not! *(Then fearfully)* Is it married to someone else you are—in the West maybe?

ANNA *(vehemently).* I should say not.

BURKE *(regaining his courage).* To the divil with all other reasons then. They don't matter with me at all. *(He gets to his feet confidently, assuming a masterful tone)* I'm thinking you're the like of them women can't make up their mind till they're drove to it. Well, then, I'll make up your mind for you bloody quick. *(He takes her by the arms, grinning to soften his serious bullying)* We've had enough of talk! Let you be going into your room now and be dressing in your best and we'll be going ashore.

CHRIS *(aroused—angrily).* No, py God, she don't do that! *(Takes hold of her arm)*

ANNA *(who has listened to* BURKE *in astonishment. She draws away from him, instinctively repelled by his tone, but not exactly sure if he is serious or not—a trace of resentment in her voice).* Say, where do you get that stuff?

BURKE *(imperiously).* Never mind, now! Let you go get dressed, I'm saying. *(Then turning to* CHRIS) We'll be seeing who'll win in the end—me or you.

CHRIS *(to* ANNA—*also in an authoritative tone).* You stay right here, Anna, you hear! (ANNA *stands looking from one to the other of them as if she thought they had both gone crazy. Then the expression of her face freezes into the hardened sneer of her experience)*

BURKE *(violently).* She'll not! She'll do what I say! You've had your hold on her long enough. It's my turn now.

ANNA *(with a hard laugh).* Your turn? Say, what am I, anyway?

BURKE. 'Tis not what you are, 'tis what you're going to be this day—and that's wedded to me before night comes. Hurry up now with your dressing.

CHRIS *(commandingly).* You don't do one tang he say, Anna! (ANNA *laughs mockingly)*

BURKE. She will, so!

CHRIS. Ay tal you she don't! Ay'm her fa'der.

BURKE. She will in spite of you. She's taking my orders from this out, not yours.

ANNA *(laughing again).* Orders is good!

BURKE *(turning to her impatiently).* Hurry up now, and shake a leg. We've no time to be wasting. *(Irritated as she doesn't move)* Do you hear what I'm telling you?

CHRIS. You stay dere, Anna!

ANNA *(at the end of her patience—blazing out at them passionately).* You can go to hell, both of you! *(There is something in her tone that makes them forget their quarrel and turn to her in a stunned amazement.* ANNA *laughs wildly)* You're just like all the rest of them—you two! Gawd, you'd think I was a piece of furniture! I'll show you! Sit down now! *(As they hesitate —furiously)* Sit down and let me talk for a minute. You're all wrong, see? Listen to me! I'm going to tell you something—and then I'm going to beat it. *(To* BURKE*—with a harsh laugh)* I'm going to tell you a funny story, so pay attention. *(Pointing to* CHRIS) I've been meaning to turn it loose on him every time he'd get my goat with his bull about keeping me safe inland. I wasn't going to tell you, but you've forced me into it. What's the dif? It's all wrong anyway, and you might as well get cured that way as any other. *(With hard mocking)* Only don't forget what you said a minute ago about it not mattering to you what other reason I got so long as I wasn't married to no one else.

BURKE *(manfully).* That's my word, and I'll stick to it!

ANNA *(laughing bitterly).* What a chance! You make me laugh, honest! Want to bet you will? Wait 'n see! *(She stands at the table rear, looking from one to the other of the two men with her hard, mocking smile. Then she begins, fighting to control her emotion and speak calmly)* First thing is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on 's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me, see?—'cepting myself. I'll do what I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do! I ain't asking either of you for a living. I can make it myself—one way or other. I'm my own boss. So put that in your pipe and smoke it! You and your orders!

BURKE *(protestingly).* I wasn't meaning it that way at all and well you know it. You've no call to be raising this rumpus with me. *(Pointing to* CHRIS) 'Tis him you've a right——

ANNA. I'm coming to him. But you—you did mean it that way, too. You sounded—yust like all the rest. *(Hysterically)* But, damn it, shut up! Let me talk for a change!

BURKE. 'Tis quare, rough talk, that—for a dacent girl the like of you!

ANNA *(with a hard laugh).* Decent? Who told you I was? (CHRIS *is sitting with bowed shoulders, his head in his hands. She leans over him in exasperation and shakes him violently by the shoulder)* Don't go to sleep, Old Man! Listen here, I'm talking to you now!

CHRIS *(straightening up and looking about as if he were seeking a way to escape—with frightened foreboding in his voice).* Ay don't vant for hear it. You vas going out of head, Ay tank, Anna.

ANNA *(violently).* Well, living with you is enough to drive anyone off their

nut. Your bunk about the farm being so fine! Didn't I write you year after year how rotten it was and what a dirty slave them cousins made of me? What'd you care? Nothing! Not even enough to come out and see me! That crazy bull about wanting to keep me away from the sea don't go down with me! You yust didn't want to be bothered with me! You're like all the rest of 'em!

CHRIS *(feebly).* Anna! It ain't so——

ANNA *(not heeding his interruption—revengefully).* But one thing I never wrote you. It was one of them cousins that you think is such nice people —the youngest son—Paul—that started me wrong. *(Loudly)* It wasn't none of my fault. I hated him worse'n hell and he knew it. But he was big and strong—*(pointing to* BURKE)—like you!

BURKE *(half springing to his feet—his fists clenched).* God blarst it! *(He sinks slowly back in his chair again, the knuckles showing white on his clenched hands, his face tense with the effort to suppress his grief and rage)*

CHRIS *(in a cry of horrified pain).* Anna!

ANNA *(to him—seeming not to have heard their interruptions).* That was why I run away from the farm. That was what made me get a yob as nurse girl in St. Paul. *(With a hard, mocking laugh)* And you think that was a nice yob for a girl, too, don't you? *(Sarcastically)* With all of them nice inland fellers yust looking for a chance to marry me, I s'pose. Marry me? What a chance! They wasn't looking for marrying. *(As* BURKE *lets a groan of fury escape him—desperately)* I'm owning up to everything fair and square. I was caged in, I tell you—yust like in yail—taking care of other people's kids—listening to 'em bawling and crying day and night—when I wanted to be out—and I was lonesome—lonesome as hell! *(With a sudden weariness in her voice)* So I give up finally. What was the use? *(She stops and looks at the two men. Both are motionless and silent.* CHRIS *seems in a stupor of despair, his house of cards fallen about him.* BURKE'S *face is livid with the rage that is eating him up, but he is too stunned and bewildered yet to find a vent for it. The condemnation she feels in their silence goads* ANNA *into a harsh, strident defiance)* You don't say nothing—either of you—but I know what you're thinking. You're like all the rest! *(To* CHRIS—*furiously)* And who's to blame for it, me or you? If you'd even acted like a man—if you'd even had been a regular father and had me with you—maybe things would be different!

CHRIS *(in agony).* Don't talk dat vay, Anna! Ay go crazy! Ay von't listen! *(Puts his hands over his ears)*

ANNA *(infuriated by his action—stridently).* You will too listen! *(She leans over and pulls his hands from his ears—with hysterical rage)* You—keeping me safe inland—I wasn't no nurse girl the last two years—I lied when I wrote you—I was in a house, that's what!—yes, that kind of a house—the

kind sailors like you and Mat goes to in port—and your nice inland men, too—and all men, God damn 'em! I hate 'em! Hate 'em! *(She breaks into hysterical sobbing, throwing herself into the chair and hiding her face in her hands on the table. The two men have sprung to their feet)*

CHRIS *(whimpering like a child).* Anna! Anna! It's a lie! It's a lie! *(He stands wringing his hands together and begins to weep)*

BURKE *(his whole great body tense like a spring—dully and gropingly).* So that's what's in it!

ANNA *(raising her head at the sound of his voice—with extreme mocking bitterness).* I s'pose you remember your promise, Mat? No other reason was to count with you so long as I wasn't married already. So I s'pose you want me to get dressed and go ashore, don't you? *(She laughs)* Yes, you do!

BURKE *(on the verge of his outbreak—stammeringly).* God stiffen you!

ANNA *(trying to keep up her hard, bitter tone, but gradually letting a note of pitiful pleading creep in).* I s'pose if I tried to tell you I wasn't—that—no more you'd believe me, wouldn't you? Yes, you would! And if I told you that yust getting out in this barge and being on the sea had changed me and made me feel different about things, 's if all I'd been through wasn't me and didn't count and was yust like it never happened—you'd laugh, wouldn't you? And you'd die laughing sure if I said that meeting you that funny way that night in the fog, and afterwards seeing that you was straight goods stuck on me, had got me to thinking for the first time, and I sized you up as a different kind of man—a sea man as different from the ones on land as water is from mud—and that was why I got stuck on you, too. I wanted to marry you and fool you, but I couldn't. Don't you see how I've changed? I couldn't marry you with you believing a lie—and I was shamed to tell you the truth—till the both of you forced my hand, and I seen you was the same as all the rest. And now, give me a bawling out and beat it, like I can tell you're going to. *(She stops, looking at* BURKE. *He is silent, his face averted, his features beginning to work with fury. She pleads passionately)* Will you believe it if I tell you that loving you has made me—clean? It's the straight goods, honest! *(Then as he doesn't reply—bitterly)* Like hell you will! You're like all the rest!

BURKE *(blazing out—turning on her in a perfect frenzy of rage—his voice trembling with passion).* The rest, is it? God's curse on you! Clane is it? You slut, you, I'll be killing you now! *(He picks up the chair on which he has been sitting and, swinging it high over his shoulder, springs toward her.* CHRIS *rushes forward with a cry of alarm, trying to ward off the blow from his daughter.* ANNA *looks up into* BURKE'S *eyes with the fearlessness of despair.* BURKE *checks himself, the chair held in the air)*

CHRIS *(wildly).* Stop, you crazy fool! You vant for murder her!

ANNA *(pushing her father away brusquely, her eyes still holding* BURKE'S*).* Keep out of this, you! *(To* BURKE*—dully)* Well, ain't you got the nerve to do it? Go ahead! I'll be thankful to you, honest. I'm sick of the whole game.

BURKE *(throwing the chair away into a corner of the room—helplessly).* I can't do it, God help me, and your two eyes looking at me. *(Furiously)* Though I do be thinking I'd have a good right to smash your skull like a rotten egg. Was there iver a woman in the world had the rottenness in her that you have, and was there iver a man the like of me was made the fool of the world, and me thinking thoughts about you, and having great love for you, and dreaming dreams of the fine life we'd have when we'd be wedded! *(His voice high pitched in a lamentation that is like a keen)* Yerra, God help me! I'm destroyed entirely and my heart is broken in bits! I'm asking God Himself, was it for this He'd have me roaming the earth since I was a lad only, to come to black shame in the end, where I'd be giving a power of love to a woman is the same as others you'd meet in any hooker-shanty in port, with red gowns on them and paint on their grinning mugs, would be sleeping with any man for a dollar or two!

ANNA *(in a scream).* Don't, Mat! For Gawd's sake! *(Then raging and pounding on the table with her hands)* Get out of here! Leave me alone! Get out of here!

BURKE *(his anger rushing back on him).* I'll be going, surely! And I'll be drinking sloos of whisky will wash that black kiss of yours off my lips; and I'll be getting dead rotten drunk so I'll not remember if 'twas iver born you was at all; and I'll be shipping away on some boat will take me to the other end of the world where I'll never see your face again! *(He turns toward the door)*

CHRIS *(who has been standing in a stupor—suddenly grasping* BURKE *by the arm—stupidly).* No, you don't go. Ay tank maybe it's better Anna marry you now.

BURKE *(shaking* CHRIS *off—furiously).* Lave go of me, ye old ape! Marry her, is it? I'd see her roasting in hell first! I'm shipping away out of this, I'm telling you! *(Pointing to* ANNA*—passionately)* And my curse on you and the curse of Almighty God and all the Saints! You've destroyed me this day and may you lie awake in the long nights, tormented with thoughts of Mat Burke and the great wrong you've done him!

ANNA *(in anguish).* Mat! *(But he turns without another word and strides out of the doorway.* ANNA *looks after him wildly, starts to run after him, then hides her face in her outstretched arms, sobbing.* CHRIS *stands in a stupor, staring at the floor)*

CHRIS *(after a pause, dully).* Ay tank Ay go ashore, too.

ANNA *(looking up, wildly).* Not after him! Let him go! Don't you dare—

CHRIS *(somberly).* Ay go for gat drink.

ANNA *(with a harsh laugh).* So I'm driving you to drink, too, eh? I s'pose you want to get drunk so's you can forget—like him?

CHRIS *(bursting out angrily).* Yes, Ay vant! You tank Ay like hear dem tangs. *(Breaking down—weeping)* Ay tank you vasn't dat kind of gel, Anna.

ANNA *(mockingly).* And I s'pose you want me to beat it, don't you? You don't want me here disgracing you, I s'pose?

CHRIS. No, you stay here! *(Goes over and pats her on the shoulder, the tears running down his face)* Ain't your fault, Anna, Ay know dat. *(She looks up at him, softened. He bursts into rage)* It's dat ole davil, sea, do this to me! *(He shakes his fist at the door)* It's her dirty tricks! It vas all right on barge with yust you and me. Den she bring dat Irish fallar in fog, she make you like him, she make you fight with me all time! If dat Irish fallar don't never come, you don't never tal me dem tangs, Ay don't never know, and everytang's all right. *(He shakes his fist again)* Dirty ole davil!

ANNA *(with spent weariness).* Oh, what's the use? Go on ashore and get drunk.

CHRIS *(goes into room on left and gets his cap. He goes to the door, silent and stupid—then turns).* You vait here, Anna?

ANNA *(dully).* Maybe—and maybe not. Maybe I'll get drunk, too. Maybe I'll—But what the hell do you care what I do? Go on and beat it. *(*CHRIS *turns stupidly and goes out.* ANNA *sits at the table, staring straight in front of her)*

ACT IV

Scene: Same as Act Three, about nine o'clock of a foggy night two days later. The whistles of steamers in the harbor can be heard. The cabin is lighted by a small lamp on the table. A suit case stands in the middle of the floor. ANNA *is sitting in the rocking-chair. She wears a hat, is all dressed up as in Act One. Her face is pale, looks terribly tired and worn, as if the two days just past had been ones of suffering and sleepless nights. She stares before her despondently, her chin in her hands. There is a timid knock on the door in rear.* ANNA *jumps to her feet with a startled exclamation and looks toward the door with an expression of mingled hope and fear.*

ANNA *(faintly).* Come in. *(Then summoning her courage—more resolutely)* Come in. *(The door is opened and* CHRIS *appears in the doorway. He is in a very bleary, bedraggled condition, suffering from the after-effects of his drunk. A tin pail full of foaming beer is in his hand. He comes forward, his eyes avoiding* ANNA's. *He mutters stupidly)* It's foggy.

ANNA *(looking him over with contempt).* So you come back at last, did you?

You're a fine looking sight! *(Then jeeringly)* I thought you'd beaten it for good on account of the disgrace I'd brought on you.

CHRIS *(wincing—faintly).* Don't say dat, Anna, please! *(He sits in a chair by the table, setting down the can of beer, holding his head in his hands)*

ANNA *(looks at him with a certain sympathy).* What's the trouble? Feeling sick?

CHRIS *(dully).* Inside my head feel sick.

ANNA. Well, what d'you expect after being soused for two days? *(Resentfully)* It serves you right. A fine thing—you leaving me alone on this barge all that time!

CHRIS *(humbly).* Ay'm sorry, Anna.

ANNA *(scornfully).* Sorry!

CHRIS. But Ay'm not sick inside head vay you mean. Ay'm sick from tank too much about you, about me.

ANNA. And how about me? D'you suppose I ain't been thinking, too?

CHRIS. Ay'm sorry, Anna. *(He sees her bag and gives a start)* You pack your bag, Anna? You vas going——?

ANNA *(forcibly).* Yes, I was going right back to what you think.

CHRIS. Anna!

ANNA. I went ashore to get a train for New York. I'd been waiting and waiting till I was sick of it. Then I changed my mind and decided not to go today. But I'm going first thing tomorrow, so it'll all be the same in the end.

CHRIS *(raising his head—pleadingly).* No, you never do dat, Anna!

ANNA *(with a sneer).* Why not, I'd like to know?

CHRIS. You don't never gat to do—dat vay—no more, Ay tal you. Ay fix dat up all right.

ANNA *(suspiciously).* Fix what up?

CHRIS *(not seeming to have heard her question—sadly).* You vas vaiting, you say? You vasn't vaiting for me, Ay bet.

ANNA *(callously).* You'd win.

CHRIS. For dat Irish fallar?

ANNA *(defiantly).* Yes—if you want to know! *(Then with a forlorn laugh)* If he did come back it'd only be 'cause he wanted to beat me up or kill me, I suppose. But even if he did, I'd rather have him come than not show up at all. I wouldn't care what he did.

CHRIS. Ay guess it's true you vas in love with him all right.

ANNA. You guess!

CHRIS *(turning to her earnestly).* And Ay'm sorry for you like hell he don't come, Anna!

ANNA *(softened).* Seems to me you've changed your tune a lot.

CHRIS. Ay've been tanking, and Ay guess it vas all my fault—all bad tangs dat happen to you. *(Pleadingly)* You try for not hate me, Anna. Ay'm crazy ole fool, dat's all.

ANNA. Who said I hated you?

CHRIS. Ay'm sorry for everytang Ay do wrong for you, Anna. Ay vant for you be happy all rest of your life for make up! It make you happy marry dat Irish fallar, Ay vant it, too.

ANNA *(dully)*. Well, there ain't no chance. But I'm glad you think different about it, anyway.

CHRIS *(supplicatingly)*. And you tank—maybe—you forgive me sometime?

ANNA *(with a wan smile)*. I'll forgive you right now.

CHRIS *(seizing her hand and kissing it—brokenly)*. Anna lilla! Anna lilla!

ANNA *(touched but a bit embarrassed)*. Don't bawl about it. There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we yust get mixed in wrong, that's all.

CHRIS *(eagerly)*. You say right tang, Anna, py golly! It ain't nobody's fault! *(Shaking his fist)* It's dat ole davil sea!

ANNA *(with an exasperated laugh)*. Gee, won't you ever can that stuff? *(CHRIS relapses into injured silence. After a pause* ANNA *continues curiously)* You said a minute ago you'd fixed something up—about me. What was it?

CHRIS *(after a hesitating pause)*. Ay'm shipping avay on sea again, Anna.

ANNA *(astounded)*. You're—what?

CHRIS. Ay sign on steamer sail tomorrow. Ay gat my ole yob—bo'sun. *(ANNA stares at him. As he goes on, a bitter smile comes over her face)*. Ay tank dat's best tang for you. Ay only bring you bad luck. Ay tank. Ay make your mo'der's life sorry. Ay don't vant make yours dat way, but Ay do yust same. Dat ole davil, sea, she make me Yonah man ain't no good for nobody. And Ay tank now it ain't no use fight with sea. No man dat live going to beat her, py yingo!

ANNA *(with a laugh of helpless bitterness)*. So that's how you've fixed me, is it?

CHRIS. Yes, Ay tank if dat ole davil gat me back she leave you alone den.

ANNA *(bitterly)*. But, for Gawd's sake, don't you see you're doing the same thing you've always done? Don't you see——? *(But she sees the look of obsessed stubbornness on her father's face and gives it up helplessly)* But what's the use of talking? You ain't right, that's what. I'll never blame you for nothing no more. But how you could figure out that was fixing me——!

CHRIS. Dat ain't all. Ay gat dem fallars in steamship office to pay you all money coming to me every month vhile Ay'm avay.

ANNA *(with a hard laugh)*. Thanks. But I guess I won't be hard up for no small change.

CHRIS *(hurt—humbly).* It ain't much, Ay know, but it's plenty for keep you so you never gat go back—

ANNA *(shortly).* Shut up, will you? We'll talk about it later, see?

CHRIS *(after a pause—ingratiatingly).* You like Ay go ashore look for dat Irish fallar, Anna?

ANNA *(angrily).* Not much! Think I want to drag him back?

CHRIS *(after a pause—uncomfortably).* Py golly, dat booze don't go vell. Give me fever, Ay tank. Ay feel hot like hell. *(He takes off his coat and lets it drop on the floor. There is a loud thud)*

ANNA *(with a start).* What you got in your pocket, for Pete's sake—a ton of lead? *(She reaches down, takes the coat and pulls out a revolver—looks from it to him in amazement)* A gun? What were you doing with this?

CHRIS *(sheepishly).* Ay forget. Ain't nothing. Ain't loaded, anyvay.

ANNA *(breaking it open to make sure—then closing it again—looking at him suspiciously).* That ain't telling me why you got it?

CHRIS. Ay'm ole fool. Ay got it when Ay go ashore first. Ay tank den it's all fault of dat Irish fallar.

ANNA *(with a shudder).* Say, you're crazier than I thought. I never dreamt you'd go that far.

CHRIS *(quickly).* Ay don't. Ay gat better sense right avay. Ay don't never buy bullets even. It ain't his fault, Ay know.

ANNA *(still suspicious of him).* Well, I'll take care of this for a while, loaded or not. *(She puts it in the drawer of table and closes the drawer)*

CHRIS *(placatingly).* Throw it overboard if you vant. Ay don't care. *(Then after a pause)* Py golly, Ay tank Ay go lie down. Ay feel sick. (ANNA *takes a magazine from the table.* CHRIS *hesitates by her chair)* Ve talk again before Ay go, yes?

ANNA *(dully).* Where's this ship going to?

CHRIS. Cape Town. Dat's in South Africa. She's British steamer called Londonderry. *(He stands hesitatingly—finally blurts out)* Anna—you forgive me sure?

ANNA *(wearily).* Sure I do. You ain't to blame. You're yust—what you are—like me.

CHRIS *(pleadingly).* Den—you lat me kiss you again once?

ANNA *(raising her face—forcing a wan smile).* Sure. No hard feelings.

CHRIS *(kisses her brokenly).* Anna lilla! Ay— *(He fights for words to express himself, but finds none—miserably—with a sob)* Ay can't say it. Good-night, Anna.

ANNA. Good-night. *(He picks up the can of beer and goes slowly into the room on left, his shoulders bowed, his head sunk forward dejectedly. He closes the door after him.* ANNA *turns over the pages of the magazine, trying desperately to banish her thoughts by looking at the pictures. This*

fails to distract her, and flinging the magazine back on the table, she springs to her feet and walks about the cabin distractedly, clenching and unclenching her hands. She speaks aloud to herself in a tense, trembling voice) Gawd, I can't stand this much longer! What am I waiting for anyway?—like a damn fool! *(She laughs helplessly, then checks herself abruptly, as she hears the sound of heavy footsteps on the deck outside. She appears to recognize these and her face lights up with joy. She gasps)* Mat! *(A strange terror seems suddenly to seize her. She rushes to the table, takes the revolver out of the drawer and crouches down in the corner, left, behind the cupboard. A moment later the door is flung open and* MAT BURKE *appears in the doorway. He is in bad shape—his clothes torn and dirty, covered with sawdust as if he had been grovelling or sleeping on barroom floors. There is a red bruise on his forehead over one of his eyes, another over one cheekbone, his knuckles are skinned and raw—plain evidence of the fighting he has been through on his "bat." His eyes are bloodshot and heavy-lidded, his face has a bloated look. But beyond these appearances—the results of heavy drinking—there is an expression in his eyes of wild mental turmoil, of impotent animal rage baffled by its own abject misery)*

BURKE *(peers blinkingly about the cabin—hoarsely).* Let you not be hiding from me, whoever's here—though 'tis well you know I'd have a right to come back and murder you. *(He stops to listen. Hearing no sound, he closes the door behind him and comes forward to the table. He throws himself into the rocking-chair—despondently)* There's no one here, I'm thinking, and 'tis a great fool I am to be coming. *(With a sort of dumb, uncomprehending anguish)* Yerra, Mat Burke, 'tis a great jackass you've become and what's got into you at all, at all? She's gone out of this long ago, I'm telling you, and you'll never see her face again. (ANNA *stands up, hesitating, struggling between joy and fear.* BURKE'S *eyes fall on* ANNA'S *bag. He leans over to examine it)* What's this? *(Joyfully)* It's hers. She's not gone! But where is she? Ashore? *(Darkly)* What would she be doing ashore on this rotten night? *(His face suddenly convulsed with grief and rage)* 'Tis that, is it? Oh, God's curse on her! *(Raging)* I'll wait till she comes and choke her dirty life out. (ANNA *starts, her face grows hard. She steps into the room, the revolver in her right hand by her side)*

ANNA *(in a cold, hard tone).* What are you doing here?

BURKE *(wheeling about with a terrified gasp).* Glory be to God! *(They remain motionless and silent for a moment, holding each other's eyes)*

ANNA *(in the same hard voice).* Well, can't you talk?

BURKE *(trying to fall into an easy, careless tone).* You've a year's growth scared out of me, coming at me so sudden and me thinking I was alone.

ANNA. You've got your nerve butting in here without knocking or nothing. What d'you want?

BURKE *(airily).* Oh, nothing much. I was wanting to have a last word with you, that's all. *(He moves a step toward her)*

ANNA *(sharply—raising the revolver in her hand).* Careful now! Don't try getting too close. I heard what you said you'd do to me.

BURKE *(noticing the revolver for the first time).* Is it murdering me you'd be now, God forgive you? *(Then with a contemptuous laugh)* Or is it thinking I'd be frightened by that old tin whistle? *(He walks straight for her)*

ANNA *(wildly).* Look out, I tell you!

BURKE *(who has come so close that the revolver is almost touching his chest).* Let you shoot, then! *(Then with sudden wild grief)* Let you shoot, I'm saying, and be done with it! Let you end me with a shot and I'll be thanking you, for it's a rotten dog's life I've lived the past two days since I've known what you are, till I'm after wishing I was never born at all!

ANNA *(overcome—letting the revolver drop to the floor, as if her fingers had no strength to hold it—hysterically).* What d'you want coming here? Why don't you beat it? Go on! *(She passes him and sinks down in the rocking-chair)*

BURKE *(following her—mournfully).* 'Tis right you'd be asking why did I come. *(Then angrily)* 'Tis because 'tis a great weak fool of the world I am, and me tormented with the wickedness you'd told of yourself, and drinking oceans of booze that'd make me forget. Forget? Divil a word I'd forget, and your face grinning always in front of my eyes, awake or asleep, till I do be thinking a madhouse is the proper place for me.

ANNA *(glancing at his hands and face—scornfully).* You look like you ought to be put away some place. Wonder you wasn't pulled in. You been scrapping, too, ain't you?

BURKE. I have—with every scut would take off his coat to me! *(Fiercely)* And each time I'd be hitting one a clout in the mug, it wasn't his face I'd be seeing at all, but yours, and me wanting to drive you a blow would knock you out of this world where I wouldn't be seeing or thinking more of you.

ANNA *(her lips trembling pitifully).* Thanks!

BURKE *(walking up and down—distractedly).* That's right, make game of me! Oh, I'm a great coward surely, to be coming back to speak with you at all. You've a right to laugh at me.

ANNA. I ain't laughing at you, Mat.

BURKE *(unheeding).* You to be what you are, and me to be Mat Burke, and me to be drove back to look at you again! 'Tis black shame is on me!

ANNA *(resentfully).* Then get out. No one's holding you!

BURKE *(bewilderedly).* And me to listen to that talk from a woman like you and be frightened to close her mouth with a slap! Oh, God help me, I'm

a yellow coward for all men to spit at! *(Then furiously)* But I'll not be getting out of this till I've had me word. *(Raising his fist threateningly)* And let you look out how you drive me! *(Letting his fist fall helplessly)* Don't be angry now! I'm raving like a real lunatic, I'm thinking, and the sorrow you put on me has my brains drownded in grief. *(Suddenly bending down to her and grasping her arm intensely)* Tell me it's a lie, I'm saying! That's what I'm coming to hear you say.

ANNA *(dully)*. A lie? What?

BURKE *(with passionate entreaty)*. All the badness you told me two days back. Sure it must be a lie! You was only making game of me, wasn't you? Tell me 'twas a lie, Anna, and I'll be saying prayers of thanks on my two knees to the Almighty God!

ANNA *(terribly shaken—faintly)*. I can't, Mat. *(As he turns away—imploringly)* Oh, Mat, won't you see that no matter what I was I ain't that any more? Why, listen! I packed up my bag this afternoon and went ashore. I'd been waiting here all alone for two days, thinking maybe you'd come back—thinking maybe you'd think over all I'd said—and maybe—oh, I don't know what I was hoping! But I was afraid to even go out of the cabin for a second, honest—afraid you might come and not find me here. Then I gave up hope when you didn't show up and I went to the railroad station. I was going to New York. I was going back—

BURKE *(hoarsely)*. God's curse on you!

ANNA. Listen, Mat. You hadn't come, and I'd gave up hope. But—in the station—I couldn't go. I'd bought my ticket and everything. *(She takes the ticket from her dress and tries to hold it before his eyes)* But I got to thinking about you—and I couldn't take the train—I couldn't! So I come back here—to wait some more. Oh, Mat, don't you see I've changed? Can't you forgive what's dead and gone—and forget it?

BURKE *(turning on her—overcome by rage again)*. Forget, is it? I'll not forget till my dying day, I'm telling you, and me tormented with thoughts. *(In a frenzy)* Oh, I'm wishing I had wan of them fornenst me this minute and I'd beat him with my fists till he'd be a bloody corpse! I'm wishing the whole lot of them will roast in hell till the Judgment Day—and yourself along with them, for you're as bad as they are.

ANNA *(shuddering)*. Mat! *(Then after a pause—in a voice of dead, stony calm)*. Well, you've had your say. Now you better beat it.

BURKE *(starts slowly for the door—hesitates—then after a pause)*. And what'll you be doing?

ANNA. What difference does it make to you?

BURKE. I'm asking you!

ANNA *(in the same tone)*. My bag's packed and I got my ticket. I'll go to New York tomorrow.

BURKE *(helplessly).* You mean—you'll be doing the same again?

ANNA *(stonily).* Yes.

BURKE *(in anguish).* You'll not! Don't torment me with that talk! 'Tis a she-divil you are sent to drive me mad entirely!

ANNA *(her voice breaking).* Oh, for Gawd's sake, Mat, leave me alone! Go away! Don't you see I'm licked? Why d'you want to keep on kicking me?

BURKE *(indignantly).* And don't you deserve the worst I'd say, God forgive you?

ANNA. All right, maybe I do. But don't rub it in. Why ain't you done what you said you was going to? Why ain't you got that ship was going to take you to the other side of the earth where you'd never see me again?

BURKE. I have.

ANNA *(startled).* What—then you're going—honest?

BURKE. I signed on today at noon, drunk as I was—and she's sailing tomorrow.

ANNA. And where's she going to?

BURKE. Cape Town.

ANNA *(the memory of having heard that name a little while before coming to her—with a start, confusedly).* Cape Town? Where's that? Far away?

BURKE. 'Tis at the end of Africa. That's far for you.

ANNA *(forcing a laugh).* You're keeping your word all right, ain't you? *(After a slight pause—curiously)* What's the boat's name?

BURKE. The Londonderry.

ANNA *(it suddenly comes to her that this is the same ship her father is sailing on).* The Londonderry! It's the same—Oh, this is too much! *(With wild, ironical laughter)* Ha-ha-ha!

BURKE. What's up with you now?

ANNA. Ha-ha-ha! It's funny, funny! I'll die laughing!

BURKE *(irritated).* Laughing at what?

ANNA. It's a secret. You'll know soon enough. It's funny. *(Controlling herself—after a pause—cynically)* What kind of a place is this Cape Town? Plenty of dames there, I suppose?

BURKE. To hell with them! That I may never see another woman to my dying hour!

ANNA. That's what you say now, but I'll bet by the time you get there you'll have forgot all about me and start in talking the same old bull you talked to me to the first one you meet.

BURKE *(offended).* I'll not then! God mend you, is it making me out to be the like of yourself you are, and you taking up with this one and that all the years of your life?

ANNA *(angrily assertive).* Yes, that's yust what I do mean! You been doing

the same thing all your life, picking up a new girl in every port. How're you any better than I was?

BURKE *(thoroughly exasperated).* Is it no shame you have at all? I'm a fool to be wasting talk on you and you hardened in badness. I'll go out of this and lave you alone forever. *(He starts for the door—then stops to turn on her furiously)* And I suppose 'tis the same lies you told them all before that you told to me?

ANNA *(indignantly).* That's a lie! I never did!

BURKE *(miserably).* You'd be saying that, anyway.

ANNA *(forcibly, with growing intensity).* Are you trying to accuse me—of being in love—really in love—with them?

BURKE. I'm thinking you were, surely.

ANNA *(furiously, as if this were the last insult—advancing on him threateningly).* You mutt, you! I've stood enough from you. Don't you dare. *(With scornful bitterness)* Love 'em! Oh, my Gawd! You damn thick-head! Love 'em *(Savagely)* I hated 'em, I tell you! Hated 'em, hated 'em, hated 'em! And may Gawd strike me dead this minute and my mother, too, if she was alive, if I ain't telling you the honest truth!

BURKE *(immensely pleased by her vehemence—a light beginning to break over his face—but still uncertain, torn between doubt and the desire to believe—helplessly).* If I could only be believing you now!

ANNA *(distractedly).* Oh, what's the use? What's the use of me talking? What's the use of anything? *(Pleadingly)* Oh, Mat, you mustn't think that for a second! You mustn't! Think all the other bad about me you want to, and I won't kick, 'cause you've a right to. But don't think that! *(On the point of tears)* I couldn't bear it! It'd be yust too much to know you was going away where I'd never see you again—thinking that about me!

BURKE *(after an inward struggle—tensely—forcing out the words with difficulty).* If I was believing—that you'd never had love for any other man in the world but me—I could be forgetting the rest, maybe.

ANNA *(with a cry of joy).* Mat!

BURKE *(slowly).* If 'tis truth you're after telling, I'd have a right, maybe, to believe you'd changed—and that I'd changed you myself till the thing you'd been all your life wouldn't be you any more at all.

ANNA *(hanging on his words—breathlessly).* Oh, Mat! That's what I been trying to tell you all along!

BURKE *(simply).* For I've a power of strength in me to lead men the way I want, and women, too, maybe, and I'm thinking I'd change you to a new woman entirely, so I'd never know, or you either, what kind of woman you'd been in the past at all.

ANNA. Yes, you could, Mat! I know you could!

BURKE. And I'm thinking, 'twasn't your fault, maybe, but having that old ape for a father that left you to grow up alone, made you what you was. And if I could be believing 'tis only me you——

ANNA *(distractedly).* You got to believe it, Mat! What can I do? I'll do anything, anything you want to prove I'm not lying!

BURKE *(suddenly seems to have a solution. He feels in the pocket of his coat and grasps something—solemnly).* Would you be willing to swear an oath, now—a terrible, fearful oath would send your soul to the divils in hell if you was lying?

ANNA *(eagerly).* Sure, I'll swear, Mat—on anything!

BURKE *(takes a small, cheap old crucifix from his pocket and holds it up for her to see).* Will you swear on this?

ANNA *(reaching out for it).* Yes. Sure I will. Give it to me.

BURKE *(holding it away).* 'Tis a cross was given me by my mother, God rest her soul. *(He makes the sign of the cross mechanically)* I was a lad only, and she told me to keep it by me if I'd be waking or sleeping and never lose it, and it'd bring me luck. She died soon after. But I'm after keeping it with me from that day to this, and I'm telling you there's great power in it, and 'tis great bad luck it's saved me from and me roaming the seas, and I having it tied round my neck when my last ship sunk, and it bringing me safe to land when the others went to their death. *(Very earnestly)* And I'm warning you now, if you'd swear an oath on this, 'tis my old woman herself will be looking down from Hivin above, and praying Almighty God and the Saints to put a great curse on you if she'd hear you swearing a lie!

ANNA *(awed by his manner—superstitiously).* I wouldn't have the nerve—honest—if it was a lie. But it's the truth and I ain't scared to swear. Give it to me.

BURKE *(handing it to her—almost frightenedly, as if he feared for her safety).* Be careful what you'd swear, I'm saying.

ANNA *(holding the cross gingerly).* Well—what do you want me to swear? You say it.

BURKE. Swear I'm the only man in the world ivir you felt love for.

ANNA *(looking into his eyes steadily).* I swear it.

BURKE. And that you'll be forgetting from this day all the badness you've done and never do the like of it again.

ANNA *(forcibly).* I swear it! I swear it by God!

BURKE. And may the blackest curse of God strike you if you're lying. Say it now!

ANNA. And may the blackest curse of God strike me if I'm lying!

BURKE *(with a stupendous sigh).* Oh, glory be to God, I'm after believing you

now! *(He takes the cross from her hand, his face beaming with joy, and puts it back in his pocket. He puts his arm about her waist and is about to kiss her when he stops, appalled by some terrible doubt)*

ANNA *(alarmed)*. What's the matter with you?

BURKE *(with sudden fierce questioning)*. Is it Catholic ye are?

ANNA *(confused)*. No. Why?

BURKE *(filled with a sort of bewildered foreboding)*. Oh, God, help me! *(With a dark glance of suspicion at her)* There's some divil's trickery in it, to be swearing an oath on a Catholic cross and you wan of the others.

ANNA *(distractedly)*. Oh, Mat, don't you believe me?

BURKE *(miserably)*. If it isn't a Catholic you are——

ANNA. I ain't nothing. What's the difference? Didn't you hear me swear?

BURKE *(passionately)*. Oh, I'd a right to stay away from you—but I couldn't! I was loving you in spite of it all and wanting to be with you, God forgive me, no matter what you are. I'd go mad if I'd not have you! I'd be killing the world—— *(He seizes her in his arms and kisses her fiercely)*

ANNA *(with a gasp of joy)*. Mat!

BURKE *(suddenly holding her away from him and staring into her eyes as if to probe into her soul—slowly)*. If your oath is no proper oath at all, I'll have to be taking your naked word for it and have you anyway, I'm thinking—I'm needing you that bad!

ANNA *(hurt—reproachfully)*. Mat! I swore, didn't I?

BURKE *(defiantly, as if challenging fate)*. Oath or no oath, 'tis no matter. We'll be wedded in the morning, with the help of God. *(Still more defiantly)* We'll be happy now, the two of us, in spite of the divil! *(He crushes her to him and kisses her again. The door on the left is pushed open and* CHRIS *appears in the doorway. He stands blinking at them. At first the old expression of hatred of* BURKE *comes into his eyes instinctively. Then a look of resignation and relief takes its place. His face lights up with a sudden happy thought. He turns back into the bedroom—reappears immediately with the tin can of beer in his hand—grinning)*

CHRIS. Ve have a drink on this, py golly! *(They break away from each other with startled exclamations)*

BURKE *(explosively)*. God stiffen it! *(He takes a step toward* CHRIS *threateningly)*

ANNA *(happily—to her father)*. That's the way to talk! *(With a laugh)* And say, it's about time for you and Mat to kiss and make up. You're going to be shipmates on the Londonderry, did you know it?

BURKE *(astounded)*. Shipmates— Has himself——

CHRIS *(equally astounded)*. Ay vas bo'sun on her.

BURKE. The divil! *(Then angrily)* You'd be going back to sea and leaving her alone, would you?

ANNA *(quickly).* It's all right, Mat. That's where he belongs, and I want him to go. You got to go, too; we'll need the money. *(With a laugh, as she gets the glasses)* And as for me being alone, that runs in the family, and I'll get used to it. *(Pouring out their glasses)* I'll get a little house somewhere and I'll make a regular place for you two to come back to,—wait and see. And now you drink up and be friends.

BURKE *(happily—but still a bit resentful against the old man).* Sure! *(Clinking his glass against* CHRIS') Here's luck to you! *(He drinks)*

CHRIS *(subdued—his face melancholy).* Skoal. *(He drinks)*

BURKE *(to* ANNA, *with a wink).* You'll not be lonesome long. I'll see to that, with the help of God. 'Tis himself here will be having a grandchild to ride on his foot, I'm telling you!

ANNA *(turning away in embarrassment).* Quit the kidding now. *(She picks up her bag and goes into the room on left. As soon as she is gone* BURKE *relapses into an attitude of gloomy thought.* CHRIS *stares at his beer absent-mindedly. Finally* BURKE *turns on him)*

BURKE. Is it any religion at all you have, you and your Anna?

CHRIS *(surprised).* Vhy yes. Ve vas Lutheran in ole country.

BURKE *(horrified).* Luthers, is it? *(Then with a grim resignation, slowly, aloud to himself)* Well, I'm damned then surely. Yerra, what's the difference? 'Tis the will of God, anyway.

CHRIS *(moodily preoccupied with his own thoughts—speaks with somber premonition as* ANNA *re-enters from the left).* It's funny. It's queer, yes—you and me shipping on same boat dat vay. It ain't right. Ay don't know—it's dat funny vay ole davil sea do her vorst dirty tricks, yes. It's so. *(He gets up and goes back and, opening the door, stares out into the darkness)*

BURKE *(nodding his head in gloomy acquiescence—with a great sigh).* I'm fearing maybe you have the right of it for once, divil take you.

ANNA *(forcing a laugh).* Gee, Mat, you ain't agreeing with him, are you? *(She comes forward and puts her arm about his shoulder—with a determined gayety)* Aw say, what's the matter? Cut out the gloom. We're all fixed now, ain't we, me and you? *(Pours out more beer into his glass and fills one for herself—slaps him on the back)* Come on! Here's to the sea, no matter what! Be a game sport and drink to that! Come on! *(She gulps down her glass.* BURKE *banishes his superstitious premonitions with a defiant jerk of his head, grins up at her, and drinks to her toast)*

CHRIS *(looking out into the night—lost in his somber preoccupation—shakes his head and mutters).* Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see vhere you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea—she knows! *(The two stare at him. From the harbor comes the muffled, mournful wail of steamers' whistles)*

Poetry

If you have read Part I in this book, you have learned already that poetry has much in common with fiction and drama. For the sake of emphasizing this fact, we might briefly review the aspects of craftsmanship considered there in relationship to poetry.

Happenings. If anything, happenings in poetry are more diverse than they are in fiction and drama. At one extreme, the poet may do nothing more than observe a duck flying against a crimson evening sky; at the other, he may detail the heroic and bloody activities of a ten-year war. Happenings are especially important in narrative and epic poetry.

Characterization. Characterization also is a matter of first importance in narrative and epic poetry, and in dramatic monologues like Browning's "My Last Duchess." Ordinarily you do not associate problems of characterization with lyric poetry unless you consider how the poem characterizes the intrusive author. (See p. 99.) In that sense, characterization becomes an important aspect of many lyrical poems.

Setting. Setting, too, exhibits great range. It may be set forth in great detail, as in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Or it may be omitted completely, as in a philosophical poem like Emerson's "Brahma" (p. 139). Background is especially prominent in lyric poems developing atmosphere or mood. Poe's "The City in the Sea" (p. 722) is a good example of this.

Language. There are certain differences between the ways that poets and prose writers select and arrange their words, differences that we shall consider shortly. In the main, however, these are less marked than many suppose. Possibly you have heard about "poetic diction" or "poetic license" and have developed the notion that poets use a special language. To support this belief you can point to words like "e'er," "thou," and "swain." It is true that at one time poets did employ terms which were not so commonly seen in prose, but there was rarely a significant difference, and today there is—in most poetry—none at all. Miss Marguerite Wilkinson claims in her *New Voices,* "No good poet of today wants a license for any unfair dealings with words." By their employment of words in context, poets often pack more meaning and emotion into them than prose writers do, but the words themselves are the ones you know already, and probably the ones you use daily.

Certainly, too, the function of words in poetry is the same as in prose. They body forth the happenings, characters, settings—images of all kinds. They withhold or give emphasis, emotional colorations, and interpretations.

When we add to these matters of craftsmanship their effects in terms of *tone* and *meaning,* and find that these achievements are substantially the same in poetry and in prose, you may well ask what makes poetry a distinctive literary form. What special characteristics does it have? More specifically,

what should you look for as you read poetry that you have not already been looking for in prose? The answer lies especially in five characteristics: *rhythm, sound patterns, compactness, figurativeness,* and *emotional intensity,* the last being the result of the first four. We shall consider them in that order.

Rhythm

POETRY is distinct from prose not because poetry has rhythm but because it has a more regular rhythm than prose. We need not explain what rhythm is since you already know that from dancing and listening to music. Nor do we need to elaborate much on the thesis that rhythm is part of everyday life. You need only to recall the beating of your own heart to recognize that rhythm is, in fact, a necessity of life. Doubtless you will be quick to admit, too, that you have characteristic rhythms for doing even the simplest things, that you take greater satisfaction out of smooth, rhythmic performances than jerky ones. In short, rhythm is natural to you and gives you pleasure. If this is so in general, it should be so in poetry also. You should find that the rhythms of poetry are natural and pleasurable.

Traditionally, English poetry (but not Anglo-Saxon) has based its rhythm upon accent. Whereas in prose accented and unaccented syllables occur in irregular fashion throughout a sentence, in poetry they create a relatively regular pattern. Notice the difference:

Prose:

My father, a mountaineer, in addition to swinging a hard fist, was very quick on his feet. Unfortunately, however, he stammered.

Poetry:

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as running deer
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.[1]

If you mark all the accented syllables in these two examples you will discover that whereas there is no pattern in the prose passage, the stanza of verse has four accents in the first and third lines, three accents in the second and fourth, and that unaccented syllables combine with accented ones to form a pattern.

Regular rhythmical arrangement like this is usually called *meter.* In English there are four conventional types of meter, each being distinguished from the others by the number and accent of syllables. By far the most popular, and probably the most natural to English expression, is called *iambic.* The basic unit, or foot, of iambic has one unaccented and one accented syllable (˘ /).

| The | shades | of | night | were | fall | ing | fast |

Just the reverse of iambic meter is the *trochaic,* each foot of which contains an accented and an unaccented syllable (/ ˘). Ordinarily the trochaic rhythm is slower than the iambic, thus creating a heavier and more dignified beat, as in the following example:

| Swift | of | foot | was | Hia | watha |

Anapestic meter contains in each foot two unaccented syllables and one accented (˘ ˘ /). Sprightly and frolicsome in rhythm, this meter is usually

[1] Stephen Vincent Benét, "The Ballad of William Sycamore."

best adapted to relatively light subjects.

For the moon | never beams | without bringing me dreams

Dactylic meter reverses the anapestic (/ ˘ ˘). It is considerably slower and often is employed to create a mood of strangeness.

This is the | forest pri|meval |

"Scanning" a line of poetry consists of seeing what the metrical units are and how many of them occur in the line. A one-foot line is called a monometer line, a two-foot line dimeter, and others in progression up to a seven-foot line are called, respectively, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, and heptameter. Thus the anapestic line quoted above is a tetrameter, and the dactylic line a trimeter. Such scanning is valuable not only that you may see the prevailing pattern of lines and stanzas but also that you may see diversions from the patterns.

For few poets use the same type of foot throughout a poem, since the result would be too monotonous. To achieve variety and, even more important, to achieve emphasis or onomatopoeia, they use *substitute feet.* These may be feet of the sort we have considered (e.g., the trochaic foot in "This is the forest primeval") or they may be feet of a sort used only as substitutes, perhaps the *spondee* (/ /), two accented syllables, or the *pyrrhus* (˘ ˘), two unaccented syllables. Keats offers an example of the former in the line,

The hare | limped trem | bling through | the fro|zen grass.|

wherein the spondaic second foot serves to emphasize and to imitate the uneven progress of the hare in a stanza describing a bitter chill night. Paradoxical as it may seem, you will find that one of the chief insights you get from observing a poem's rhythmic pattern derives from considering where and why the poet deviates from that pattern.

Many modern poets have come to believe that none of these metrical schemes is adequate for what they have to say. Rhythm, they assert, must be organic, must rise naturally out of mood and content and must not be a regularized system imposed upon them. As a result, they write what is called *free verse,* poetry which follows no systemized metrical pattern. At its worst such poetry seems like nothing so much as bad prose; at its best it achieves a variety and subtlety of rhythm quite beyond the possibilities of the more conventional methods. One of the best examples of free verse in this book is Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (p. 731).

Sound patterns

As we have seen, English rhythm is largely a matter of accent patterns. Corresponding to these are certain sound patterns, the most obvious and familiar of which is rhyme. Rhyme adds melody, creates harmony, and gives finish to line endings. Most important, it distinguishes parts of a poem by setting them off from one another. Wordsworth's sonnet "Evening on Calais Beach" exemplifies this last point especially well.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad
sun

Is sinking down in its tranquility;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea;
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

The rhyme scheme here is like that of the Petrarchan sonnet: *abba, acca, def, dfe.* According to this pattern, the first eight lines are distinct from the last six, with each of these divisions being subdivided into two equal parts. Notice how the sense of the poem corresponds. The first eight lines describe the scene; the last six evaluate the child's and, incidentally, the poet's reaction to the scene. The first half of the first division deals with evening and sun, the second with the sea. The first half of the second division suggests the child's apparent indifference to the scene; the second half accounts for this attitude. What is clear, therefore, is that rhyme can be a valuable clue to meaning.

But when all this is said, the fact still remains that much great poetry has been written without rhyme. Consequently, though rhyme is valuable and delightful for many reasons, it is not indispensable to all kinds of verse.

Other prominent sound patterns are alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, and cacophony. Some of these have already been illustrated in this text (p. 84) and are defined in the Glossary and Index of Critical Terms. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out here, briefly, that these devices are peculiarly valuable to the poet since like rhyme they help create the mood which he feels an essential part of his experience. What is especially important to him is that they do this quickly. Notice how in a single line Coleridge gives you a sense of a curse simply by repeating the "s" sound until he gets a sustained hiss:

Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse.

To get the full effect of these sound patterns you should read poetry aloud. Try it with Poe's "The City in the Sea" (p. 722) and notice how much sound contributes to your awareness and your pleasure.

Compactness

WHEREAS the prose writer within sensible limits may be as discursive as he wishes, the poet should never be so. Because of the limitation of his form, the poet must choose his material with especial care and screen his language for all useless words. This careful selection and sifting result in compactness and consequently the necessity for thoughtful, sensitive reading.

At first glance you may question what the selection of material has to do with compactness of expression. The answer can be discovered by examining the poet's purpose and his medium. The poet's purpose is to communicate experience in as vivid and memorable a fashion as possible. If he is a good poet, he is admirably equipped to do this, for

he has the faculty, as Elizabeth Drew shows, of revealing things in relationships which in normal experience are hidden. Especially, he is sensitive to the *quality* of experience. Let us try to clarify this with a simple example. Undoubtedly, you have had that sore, empty feeling that comes at the time of the death of someone dear to you. You continue with your daily tasks, but your mood is different, and somehow the tasks themselves take on a new quality. Now the poet would be interested in this special quality, and he would try to communicate it by selecting the details which most powerfully suggest it.

To be sure, this is what the prose writer does also. But the job of the poet is a harder one. The prose writer may achieve his effect by an accumulation of details—hundreds of them, if he wishes. The poet, however, is held down by the shortness of his form. Possibly he has room for only five details, possibly three, possibly only one. Every detail, therefore, must be supremely right.

Compactness also results from the way poets use words. Like anyone else, they use them first for meaning. But because of the space limitations of the poetic form, they frequently try to pack more meaning into them than prose writers do. Often they have words operating at several levels of meaning at the same time. The example has already been cited (p. 115) of Whitman's "Passage to India," in which the word "passage" refers not only to the physical trip to the Orient, but to the race's circling back to the land of its origins, the mind's journey from the world of science to the world of intuitive insight, and the soul's flight to God.

The poet selects his words, again with probably more care than the prose writer, for their connotations, the moods and associations which they stir up in us. This is not surprising since it is through the connotations of words that the poet can best communicate the quality of his experience within the few lines at his command. He does this, first, by using a great many concrete words. Among concrete words, the poet then chooses those which give him the precise quality that he wants. Even so simple a poem as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Bells" gives us a chance to observe this. In it Poe set for himself the little exercise of catching the quality of four different kinds of bells. Notice the key words he uses with each. In meaning, the words within each group are not too dissimilar; in connotation they are quite different:

Silver bells: *tinkle, tintinnabulation, jingling*
Golden bells: *ring, rhyming, chiming*
Bronze bells: *shriek, clamor, clanging*
Iron bells: *tolling, moaning, groaning.*

What this comes down to is that in poetry compactness with words is not so much a matter of cutting away needless ones as packing the useful ones with all the meaning and emotion possible. Those learning to write freshman themes can, after practice, eliminate deadwood, but only someone highly sensitive to the potentialities of words can make every one count to the utmost.

The implications of all this for the reader are clear. He must realize that competent poetry is too compact for skimming. He must realize that each detail, each word—literally each word—is important.

Figurativeness

In discussing details under the heading of compactness, we made no attempt to distinguish between the lit-

eral and the figurative. This now should be done, since one of the most outstanding characteristics of poetry is its extensive use of metaphors, similes, personifications, and other figures of speech.

Of all these figures, metaphors and similes are by far the most important. Through the images they create, the poet can catch the quality of the experience he is after far more quickly and vividly than he can by describing his thought or his action literally. You can see why this is so. Metaphors and similes are concrete: they create images which appeal to your senses. Therefore, when well chosen they are easily visualized and remembered. When well phrased, they are richly connotative. Being comparisons, they fuse the original experience with other experiences, thus compounding the physical, emotional, and even intellectual values.

All of this would contradict a popular notion that similes and metaphors are extraneous decorations which can be lopped off without undue loss to meaning or emotion. Figures of speech can be such if they are simply tacked on for no purpose other than to show the poet's cleverness. But when well used they are structural necessities, and often are more essential than a literal statement would be. One must constantly keep in mind that the poet is anxious to convey his sense of the meaning and quality of experience and to do it in considerably less space than the prose writer. For this purpose metaphors and similes are indispensable. How quickly or well, for instance, could a literal prose definition of the word "presentiment" carry the quiet foreboding suggested in Emily Dickinson's metaphor:

Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn
Indicative that suns go down;
The notice to the startled grass
That darkness is about to pass.

And notice how Coleridge conveys the sense of complete inactivity, first by the metaphor "stuck" and second by the simile of the painting:

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion:
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Through another figure, personification, poets can achieve a startling vividness often quite beyond the potentialities of more conventional statements. In "Grass," for example, Sandburg creates an effect that no disquisition on the transitoriness of life could hope to achieve. Here are the first lines:

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work:
I am the Grass; I cover all.

Other figures, too, create images and symbols; you can look them up in the Glossary under such headings as hyperbole and synecdoche. Intentionally we have repeated here much about figures of speech which we discussed earlier (pp. 82-83) in order to emphasize the fact that though figures are the tools of all imaginative writers they are especially useful to the poet. In poetry, therefore, you can expect to find them used more extensively and, on the whole, more brilliantly.

Emotional intensity

If rhythm, sound patterns, compactness, and figures of speech are all handled in a craftsmanlike way, the

inevitable result is that the poem will make a stronger emotional impact upon the reader than any equivalent passage in prose can do. The truth of this is almost self-evident. Rhythm heightens feelings almost always; think of one of the simplest kinds, the beat of a drum. Sound patterns add tone values; compactness keeps the material from being thinned out through careless selection or through pale and useless words; figures make the subject vivid and memorable. The most intense realizations of human experiences, therefore, when stated verbally, must almost inevitably find expression in poetry. Prose cannot do them justice.

Except for rhyme, no one of these characteristics which we have discussed is peculiar to poetry. There is simply a difference in degree. This means that there is no sharp line between prose and poetry. One merges into the other as the rhythm becomes more regular, the imagery more vivid, the statement more compact, and the emotion more intense. You cannot measure the difference with a pair of literary calipers, but you can feel it as you read. It is like a man in love. He cannot measure the difference between his affection for a cousin and that for his fiancée, but he knows it is there, that it is a reality.

If you are to read poetry well, you must know, then, what its characteristics are and what the poet is attempting to do. You must not expect the fully developed situations of the novel, the play, or even the short story. Rather, you should look for sudden bursts of insight into some corner of human experience. More important, possibly, you should look forward to sharing briefly in the experience itself. For it is part of the magic of poetry that at one and the same time it can tell you about experience and make you feel its peculiar significance.

In the following section we have tried to show you the characteristic types of poetry which have been written in the English language. All of the selections included here were originally written in English except those from the Bible and the *Iliad.* These are included because they have been read as much or more in America and England than our original verse, and because the sources they represent have had so profound an effect upon our native poets. The poems are arranged chronologically so that you can see how tastes and forms have changed even though the basic characteristics have remained constant.

Hebrew lyrics

Psalm 1

BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in his law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
That bringeth forth his fruit in his season,
His leaf also shall not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The ungodly are not so;
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 23

THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 24

THE EARTH is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,

And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

Psalm 100

MAKE a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
For the Lord is good;
His mercy is everlasting;
And his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalm 121

I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills:
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,

Which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper:
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil;
He shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and even for evermore.

The classical epic

from The Iliad

The Iliad *is attributed to Homer, a poet supposed to have lived about the ninth century* B.C. *It is the story of the main events which took place in the tenth year of the siege of Troy by the Greeks. As the poem opens, Achilles has withdrawn from the rest of the Greeks because of a quarrel with Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks and older brother of Menelaus. The gods quarrel over the affair, too, with the result that Jupiter, incited by Thetis, persuades Agamemnon to lead the Greeks into battle without the aid of the sulking Achilles and his Myrmidons. The troops almost revolt, but they are persuaded otherwise by Ulysses, Nestor, and other Greek chieftains. They then group themselves for battle.*

Through the eloquence of Hector, son of Priam, the Trojan king, both armies agree to decide the battle by single combat. The lots fall appropriately to Menelaus (Atrides), jilted husband of Helen, and to Paris (Alexander), also Priam's son, who started the war by carrying Helen off to Troy. The following passage (from the translation by William Cullen Bryant) tells of the combat and how Paris, though beaten, is transported to Helen by Venus, with whom he is a favorite.

from BOOK III

But HECTOR, son of Priam, and the great
Ulysses measured off a fitting space,
And in a brazen helmet, to decide

Which warrior first should hurl the brazen spear,
They shook the lots, while all the people round
Lifted their hands to heaven and prayed the gods;
And thus the Trojans and Achaians said:—
"O Father Jove, who rulest from the top
Of Ida, mightiest one and most august!
Whichever of these twain has done the wrong,
Grant that he pass to Pluto's dwelling, slain,
While friendship and a faithful league are ours."
So spake they. Hector of the beamy helm
Looked back and shook the lots. Forth leaped at once
The lot of Paris. Then they took their seats
In ranks beside their rapid steeds, and where
Lay their rich armor. Paris the divine,
Husband of bright-haired Helen, there put on
His shining panoply,—upon his legs
Fair greaves, with silver clasps, and on his breast
His brother's mail, Lycaon's, fitting well
His form. Around his shoulders then he hung
His silver-studded sword, and stout, broad shield,
And gave his glorious brows the dreadful helm,
Dark with its horse-hair plume. A massive spear
Filled his right hand. Meantime the warlike son
Of Atreus clad himself in like array.
And now when both were armed for fight, and each
Had left his host, and, coming forward, walked
Between the Trojans and the Greeks, and frowned
Upon the other, a mute wonder held
The Trojan cavaliers and well-greaved Greeks.
There near each other in the measured space
They stood in wrathful mood with lifted spears.
First Paris hurled his massive spear; it smote
The round shield of Atrides, but the brass
Broke not beneath the blow; the weapon's point
Was bent on that strong shield. The next assault
Atrides Menelaus made, but first
Offered this prayer to Father Jupiter:—
"O sovereign Jove! vouchsafe that I avenge
On guilty Paris wrongs which he was first
To offer; let him fall beneath my hand,
That men may dread hereafter to requite

The friendship of a host with injury."
He spake, and flung his brandished spear; it smote
The round shield of Priamides; right through
The shining buckler went the rapid steel,
And, cutting the soft tunic near the flank,
Stood fixed in the fair corselet. Paris bent
Sideways before it and escaped his death.
Atrides drew his silver-studded sword,
Lifted it high and smote his enemy's crest.
The weapon, shattered to four fragments, fell.
He looked to the broad heaven, and thus exclaimed:—
"O Father Jove! thou art of all the gods
The most unfriendly. I had hoped to avenge
The wrong by Paris done me, but my sword
Is broken in my grasp, and from my hand
The spear was vainly flung and gave no wound."
He spake, and, rushing forward, seized the helm
Of Paris by its horse-hair crest, and turned
And dragged him toward the well-armed Greeks. Beneath
His tender throat the embroidered band that held
The helmet to the chin was choking him.
And now had Menelaus dragged him thence,
And earned great glory, if the child of Jove,
Venus, had not perceived his plight in time.
She broke the ox-hide band; an empty helm
Followed the powerful hand; the hero saw,
Swung it aloft and hurled it toward the Greeks,
And there his comrades seized it. He again
Rushed with his brazen spear to slay his foe.
But Venus—for a goddess easily
Can work such marvels—rescued him, and, wrapped
In a thick shadow, bore him from the field
And placed him in his chamber, where the air
Was sweet with perfumes. Then she took her way
To summon Helen. On the lofty tower
She found her, midst a throng of Trojan dames,
And plucked her perfumed robe. She took the form
And features of a spinner of the fleece,
An aged dame, who used to comb for her
The fair white wool in Lacedaemon's halls,
And loved her much. In such an humble guise

The goddess Venus thus to Helen spake:—
"Come hither, Alexander sends for thee;
He now is in his chamber and at rest
On his carved couch; in beauty and attire
Resplendent, not like one who just returns
From combat with a hero, but like one
Who goes to mingle in the choral dance,
Or, when the dance is ended, takes his seat."
She spake, and Helen heard her, deeply moved;
Yet when she marked the goddess's fair neck,
Beautiful bosom, and soft, lustrous eyes,
Her heart was touched with awe, and thus she said:—
"Strange being! why wilt thou delude me still?
Wouldst thou decoy me further on among
The populous Phrygian towns, or those that stud
Pleasant Maeonia, where there haply dwells
Some one of mortal race whom thou dost deign
To make thy favorite? Hast thou seen, perhaps,
That Menelaus, having overpowered
The noble Alexander, seeks to bear
Me, hated as I must be, to his home?
And hast thou therefore fallen on this device?
Go to him, sit by him, renounce for him
The company of gods, and never more
Return to heaven, but suffer with him; watch
Beside him till he take thee for his wife
Or handmaid. Thither I shall never go,
To adorn his couch and to disgrace myself.
The Trojan dames would taunt me. O, the griefs
That press upon my soul are infinite!"
Displeased, the goddess Venus answered: "Wretch,
Incense me not, lest I abandon thee
In anger, and detest thee with a zeal
As great as is my love, and lest I cause
Trojan and Greeks to hate thee, so that thou
Shalt miserably perish." Thus she spake;
And Helen, Jove-begotten, struck with awe,
Wrapped in a robe of shining white, went forth
In silence from amidst the Trojan dames,
Unheeded, for the goddess led the way.
When now they stood beneath the sumptuous roof
Of Alexander, straightway did the maids

Turn to their wonted tasks, while she went up,
Fairest of women, to her chamber. There
The laughing Venus brought and placed a seat
Right opposite to Paris. Helen sat,
Daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, with eyes
Averted, and reproached her husband thus:—
"Com'st thou from battle? Rather would that thou
Hadst perished by the mighty hand of him
Who was my husband. It was once, I know,
Thy boast that thou wert more than peer in strength
And power of hand, and practice with the spear,
To warlike Menelaus. Go then now,
Defy him to the combat once again.
And yet I counsel thee to stand aloof,
Nor rashly seek a combat, hand to hand,
With fair-haired Menelaus, lest perchance
He smite thee with his spear and thou be slain."
Then Paris answered: "Woman, chide me not
Thus harshly. True it is, that, with the aid
Of Pallas, Menelaus hath obtained
The victory; but I may vanquish him
In turn, for we have also gods with us.
Give we the hour to dalliance; never yet
Have I so strongly proved the power of love,—
Not even when I bore thee from thy home
In pleasant Lacedaemon, traversing
The deep in my good ships, and in the isle
Of Cranaë made thee mine,—such glow of love
Possesses me, and sweetness of desire."
He spake, and to the couch went up. His wife
Followed, and that fair couch received them both.
Meantime Atrides, like a beast of prey,
Went fiercely ranging through the crowd in search
Of godlike Alexander. None of all
The Trojans, or of their renowned allies,
Could point him out to Menelaus, loved
Of Mars; and had they known his lurking-place
They would not for his sake have kept him hid,
For like black death they hated him. Then stood
Among them Agamemnon, king of men,
And spake: "Ye Trojans and Achaians, hear,
And ye allies. The victory belongs

To warlike Menelaus. Ye will then
Restore the Argive Helen and her wealth,
And pay the fitting fine, which shall remain
A memory to men in future times."
  Thus spake the son of Atreus, and the rest
Of the Achaian host approved his words.

Through the meddling of the gods the truce is broken and the battle resumes. Finding the contest going against them, the Trojans withdraw to entreat the help of Minerva. After performing the proper rites, Hector visits his wife, Andromache. The tenderness of this passage is in sharp contrast to the battle accounts which characterize most of this poem.

from BOOK VI

HECTOR left in haste
  The mansion, and retraced his way between
The rows of stately dwellings, traversing
The mighty city. When at length he reached
The Scaean gates, that issue on the field,
His spouse, the nobly-dowered Andromache
Came forth to meet him,—daughter of the prince
Eëtion, who, among the woody slopes
Of Placos, in the Hypoplacian town
Of Thebè, ruled Cilicia and her sons,
And gave his child to Hector great in arms.
She came attended by a maid, who bore
A tender child—a babe too young to speak—
Upon her bosom,—Hector's only son,
Beautiful as a star, whom Hector called
Scamandrius, but all else Astyanax,—
The city's lord,—since Hector stood the sole
Defence of Troy. The father on his child
Looked with a silent smile. Andromache
Pressed to his side meanwhile, and, all in tears,
Clung to his hand, and, thus beginning, said:—
  "Too brave! thy valor yet will cause thy death.
Thou hast no pity on thy tender child,
Nor me, unhappy one, who soon must be
Thy widow. All the Greeks will rush on thee
To take thy life. A happier lot were mine,
If I must lose thee, to go down to earth,
For I shall have no hope when thou art gone,—

Nothing but sorrow. Father have I none,
And no dear mother. Great Achilles slew
My father when he sacked the populous town
Of the Cilicians,—Thebè with high gates.
'Twas there he smote Eëtion, yet forbore
To make his arms a spoil; he dared not that,
But burned the dead with his bright armor on.
And raised a mound above him. Mountain-nymphs,
Daughters of aegis-bearing Jupiter,
Came to the spot and planted it with elms.
Seven brothers had I in my father's house,
And all went down to Hades in one day.
Achilles the swift-footed slew them all
Among their slow-paced bullocks and white sheep.
My mother, princess on the woody slopes
Of Placos, with his spoils he bore away,
And only for large ransom gave her back.
But her Diana, archer-queen, struck down
Within her father's palace. Hector, thou
Art father and dear mother now to me,
And brother and my youthful spouse besides.
In pity keep within the fortress here,
Nor make thy child an orphan nor thy wife
A widow. Post thine army near the place
Of the wild fig-tree, where the city-walls
Are low and may be scaled. Thrice in the war
The boldest of the foe have tried the spot,—
The Ajaces and the famed Idomeneus,
The two chiefs born to Atreus, and the brave
Tydides, whether counselled by some seer
Or prompted to the attempt by their own minds."
  Then answered Hector, great in war: "All this
I bear in mind, dear wife; but I should stand
Ashamed before the men and long-robed dames
Of Troy, were I to keep aloof and shun
The conflict, coward-like. Not thus my heart
Prompts me, for greatly have I learned to dare
And strike among the foremost sons of Troy,
Upholding my great father's fame and mine;
Yet well in my undoubting mind I know
The day shall come in which our sacred Troy,
And Priam, and the people over whom

Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all.
But not the sorrows of the Trojan race,
Nor those of Hecuba herself, nor those
Of royal Priam, nor the woes that wait
My brothers many and brave,—who all at last,
Slain by the pitiless foe, shall lie in dust,—
Grieve me so much as thine, when some mailed Greek
Shall lead thee weeping hence, and take from thee
Thy day of freedom. Thou in Argos then
Shalt, at another's bidding, ply the loom,
And from the fountain of Messeis draw
Water, or from the Hypereian spring,
Constrained unwilling by thy cruel lot.
And then shall some one say who sees thee weep,
'This was the wife of Hector, most renowned
Of the horse-taming Trojans, when they fought
Around their city.' So shall some one say,
And thou shalt grieve the more, lamenting him
Who haply might have kept afar the day
Of thy captivity. O, let the earth
Be heaped above my head in death before
I hear thy cries as thou art borne away!"
  So speaking, mighty Hector stretched his arms
To take the boy; the boy shrank crying back
To his fair nurse's bosom, scared to see
His father helmeted in glittering brass,
And eying with affright the horse-hair plume
That grimly nodded from the lofty crest.
At this both parents in their fondness laughed;
And hastily the mighty Hector took
The helmet from his brow and laid it down
Gleaming upon the ground, and, having kissed
His darling son and tossed him up in play,
Prayed thus to Jove and all the gods of heaven:—
  "O Jupiter and all ye deities,
Vouchsafe that this my son may yet become
Among the Trojans eminent like me,
And nobly rule in Ilium. May they say,
'This man is greater than his father was!'
When they behold him from the battle-field
Bring back the bloody spoil of the slain foe,—

That so his mother may be glad at heart."
So speaking, to the arms of his dear spouse
He gave the boy; she on her fragrant breast
Received him, weeping as she smiled. The chief
Beheld, and, moved with tender pity, smoothed
Her forehead gently with his hand and said:—
"Sorrow not thus, beloved one, for me.
No living man can send me to the shades
Before my time; no man of woman born,
Coward or brave, can shun his destiny.
But go thou home, and tend thy labors there,—
The web, the distaff,—and command thy maids
To speed the work. The cares of war pertain
To all men born in Troy, and most to me."

The fortune of battle, controlled largely by the gods, favors one side and then the other. The Greeks try to persuade Achilles to join them, but he continues to sulk. Finally his closest friend, Patroclus, with his permission and wearing his armor, goes out to do battle. Seeing the armor of Achilles, the Trojans fall back in consternation until Apollo intervenes and makes it possible for Hector to kill Patroclus. The two forces fight for his body until the Greeks, after beating off the Trojans, bear it back toward their ships. The graphic picture of the battle which still rages follows.

from BOOK XVII

He ended, and the warriors in their arms
Raised with main strength the body from the ground.
The Trojans, as they saw it borne away,
Shouted behind them, rushing on like hounds
That spring upon a wounded forest-boar
Before the hunter-youths now pressing close
Upon his flank, to tear him, then again,
Whene'er he turns upon them in his strength,
Retreating in dismay, and put to flight
Hither and thither. Thus, in hot pursuit
And close array, the Trojans following strook
With swords and two-edged spears; but when the twain
Turned and stood firm to meet them, every cheek
Grew pale, and not a single Trojan dared
Draw near the Greeks to combat for the corse.
Thus rapidly they bore away the dead

Toward their good galleys from the battle-field.
Onward with them the furious battle swept,
As spreads a fire that, kindled suddenly,
Seizes a city, and the dwellings sink
In the consuming blaze, and a strong wind
Roars through the flame. Such fearful din of steeds
And warriors followed the retreating Greeks.
As from a mountain summit strong-backed mules
Drag over the rough ways a ponderous beam
Or mast, till weary with the mighty strain
And streaming sweat, so they with resolute toil
Bore off the dead. Behind them as they went
Their two defenders kept the foe aloof.
As when a river-dike o'ergrown with trees
Crosses a plain, and holds the violent course
Of the swoln stream in check, and, driving back
The waters, spreads them o'er the level fields,
Nor can their fury force a passage through,—
So did the warriors Ajax hold in check
The Trojans; yet they followed close, and two
More closely than the rest,—Æneas, son
Of old Anchises, and the illustrious chief,
Hector. As when a company of daws
Or starlings, startled at a hawk's approach,
The murderous enemy of the smaller birds,
Take wing with piercing cries, so, driven before
The might of Hector and Æneas, fled
The Greeks with clamorous cries, and thought no more
Of combat. In the trench and near it lay
Many fair weapons, which the fugitive Greeks
Had dropped in haste, and still the war went on.

Angered by the killing of Patroclus, Achilles makes friends once more with Agamemnon, and resumes his place in battle. So inspired are the Greeks that, slaughtering many, they push the Trojans back inside the city walls. Hector alone remains outside. Achilles pursues him three times around the walls before, with the help of Minerva, he is able to make him stand and fight. Then occurs the crucial engagement of the war, described here.

The remainder of the poem tells of the funeral rites for Patroclus, and of the sorrow of the Trojans over Hector.

He spake, and, brandishing his massive spear,
Hurled it at Hector, who beheld its aim
From where he stood. He stooped, and over him
The brazen weapon passed, and plunged to earth.
Unseen by royal Hector, Pallas went
And plucked it from the ground, and brought it back
And gave it to the hands of Peleus' son,
While Hector said to his illustrious foe:—
"Godlike Achilles, thou hast missed thy mark;
Nor hast thou learned my doom from Jupiter,
As thou pretendest. Thou art glib of tongue,
And cunningly thou orderest thy speech,
In hope that I who hear thee may forget
My might and valor. Think not I shall flee,
That thou mayst pierce my back; for thou shalt send
Thy spear, if God permit thee, through my breast
As I rush on thee. Now avoid in turn
My brazen weapon. Would that it might pass
Clean through thee, all its length! The tasks of war
For us of Troy were lighter for thy death,
Thou pest and deadly foe of all our race!"
He spake, and brandishing his massive spear,
Hurled it, nor missed, but in the centre smote
The buckler of Pelides. Far away
It bounded from the brass, and he was vexed
To see that the swift weapon from his hand
Had flown in vain. He stood perplexed and sad;
No second spear had he. He called aloud
On the white-bucklered chief, Deiphobus,
To bring another; but that chief was far,
And Hector saw that it was so, and said:—
"Ah me! the gods have summoned me to die.
I thought my warrior-friend, Deiphobus,
Was by my side; but he is still in Troy,
And Pallas has deceived me. Now my death
Cannot be far,—is near; there is no hope
Of my escape, for so it pleases Jove
And Jove's great archer-son, who have till now
Delivered me. My hour at last is come;

Yet not ingloriously or passively
I die, but first will do some valiant deed,
Of which mankind shall hear in after time."
He spake, and drew the keen-edged sword that hung,
Massive and finely tempered, at his side,
And sprang—as when an eagle high in heaven,
Through the thick cloud, darts downward to the plain
To clutch some tender lamb or timid hare,
So Hector, brandishing that keen-edged sword,
Sprang forward, while Achilles opposite
Leaped toward him, all on fire with savage hate,
And holding his bright buckler, nobly wrought,
Before him. On his shining helmet waved
The fourfold crest; there tossed the golden tufts
With which the hand of Vulcan lavishly
Had decked it. As in the still hours of night
Hesper goes forth among the host of stars,
The fairest light of heaven, so brightly shone,
Brandished in the right hand of Peleus' son,
The spear's keen blade, as, confident to slay
The noble Hector, o'er his glorious form
His quick eye ran, exploring where to plant
The surest wound. The glittering mail of brass
Won from the slain Patroclus guarded well
Each part, save only where the collar-bones
Divide the shoulder from the neck, and there
Appeared the throat, the spot where life is most
In peril. Through that part the noble son
Of Peleus drave his spear; it went quite through
The tender neck, and yet the brazen blade
Cleft not the windpipe, and the power to speak
Remained. The Trojan fell amid the dust,
And thus Achilles boasted o'er his fall:—
"Hector, when from the slain Patroclus thou
Didst strip his armor, little didst thou think
Of danger. Thou hadst then no fear of me,
Who was not near thee to avenge his death.
Fool! there was left within the roomy ships
A mightier one than he, who should come forth,
The avenger of his blood, to take thy life.
Foul dogs and birds of prey shall tear thy flesh;

The Greeks shall honor him with funeral rites."
And then the crested Hector faintly said:
"I pray thee by thy life, and by thy knees,
And by thy parents, suffer not the dogs
To tear me at the galleys of the Greeks.
Accept abundant store of brass and gold,
Which gladly will my father and the queen,
My mother, give in ransom. Send to them
My body, that the warriors and the dames
Of Troy may light for me the funeral pile."
The swift Achilles answered with a frown:
"Nay, by my knees entreat me not, thou cur,
Nor by my parents. I could even wish
My fury prompted me to cut thy flesh
In fragments, and devour it, such the wrong
That I have had from thee. There will be none
To drive away the dogs about thy head,
Not though thy Trojan friends should bring to me
Tenfold and twentyfold the offered gifts,
And promise others,—not though Priam, sprung
From Dardanus, should send thy weight in gold.
Thy mother shall not lay thee on thy bier,
To sorrow over thee whom she brought forth;
But dogs and birds of prey shall mangle thee."
And then the crested Hector, dying, said:
"I know thee, and too clearly I foresaw
I should not move thee, for thou hast a heart
Of iron. Yet reflect that for my sake
The anger of the gods may fall on thee,
When Paris and Apollo strike thee down,
Strong as thou art, before the Scæan gates."
Thus Hector spake, and straightway o'er him closed
The night of death; the soul forsook his limbs,
And flew to Hades, grieving for its fate,—
So soon divorced from youth and youthful might.
Then said the great Achilles to the dead:—
"Die thou; and I, whenever it shall please
Jove and the other gods, will meet my fate."
He spake, and, plucking forth his brazen lance,
He laid it by, and from the body stripped
The bloody mail. The thronging Greeks beheld

With wonder Hector's tall and stately form,
And no one came who did not add a wound;
And, looking to each other, thus they said:—
"How much more tamely Hector now endures
Our touch than when he set the fleet on fire!"

Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales is usually considered the first great poem indigenous to England. Even the earlier works of Chaucer himself are more French and Italian than English. But here the foreign elements are assimilated, and the work is native in both material and tone. "The Prologue," parts of which are given here, introduces the persons who are making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket in Canterbury. In the main part of the poem each pilgrim tells a story, the tales varying from the most pious of moralities to the bawdiest kind of roughhouse.

The language is the East Midland dialect of Late Middle English. Most of the words you can recognize because of their resemblance to modern English. The footnotes will help you with the others.

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of Marche hath percéd to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspiréd hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages),
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,

1. *soote*, sweet. 5. *eek*, also. 6. *holt*, wood. 8. *halfe cours y-ronne*, after April 11. 11. *corages*, spirit, heart. 14. *ferne*, distant. *halwes*, shrines. *couthe*, known.

The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Bifel that, in that sesoun on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Ere that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne

17. *martir,* Thomas à Becket. 18. *seke,* sick. 29. *atte beste,* in the best manner possible. 32. *hir,* their. 46. *fredom,* liberality. 48. *ferre,* farther. 49. *hethenesse,* heathen lands. 51. *Alisaundre,* Alexandria. 52. *bord bigonne,* sat at the head of the table.

Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight hadde been also
Sometyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And everemore he hadde a sovereyn prys,
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meek as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he weréd a gipoun
Al bismoteréd with his habergeoun,
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him there was his sone, a yong SQUYER,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,

53. *Pruce,* Prussia. 54. *Lettow,* Lithuania. *Ruce,* Russia. 56. *Gernade,* Granada, Spain. 57. *Algezir,* Algeciras. *Belmarye,* Benmarin, Morocco. 58. *Lyeys,* Lyas in Armenia. *Satalye,* Atalia in Asia Minor. 62. *Tramissene,* Tlemçen in Algeria. 64. *ilke,* same. 65. *Palatye,* Balat, Turkey. 70. *vileinye,* rudeness. 71. *wight,* person. 75. *gipoun,* short doublet worn under armor. 76. *bismoteréd,* besmirched. *habergeoun,* coat of mail. 81. *lokkes crulle,* curly hair. 84. *deliver,* quick, active. 85. *chivachye,* cavalry raids.

And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep namore than doth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy,
Hir gretteste ooth was but by seÿnt Loy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drǒpe ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet disport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere

91. *floytinge*, whistling, playing the flute. 96. *juste*, joust. *purtreye*, draw. 97. *nightertale*, nighttime. 121. *cleped*, called, named. 124. *fetisly*, handsomely. 130. *kepe*, care, notice. 132. *lest*, desire. 136. *raughte*, reached. 137. *sikerly*, surely. 139. *peyned*, took pains. *countrefete*, imitate. *chere*, expressions, behavior.

Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel breed.
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,

141. *digne,* worthy. 142. *conscience,* tender feelings. 149. *yerde smerte,* smartly with a stick. 152. *tretys,* well-formed. 157. *war,* aware. 208. *wantown,* sportive, lascivious. 209. *limitour,* a friar licensed to beg within certain limits. *solempne,* pompous.

For of his ordre he was licentiat.
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
There-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,

220. *licenciat*, a person licensed by the Pope. 223. *yeve*, give. 224. *ther as*, where. *wiste*, knew. *pitaunce*, pittance. 226. *y-shrive*, confessed. 227. *yaf*, gave. *avaunt*, boast. 233. *tipet*, cape. *farsed*, stuffed. 234. *yeven*, give. 236. *rote*, a stringed instrument. 237. *yeddinges*, songs. *utterly*, entirely. *prys*, worth. 239. *champioun*, wrestler. 241. *tappestere*, tapster. 242. *bet*, better. *lazar*, leper. *beggestere*, beggar. 244. *facultee*, official position. 246. *avaunce*, be profitable. 247. *poraille*, poor people. 249. *over-al*, everywhere.

So plesaunt was his *"In principio,"*
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
For ther he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe;
But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;

256. *purchas,* gain. *rente,* income. 257. *rage,* frolic. 259. *cloisterer,* one restricted to a cloister. 262. *semi-cope,* short outer coat. 268. *doon,* do. 446. *som-del,* somewhat. *scathe,* shame. 447. *haunt,* skill. 448. *passed hem,* surpassed them. 450. *goon,* go. 453. *ground,* texture. 462. *nouthe,* now.

At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere and a goliardeys,
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes,
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

467. *coude,* knew. 471. *targe,* shield. 472. *foot-mantel,* cloth worn over skirt when riding. 476. *the olde daunce,* all about it. 545. *for the nones,* loosely translated "to be sure." 547. *over-al,* everywhere. 549. *knarre,* knave. 550. *harre,* hinges. 554. *cop,* top. 557. *nose-thirles,* nostrils. 559. *forneys,* furnace. 560. *janglere,* chatterer. *goliardeys,* buffoon, jester. 561. *harlotryes,* lewd jokes. 562. *tollen thryes,* take toll three times, i.e., charge excessively. 563. *A thombe of gold.* There is an old proverb that an honest miller has a thumb of gold. In other words, the miller was honest according to his lights.

Ballads

ANONYMOUS Sir Patrick Spens

THE KING sits in Dunfermline toune
Drinking the blude-red wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
And signed it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

"Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne":
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll see thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

ANONYMOUS The wife of Usher's well

THERE lived a wife at Usher's well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me
In earthly flesh and blood!"

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh.

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bedside.

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
" 'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna crawed but once,
And clapped his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa'."

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be missed out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide."

"Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may;
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
She'll go mad ere it be day."

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire."

William Shakespeare

from Love's Labour's Lost

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-who!" A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-who!" A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot. (1590-1592; 1598)

from Twelfth Night

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure. (1599-1601; 1623)

from As You Like It

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;

Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not
Heigh-ho! sing, & c. (1600)

Sonnet 18

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (1609)

Sonnet 29

WHEN, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,

With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee—and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings. (1609)

Sonnet 30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanéd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end. (1609)

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long. (1609)

Sonnet 94

THEY that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold and to temptation slow;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds. (1609)

Sonnet 129

THE EXPENSE of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell. (1609)

Sonnet 146

POOR soul, the center of my sinful earth—
Fool'd by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then. (1609)

Renaissance lyrics

SIR THOMAS WYATT They flee from me

THEY flee from me that sometime did me seek
With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild, and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thankèd be fortune, it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once in special,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
Therewith all sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, *'Dear heart, how like you this?'*

It was no dream; I lay broad waking:
But all is turned, through my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangleness.
But since that I so kindly am served,
I would fain know what she hath deserved. (1557)

JOHN DONNE Song

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till Age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee
And swear
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not; I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three. (1633)

Love's alchemy

Some that have deeper digg'd love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie.
I have lov'd, and got, and told,
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery;
Oh, 'tis imposture all.
And as no chemic yet th' elixir got,

But glorifies his pregnant pot,
If by the way to him befall
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So, lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.
Our ease, our thrift, our honor, and our day,
Shall we, for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
Ends love in this, that my man
Can be as happy as I can, if he can
Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
That loving wretch that swears,
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
Which he in her angelic finds,
Would swear as justly, that he hears,
In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.
Hope not for mind in women; at their best
Sweetness and wit, they are but mummy, possest. (1633)

BEN JONSON An epitaph on Salathiel Pavy

WEEP with me, all you that read
This little story;
And know, for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As heaven and nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature.
Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When fates turned cruel,
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;
And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcae thought him one,
He played so truly.
So, by error, to his fate
They all consented,
But viewing him since, alas, too late!
They have repented;
And have sought, to give new birth,
In baths to steep him;

But being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him. (1602)

JONSON Hymn to Diana

QUEEN and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wishéd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright. (1600)

ROBERT HERRICK Upon Julia's clothes

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
Oh, how that glittering taketh me! (1648)

Corinna's going a-Maying

GET UP, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair

Fresh-quilted colors through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept and bowéd toward the east
Above an hour since: yet you not dressed;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 't is sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the springtime, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see 't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let 's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream
Before that we have left to dream:
And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even:
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come let's go a-Maying. (1648)

THOMAS CAREW Song

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet, dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars 'light
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixéd become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phoenix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies. (1640)

GEORGE HERBERT

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives. (1630-1633)

HENRY VAUGHAN

The world

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;

And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog moved there so slow,
He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found,
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see
That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in sense,
And scorned pretense;
While others, slipped into a wide excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares enslave,
Who think them brave;

And poor, despiséd Truth sat counting by
Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
But most would use no wing.
O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
Before true light!
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way,
The way, which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God;
A way where you might tread the sun, and be
More bright than he!
But, as I did their madness so discuss,
One whispered thus
"This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,
But for his bride." (1650)

ANDREW MARVELL To his coy mistress

HAD WE but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews;
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state;
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingéd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity;
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power,
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run. (c. 1650; 1681)

John Milton

On the late massacre in Piedmont

AVENGE, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans

The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant, that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe. (1655; 1673)

On his blindness

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait." (1655; 1673)

from Paradise Lost

Milton wrote his great epic with the express purpose of justifying the ways of God to man. In it he shows how Satan, an angel who revolted from God, is driven from heaven, and with all his crew is forced down to the depths of hell. There in a great debate the satanic hordes decide to retaliate by perverting the inhabitants of a new world they have heard about. Satan himself volunteers to scout out the new world. After reaching the Garden of Eden, he hides there, observing its wonders and admiring Adam and Eve. Soon he decides that the best way to bring about their downfall is to induce them to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. Through the angel Raphael, God warns Adam of his danger and of the necessity for obedience. At Adam's request, Raphael describes the creation of the world and the reasons for its creation.

The morning after Raphael's visit Adam and Eve go separately to their labors. Adam, fearing danger, warns Eve not to go without him, but because

of her pride she refuses to yield. Once alone, Eve is approached by Satan in the guise of the Serpent. After much flattery he is able to persuade her to eat the fruit. She then returns to tell Adam, who, though shocked, resolves because of his love for Eve to perish with her. Thus he too eats the fruit. Its first effect upon them is an awareness of sex, and they surrender themselves to carnal love. The selection given here (from Book IX) opens as they awake the following morning.

The remainder of the poem tells of God's displeasure, of Christ's intercession, and of man's loss of the garden and of pure delight.

SOON as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapour bland
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour, from about them, naked left
To guilty Shame: he covered, but his robe
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as strucken mute;
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:—
"O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit Man's voice—true in our fall,
False in our promised rising; since our eyes
Opened we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil, good lost and evil got:
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
And in our faces evident the signs

Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those Heavenly Shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as evening! Cover me, ye pines!
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more!
But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
What best may, for the present, serve to hide
The parts of each from other that seem most
To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen—
Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sewed,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts, that this new comer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean."
  So counselled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood. There soon they chose
The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,
But such as, at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillared shade
High overarched, and echoing walks between:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade. Those leaves
They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
And with what skill they had together sewed,
To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To that first naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found the American, so girt
With feathered cincture, naked else and wild,
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part

Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions—anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord—and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tost and turbulent:
For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed
Superior sway. From thus distempered breast
Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:—
"Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
I know not whence possessed thee! We had then
Remained still happy—not, as now, despoiled
Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable!
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail."
To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:—
"What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe?
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happened thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known
Why he should mean me ill or seek to harm.
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me."

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:—
"Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I—
Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint! What could I more?
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or to find
Matter of glorious trial; and perhaps
I also erred in overmuch admiring
What seemed in thee so perfect that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee. But I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in woman overtrusting,
Lets her will rule: restraint she will not brook;
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse."
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contest appeared no end. (1665; 1667)

Neo-classical poems

JOHN DRYDEN A song for St. Cecilia's Day

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead."

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries: "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.
Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,

Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.
Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky. (1687)

ALEXANDER POPE *from* An Essay on Man

The argument of the first sections of Epistle One as summarized by Pope is given here:

OF MAN in the abstract. I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things. II. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown. III. That it is partly on his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice of his dispensations. V. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels: and on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miser-

able. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradation of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason: that reason alone countervails all the other faculties.

The poem goes on as follows:

VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from Infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing.—On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten-thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their center nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—O madness! Pride! Impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this general frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,

The great directing mind of all ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart:
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X. Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.* (1732; 1734)

Romantic and Victorian poems

WILLIAM BLAKE The tiger

TIGER! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? (1794)

BLAKE London

I WANDER through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appalls,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.

But most, through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse. (1794)

ROBERT BURNS

The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman

Chorus

THE DEIL'S awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman!

The deil cam fiddlin thro' the town
And danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman.
And ilka wife cries: "Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man!

"We'll mak our maut, we'll brew our drink,
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man;
And monie braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
That danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman."

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land
Was *The Deil's Awa wi' th' Exciseman.*

Chorus

The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' th' Exciseman! (1792)

7. *ilka,* every. *Auld Mahoun,* Old Mahomet (an ancient name for the devil). 9. *maut,* malt. 11. *monie braw,* many fine. *meikle,* great. 13. *threesome reels,* reels in which three take part. 14. *strathspeys,* lively Scottish dances.

BURNS O, wert thou in the cauld blast

O WERT thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen. (1796; 1800)

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The world is too much with us

THE WORLD is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn. (1806; 1807)

O, wert thou in the cauld blast. 3. *airt,* direction, quarter of the wind. 7. *bield,* shelter.

London, 1802

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay. (1802; 1807)

Ode on intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blesséd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh, evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral,
And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

Oh, joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed

For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Falling from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts today
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. (1803-1806; 1807)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE Kubla Khan

In xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me,
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise. (1797; 1816)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY Ozymandias

I MET a traveler from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away." (1817; 1818)

Ode to the west wind

I

O WILD WEST WIND, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear,
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? (1819; 1820)

JOHN KEATS Ode to a nightingale

MY HEART aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness—
That thou, light-wingéd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvéd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainéd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
  Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
  White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
    Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
      And mid-May's eldest child.
  The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
    The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time,
  I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a muséd rime,
  To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
  To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
    While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
      In such an ecstasy!
  Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
    To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
  No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
  In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
  Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
    She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
      The same that oft-times hath
  Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
    Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
  To toll me back from thee to my sole self,
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
  As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
  Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
    Up the hillside; and now 'tis buried deep
      In the next valley glades:
  Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
    Fled is that music—Do I wake or sleep? (1819)

KEATS Ode on a Grecian urn

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rime:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
Forever piping songs forever new.
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or seashore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets forevermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. (1819; 1820)

KEATS Ode on melancholy

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globéd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung. (1819; 1820)

RALPH WALDO EMERSON The rhodora:

On Being Asked, Whence Is the Flower?

In MAY, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.
(1834; 1839)

Each and all

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon

Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, "I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth":—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;

Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;—
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole. (1834?; 1839)

EMERSON Days

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn. (1852?; 1857)

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON Tithonus

THE WOODS decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,

And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all

Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels. (c. 1842; 1860)

EDGAR ALLAN POE To Helen

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land! (1831)

POE The city in the sea

Lo! DEATH has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free:
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls;
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvelous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead,
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas,

Along that wilderness of glass;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea;
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven!
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low;
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence. (1831; 1845)

ROBERT BROWNING

Soliloquy of the Spanish cloister

Gr-r-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!

With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
  And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
  Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L for our initial!
  (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
  Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
  Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
  —Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
  (That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
  Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
  As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
  Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
  While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
  We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
  All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
  Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
  Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
  Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
  One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
  Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
  Off to hell, a Manichee?

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine. . . .*
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena, gratiâ,*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r—you swine! (1842)

BROWNING

The bishop orders his tomb at Saint Praxed's Church

Rome, 15—

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed; is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah, God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know—
Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South

He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk;
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless; how I earned the prize!
Draw close; that conflagration of my church—
What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah, God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah, God, of *lapis lazuli,*
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Savior at his sermon on the mount,

Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve.
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work;
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet—
Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!

Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row; and, going, turn your backs—
Aye, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was! (1845)

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL To the dandelion

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth,—thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow

Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease,
'Tis the spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam

Of heaven and could some wondrous secret show
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book. (1844; 1845)

WALT WHITMAN One's-self I sing

ONE'S-SELF I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse,
I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing. (1867; 1871)

Once I pass'd through a populous city

ONCE I pass'd through a populous city imprinting my brain for future use with its shows, architecture, customs, traditions,
Yet now of all that city I remember only a woman I casually met there who detain'd me for love of me,
Day by day and night by night we were together—all else has long been forgotten by me,
I remember I say only that woman who passionately clung to me,
Again she holds me by the hand, I must not go,
I see her close beside me with silent lips sad and tremulous. (1860; 1867)

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing

I SAW in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,

It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend, a lover near,
I know very well I could not. (1860)

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd

I

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

II

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

III

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush, tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

IV

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die).

V

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray débris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass;
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

VI

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags, with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

VII

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring.
For fresh as the morning, thus would I carol a song to you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes.
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

VIII

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,

As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side (while the other stars all look'd on),
As we wander'd together the solemn night (for something I know not what kept me from sleep),
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cold transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

IX

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

X

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea till there on the prairies meeting:
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

XI

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,

In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there;
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows;
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

XII

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light—Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.
Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

XIII

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes;
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

XIV

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,

The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages;
And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail;
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night;
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death!

XV

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure, deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

I saw askant the armies;
And I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,

And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.
I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd.
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

XVI

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the dooryard blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each I keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
The tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand hearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake;
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim. (1865; 1881)

MATTHEW ARNOLD Dover Beach

THE SEA is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night. (1867)

GEORGE MEREDITH Lucifer in starlight

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion, swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball, in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their specter of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law. (1883)

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI A birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me. (1857)

Reprinted from *Selected Poems of George Meredith;* copyright 1897 by George Meredith, 1925 by William M. Meredith; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

EMILY DICKINSON The chariot

BECAUSE I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity. (1890)

There's a certain slant of light

THERE'S a certain slant of light,
On winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything,
'Tis the seal, despair,—

An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death. (1890)

THOMAS HARDY The darkling thrush

I LEANT upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted night
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound

"The Darkling Thrush" and "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'" from *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*. Copyright 1923 by The Macmillan Company. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Was written on terrestrial things
  Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
  His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
  And I was unaware. (1900)

HARDY In time of 'the breaking of nations'

I

ONLY a man harrowing clods
  In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
  Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
  From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
  Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
  Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
  Ere their story die. (1915)

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

The habit of perfection

ELECTED Silence, sing to me
  And beat upon my whorléd ear;
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb—
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

"The Habit of Perfection" and "I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark" reprinted from *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* by permission of the Hopkins family and the Oxford University Press.

Be shelléd, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light;
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine;
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-colored clothes provide
Your spouse not labored-at nor spun. (1866; 1918)

I wake and feel the fell of dark

I WAKE and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.
I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse. (1886; 1918)

Contemporary poems

A. E. HOUSMAN The true lover

THE LAD came to the door at night,
When lovers crown their vows,
And whistled soft and out of sight
In shadow of the boughs.

"I shall not vex you with my face
Henceforth, my love, for aye;
So take me in your arms a space
Before the east is grey.

"When I from hence away am past
I shall not find a bride,
And you shall be the first and last
I ever lay beside."

She heard and went and knew not why;
Her heart to his she laid;
Light was the air beneath the sky
But dark under the shade.

"Oh do you breathe, lad, that your breast
Seems not to rise and fall,
And here upon my bosom prest
There beats no heart at all?"

"Oh loud, my girl, it once would knock,
You should have felt it then;
But since for you I stopped the clock
It never goes again."

"Oh lad, what is it, lad, that drips
Wet from your neck on mine?

"The True Lover" and "To an Athlete Dying Young" from *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

What is it falling on my lips,
My lad, that tastes of brine?"

"Oh like enough 'tis blood, my dear,
For when the knife has slit
The throat across from ear to ear
'Twill bleed because of it."

Under the stars the air was light
But dark below the boughs,
The still air of the speechless night,
When lovers crown their vows. (1896)

To an athlete dying young

THE TIME you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,

The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's. (1895; 1896)

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS Among school children

I

I WALK through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and history,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way—the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.

II

I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy—
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and the white of one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age—
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage—
And had that color upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats.* Copyright 1928 by The Macmillan Company. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind—
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once—enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts—O Presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolize—
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labor is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.

O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance? (1903)

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON Miniver Cheevy

MINIVER CHEEVY, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing.
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant:
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Reprinted from *The Town Down the River* by Edwin Arlington Robinson; copyright 1910 by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938 by Ruth Niveson; used by permission of the publishers.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking:
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking. (1907)

WALTER DE LA MARE The listeners

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of a turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even

From *Collected Poems* by Walter de la Mare. Copyright, 1941, by Walter de la Mare. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

Louder, and lifted his head:—
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,' he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Aye, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone. (1912)

ROBERT FROST After apple-picking

MY LONG two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin

From *Collected Poems of Robert Frost.* Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost. By permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep. (1913; 1914)

JOHN MASEFIELD On growing old

BE WITH me, Beauty, for the fire is dying,
My dog and I are old, too old for roving,
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.

I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute,
The clock ticks to my heart; a withered wire
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.

I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland, nor your hill-land nor your valleys,
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.

Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

From *Poems* by John Masefield. Copyright 1942 by John Masefield. By permission of The Macmillan Company.

Beauty, have pity, for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,
Springtime of man all April in a face.

Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,

So, from this glittering world with all its fashion,
Its fire and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch.

Give me but these, and though the darkness close
Even the night will blossom as the rose. (1922)

VACHEL LINDSAY The leaden-eyed

LET NOT young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride.
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed.
Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly;
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap;
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve;
Not that they die, but that they die like sheep. (1912)

SARA TEASDALE The long hill

I MUST have passed the crest a while ago
And now I am going down—
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

From *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. Copyright 1925 by The Macmillan Company. By permission of The Macmillan Company.

From *The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale.* Copyright 1937 by The Macmillan Company. By permission of The Macmillan Company.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,

It was nearly level along the beaten track
And the brambles caught in my gown—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
The rest of the way will be only going down. (1920)

ELINOR WYLIE Velvet shoes

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow. (1921)

Reprinted from *The Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie*, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1921, 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

LEONARD BACON An afternoon in Artillery Walk

(Mary Milton loquitur)

I THINK it is his blindness makes him so
He is so angry, and so querulous.
Yes, Father! I will look in Scaliger.
Yes, Cousin Phillips took the notes—I think—
May all the evil angels fly away
With Cousin Phillips to the Serbonian Bog,
Wherever that may be. And here am I
Locked in with him the livelong afternoon.
There's Anne gone limping with that love of hers,
Her master-carpenter, and Deborah
Stolen away. Yes, Father, 'tis an aleph
But the Greek glose on't in the Septuagint
Is something that I cannot quite make out.
The letter's rubbed.
Oh, thus to wear away
My soul and body with this dry-as-dust
This tearer-up of words, this plaguey seeker
After the things that no man understands.
'Tis April. I am seventeen years old,
And Abram Clark will come a-courting me.
Oh what a Hell a midday house can be!
Dusty and bright and dumb and shadowless,
Full of this sunshot dryness, like the soul
Of this old pedant here. I will not bear
Longer this tyranny of death in life
That drains my spirit like a succubus.
I am too full of blood and life for this—
This dull soul-gnawing discipline he sets
Upon our shoulders, the sad characters.
Chapter on chapter, blank and meaningless.
Now by the May-pole merry-makers run,
And the music throbs and pulses in light limbs,
And the girls' kirtles are lifted to the knee.
Ah would that I were blowsy with the heat,
Being bussed by some tall fellow, and kissing him

From *Guinea-Fowl and Other Poetry* by Leonard Bacon. Copyright, 1927, by Harper and Brothers.

On his hot red lips—some bully royalist
With gold in's purse and lace about his throat
And a long rapier for the Puritans.
Or I would wander by some cool yew-hedge,
Dallying with my lover all the afternoon,
And then to cards and supper—cinnamon,
Some delicate pastry, and an amber wine
Burning on these lips that know a year-long lent.
Then to the theatre, and Mistress Nell
That the king's fond of. Mayhap gentlemen
About would praise me, and I should hear them buzz,
And feel my cheek grow warm beneath my mask,
And glance most kindly—
I was in a muse
I have the paper, father, and the pens.
Now for the damnable dictation. So!
"High—on a throne—of royal state—
which far
Outshone—the wealth of Ormus"—S or Z?
How should I know the letter?—*"and of Ind.*
Or where—the gorgeous East—with richest hand
Showers—on her kings—barbaric—pearl and gold.
Satan exalted sate." (1927)

T. S. ELIOT The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.[1]

LET US go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;

From *Collected Poems 1909-1935* by T. S. Eliot. Copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

[1] ***S'io . . . rispondo.*** If I could believe that my answer might be to a person who should ever return into the world, this flame would stand without more quiverings; but inasmuch as, if I hear the truth, never from this depth did any living man return, without fear of infamy I answer thee (from Dante's *Inferno*, Canto XXVII, ll. 61-66).

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and, 'Do I dare?'
Time to turn back and descend the stair,

With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!')
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!')
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:—
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
  So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
  And how should I presume?
And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
  And should I then presume?
  And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .
I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,

Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
  Should say: 'That is not what I meant at all,
  That is not it, at all.'

. . . . .

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
  'That is not it at all,
  That is not what I meant, at all.'

. . . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (1917)

ELIOT Sweeney among the nightingales

ὤμοι πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.[1]

APENECK SWEENEY spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

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[1] Alas! I am stricken by a timely blow within (from the drama *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus).

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganized upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas, figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud. (1919)

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH You, Andrew Marvell

And here face down beneath the sun,
And here upon earth's noonward height,
To feel the always coming on,
The always rising of the night.

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow,

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening, strange,
The flooding dark about their knees,
The mountains over Persia change,

And now at Kermanshah the gate,
Dark, empty, and the withered grass,
And through the twilight now the late
Few travellers in the westward pass.

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone,
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on,

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone,
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown,

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls,
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls,

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And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa, the gilded sand,
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land,

Nor now the long light on the sea—
And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift, how secretly,
The shadow of the night comes on. . . . (1926; 1930)

HART CRANE At Melville's tomb

OFTEN beneath the wave, wide from this ledge
The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,
Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,
The calyx of death's bounty giving back
A scattered chapter, lived hieroglyph,
The portent wound in corridors of shells.

Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,
Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,
Forested eyes there were that lifted altars;
And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive
No farther tides . . . High in the azure steeps
Monody shall not wake the mariner.
This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps. (1930)

LEONIE ADAMS Country summer

NOW the rich cherry whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced,
Like a strict box its gems encased,

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Has spilt from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round,
Those melting rubies which it hid;
With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry
To taste that deep-red lark's-bite berry,
And blackcap-bloom is yellow-dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,
And side by side with the wren's brood,—
O lovely time of beggars' luck—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud.
And full and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house.
But all night nibble under boughs,
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm-baking smell blows round;
Inside and out and sky and ground
Are much the same; the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early-born,
Is risen only finger-far.
All stars stand close in summer air,
And tremble, and look mild as amber;
When wicks are lighted in the chamber
You might say stars were settling there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay,
Down the still light the mowers look;
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,
And they waked half to other days,
When left alone in yellow-stubble,
The rusty-coated mare would graze.
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born;
Another thought can come to mind,
But like the shivering of the wind,
Morning and evening in the corn. (1926; 1929)

W. H. AUDEN Musée des beaux arts

ABOUT suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus,* for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on. (1940)

STEPHEN SPENDER The express

AFTER the first powerful plain manifesto
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
The gasworks and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.
Beyond the town there lies the open country
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.

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It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.
And always light, aerial, underneath
Goes the elate meter of her wheels.
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines
She plunges new eras of wild happiness
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves
And parallels clean like the steel of guns.
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night
Where only a low streamline brightness
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white.
Ah, like a comet through flames she moves entranced
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal. (1933)

KARL SHAPIRO Auto wreck

Its quick soft silver bell beating, beating,
And down the dark one ruby flare
Pulsing out red light like an artery,
The ambulance at top speed floating down
Past beacons and illuminated clocks
Wings in a heavy curve, dips down,
And brakes speed, entering the crowd.
The doors leap open, emptying light;
Stretchers are laid out, the mangled lifted
And stowed into the little hospital.
Then the bell, breaking the hush, tolls once,
And the ambulance with its terrible cargo
Rocking, slightly rocking, moves away,
As the doors, an afterthought, are closed.

We are deranged, walking among the cops
Who sweep glass and are large and composed.
One is still making notes under the light.
One with a bucket douches ponds of blood

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Into the street and gutter.
One hangs lanterns on the wrecks that cling,
Empty husks of locusts, to iron poles.

Our throats were tight as tourniquets,
Our feet were bound with splints, but now
Like convalescents intimate and gauche,
We speak through sickly smiles and warn
With the stubborn saw of common sense,
The grim joke and the banal resolution.
The traffic moves around with care,
But we remain, touching a wound
That opens to our richest horror.

Already old, the question Who shall die?
Becomes unspoken Who is innocent?
For death in war is done by hands;
Suicide has cause and stillbirth, logic.
But this invites the occult mind,
Cancels our physics with a sneer,
And spatters all we knew of dénouement
Across the expedient and wicked stones. (1942)

DYLAN THOMAS Twenty-four years

TWENTY-FOUR years remind the tears of my eyes.
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)
In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a tailor
Sewing a shroud for a journey
By the light of the meat-eating sun.
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,
With my red veins full of money,
In the final direction of the elementary town
I advance for as long as forever is. (1939)

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Glossary and index of critical terms

ABSTRACT, apart from particular persons, places, and things. Thus, *life* and *firmness* are abstract when considered apart from a person who is alive or a thing which is firm. 3, 81f.

ACCENT, the stress given a syllable because of its length, sound, position, nature, or meaning. 645.

ACT, a division of a drama which, as a rule, marks off a stage in the development of the action. In the modern theater, its beginning and conclusion are indicated by the raising and lowering of the curtain. 420.

ACTION, that which occurs during the course of a narrative. See *happenings*, 36-51. See also *patterns of*, 37-38, *probable action*, 53; *relationship to characters*, 53, 54, 100.

ALEXANDRINE, a line of poetry regularly consisting of six iambic feet with a caesura or break after the third.

ALLEGORY, an expanded metaphor in the form of a narrative, using characters, happenings, and other elements to expound a concept. 209.

ALLITERATION, the repetition of consonant sounds, usually those at the beginnings of words.

And how the silence surged softly backward

ANALOGY, a comparison. Usually the term is applied to a figurative rather than a literal comparison.

ANAPEST, 645.

ANTAGONIST, 54, 70.

ANTICLIMAX, a sentence or work in which the effect decreases at the conclusion.

ANTITHESIS, a contrast, heightened by the arrangement of the opposing elements.

APOLOGUE, a short piece of fiction designed to communicate a moral or practical truth.

ASSONANCE, strictly speaking, a repetition of vowel sounds. Often, however, the term is used to indicate any repetition of sounds not exact enough to be classified as rhyme.

There open fanes and gaping graves

ATMOSPHERE, the emotional quality in a literary work achieved by the handling of the setting. 71f.

ATTRACTIVE CHARACTER, one toward whom the reader is generally sympathetic. 54. 111, 421.

BACKGROUND, the setting against which the events in an imaginative work take place. 70, 644.

BALLAD, a simple and often tragic story told in verse. Conventionally the ballad appears in four-line stanzas of alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter. The folk ballad is usually distinguished from the literary ballad, the former being often of indeterminate origin and usually concerned with physical action of a vigorous and melancholy sort. The latter is written as an imitation of the folk ballad, and is usually more sophisticated, more concerned with the psychological and moral implications of the action.

BLANK VERSE, unrhymed iambic pentameter. A good example in this book is the selection from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, 692.

BURLESQUE, 108.

CACOPHONY, harsh and unpleasing sound.

CAESURA, a pause or break, demanded by the sense, coming within a line of poetry.

CATHARSIS, a term used by Aristotle to describe the proper effect of tragedy—"a purging of pity and fear." 162.

CHARACTERISTICS, 52.

CHARACTERIZATION, 52f., 70-71, 644.

CHARACTERS, 52-69, 152, 206ff. See also *antagonist; attractive; complex*, 52; *con-*

fidant; developing; foil; functions of, 52, 53-55; *hero; heroine; in drama,* 419; *protagonist; raisonneur; related to author,* 97ff.; *to happenings,* 53; *relationship between,* 113f.; *simple,* 52, 150; *stock; type,* 149f., 422; *unattractive; villain,* 54, 140, 422.

CHORUS, (1) in Greek drama, 426; (2) in poetry, a stanzaic refrain repeated after each verse of the lyric.

CLASSICISM, often defined as the golden mean between *romanticism* and *realism.* Based on the tenets of Greek art and literature, it stresses such characteristics as beauty and simplicity of form, restraint of emotion, and clarity of statement.

CLIMAX, the high point of a series of happenings. In some narratives, the action mounts to a climax at the end; in others, the climax occurs at the point of a reversal. At times, critics define "climax" as the point in reading or seeing a work where the reader or spectator experiences the highest emotional reaction. 38.

CLOSED COUPLET, a couplet in which an idea is begun and completed. Ordinarily the punctuation at the end of a closed couplet is a colon, semicolon, or period.

True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well
express'd;

145. See also *heroic couplet.*

COINCIDENCE, an incident in a series of happenings which can only be accounted for as accidental or fortuitous. 149.

COMEDY, 421ff. See also *manners, comedy of.*

COMPLICATION, a situation which forces a character in a narrative to react.

CONCRETE, that which is experienced through or appeals to the senses. 3, 81ff., 94, 208f., 648.

CONFIDANT, a character to whom another character expresses his thoughts and feelings.

CONFLICT, the interplay between opposing forces in a narrative. 38, 113-114, 421f.

CONNOTATION, an experience, feeling, attitude, or association suggested by a word. 82, 84, 648.

CONSISTENCY, 150ff.

CONVENTION, an artistic practice generally accepted as a substitute for a more natural and realistic mode of expression. A good example is the lowering of the curtain during a play to indicate the passing of time. 210, 419.

COUPLET, two successive lines of poetry which rhyme. Usually they are of about the same length. See *closed couplet* and *heroic couplet.*

DACTYL, 646.

DENOTATION, the dictionary or scientific meaning of a word, irrespective of its associations. 82.

DENOUEMENT, literally, the untying; hence, the untangling of the threads of a plot, the solution or outcome of a series of happenings. See *happenings,* 36-51.

DESCRIPTION, discourse designed to re-create human experience in words. Often the term is applied more narrowly to that discourse which attempts to re-create for the imagination the outward aspects of a person, place, or thing. 3, 70.

DEVELOPING CHARACTER, one whose characteristics undergo change in the course of a narrative. 71, 178.

DIALOGUE, the presentation, in direct discourse, of conversation between two or more characters. 53, 84, 100.

DICTION, the language employed in a work. See *language,* 81-95.

DIDACTICISM, obvious preachiness in literary works. 99.

DRAMA, imaginative narrative designed to be performed by actors before an audience. See 418-643. See also *acts in,* 420; *closet,* 418; *experimental,* 587; *foreshadowing; Greek,* 424ff.; *parts in,* 420; *relationship to audience, to theater,* 418, 471f., 517f.; *representation of,* 418; *scenes in,* 420; *tone in,* 420-423; *treatment of,* 418.

DRAMATIC, descriptive of an action—in drama, fiction, or poetry—in a way which is concrete and direct rather than summarized; also sometimes used to signify the emotional quality of happenings involving conflicts. 94.

DRAMATIC IRONY, a device by which the

audience is made aware of the outcome of a situation before the characters in the play realize it.

ELEGY, a poem soberly and philosophically treating of death. Its parts often involve (1) a lamentation, (2) a discussion of the philosophical implications, and (3) an affirmation of belief, resulting in consolation.

EMPHASIS, 81, 149, 208-209.

ENVELOPING ACTION, that part of a narrative at the beginning and perhaps at the end which introduces a narrator and unfolds the circumstances under which the story is told. Examples are the opening paragraphs of *Heart of Darkness* (307ff.), or the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* (666ff.).

EPIC, a narrative poem dealing with action of heroic proportions. Usually the chief characters are national heroes, either real or mythical. Familiar epics are the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the Latin *Aeneid*, the German *Nibelungenlied*, the Finnish *Kalevala*, and the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*.

EPISODE, a happening in a narrative which is complete in itself and which may or may not be loosely connected with the main line of action. 422.

EUPHONY, a verbal effect which is pleasing to the ear.

EVALUATION, a thoughtful appraisal. In literary criticism the term implies an appraisal reached through the use of standards which are themselves clear and valid. 6, 135-205.

EVALUATION, STANDARDS OF: *clarity*, 138-139; *criticism of life*, 179-182; *effect upon reader*, 161-165; *escape*, 140-141; *internal consistency*, 138, 176-179; *personality of author*, 95f., 166-176; *pleasure in details*, 155-157; *real life*, 147-155; *special doctrine*, 142-146.

EXPOSITION, explanation; in fiction and drama specifically the explanation of the situation and character which is necessary for an understanding of what takes place.

EXPRESSIONISM, a dramatic mode in which the author conveys meanings, not by literal realism, but by fantastic or psychological symbolism; e.g., O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* and the dream scenes in *Emperor Jones*.

FABLE, a narrative, usually about animals, designed to make clear a moral truth. Sometimes the term applies to the action or plot of a literary work, usually a play, an epic, or a narrative poem.

FARCE, 422f.

FICTION, the interpretation of life in an imaginative narrative. 2-35, 206. See also *adventure*, 140; *detective*, 140, 181; *romantic*, 140.

FIGURES OF SPEECH, rhetorical devices designed to appeal to the reader's senses and intellect in such a way as to heighten his perception of the essential quality of the experience described. Figures which appeal primarily to the senses are simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, litotes, allegory, fable, apologue, and parable; those which appeal primarily to the intellect are analogy, antithesis, and irony. 82f., 85, 94, 649.

FOCUS, the centering of attention by the author upon a certain element or certain elements of a literary work. A figurative term for emphasis. 211.

FOCUS OF NARRATION, the point of view. 209.

FOIL CHARACTER, a character whose qualities contrast to, and thus illuminate, the nature of another character.

FOOT, METRICAL, 645, 646.

FORESHADOWING, the pointing forward to a happening in an imaginative work; an intimation to the reader of what is to follow. 420.

FORM, in literature a species of production, such as fiction, drama, or poetry; or a subspecies, such as the novel, one-act play, or sonnet. The term is also used to designate the arrangement or structure of a work as distinct from its content, or to designate everything that appears on the printed page as distinct from what went through the author's mind or goes through the reader's. 96-97, 206.

FREE VERSE. 646.

FREUDIANS, authors and critics who believe

that life should be interpreted in literature in terms of the psychology of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). 148.

FUNCTIONAL, applies to details in characterization, happenings, and other elements in a work which are useful to other elements or to the unity of the work as a whole. Thus some characterizations motivate action, and some actions contribute to total meaning. 70, 152.

HAPPENINGS, 36-51, 53, 81-82, 97f., 644.

HERO, the chief attractive male character in an imaginative work; the male protagonist. 54, 141, 421f.

HEROIC COUPLET, a closed couplet in which the metrical form is iambic pentameter.

A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!

HEROINE, the chief attractive feminine character in an imaginative work; the feminine protagonist. 54, 141, 421f.

HYPERBOLE, an extravagant exaggeration as a rule deliberately planned with an eye to its effect.

IAMBUS, 645.

IMAGERY, concrete details which stimulate the senses. Often the term is employed more narrowly to designate figurative details as distinct from literal ones. 649.

IMAGISM, the type of poetry which is intended to do no more than present small, sharp pictures with special attention to mass, line, and color.

IMPRESSIONISM, in literature the mode of writing in which the author describes an object or experience, not in clear terms of its reality as he knows or thinks it is, but in terms of his immediate, sometimes momentary sensory reactions to it.

INCONSISTENCY, 422. See also *consistency.*

INEVITABILITY, in a literary work, the relating of character and action in such a way as to convince the reader that the action is the only possible one under the circumstances presented. 421.

IRONY, discourse in which the author or speaker says the opposite of what he means, yet does it in such a fashion as to imply his real meaning. 112.

ITALIAN SONNET, see *sonnet.*

LANGUAGE, 81-95, 156; dialect, 151; poetic, 644.

LITOTES, a deliberate understatement for the sake of effect. The opposite of hyperbole.

MANNERS, COMEDY OF, a comedy which shows and satirizes the manners and conventions of contemporary upper-class society.

MARXISTS, critics and authors who believe that literature should interpret life in accordance with the social and economic doctrines of Karl Marx (1818-1883). 144.

MEANINGS, 110-135, 180, 207; in poetry, 648; related to character, 55.

MELODRAMA, 422.

METAPHOR, an implied comparison. 113, 649.

METAPHYSICAL POETRY, poetry characterized by subtleties of thought and expression. Most frequently the term is applied to the work of seventeenth-century poets like Donne and Herbert.

METER, 645.

METONYMY, a figure of speech using an associated idea for the one meant, as a cause for an effect, an effect for a cause, the container for the thing contained, an attribute of an object for the object itself.

Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth *and* cumbrous pomp *repose.*

MONOLOGUE, the direct representation of the speech or thought of a single character; e.g., *My Last Duchess,* 60.

MOTIVATION, the depiction of the personalities and of the circumstances acting upon them in an imaginative work which makes certain actions of theirs probable or inevitable. 151, 419.

NATURALISM, an extreme form of realism which emphasizes scientific aspects of heredity and environment, and which is relatively very frank in its presentation of unpleasant details.

OBJECTIVE PRESENTATION, (1) with regard to the author, a presentation which involves a minimum of the overt expression of the author's feelings; (2) with regard

to the character, the objective or dramatic point of view. 209, 211, 419.

OBLIGATORY SCENE, the scene in which the main conflict in a literary work reaches a decisive stage. It is called "obligatory" since ordinarily the author is obliged to give dramatic treatment to this important happening.

ODE, a formal, dignified, and elaborate poem written for a special purpose and often for a special occasion. The *regular* or *Pindaric* ode, designed to be chanted by a chorus, has three parts: the strophe, antistrophe, and epode. The *stanzaic* or *Horatian* ode breaks with this formality but is written in regular stanzas. The *irregular* ode follows no set pattern. 426.

OMNISCIENCE, the point of view of an author who sees and records what is going on in the hearts and minds of all the characters. 210.

ONOMATOPOEIA, a device by which sound is suited to the sense. 84.

OTTAVA RIMA, see *stanza.*

PARABLE, a brief fictional work which concretely illustrates an abstract idea or ideas; for example, Christ's parable of the prodigal son.

PARADOX, a statement which is or which seems to be self-contradictory.

PARODY, 108.

PASTICHE, 108.

PENTAMETER, 646.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE, narrative written in the first person. 210ff.

PERSONALITY, (1) of authors, 95ff.; 166-176; (2) of characters, 52-53.

PERSONIFICATION, a figure of speech in which human qualities are attributed to inanimate objects or to abstract qualities. 649.

PETRARCHAN SONNET, 646f. See also *sonnet.*

PLOT, the patterned sequence of happenings which makes up an imaginative narrative. The term is variously defined, sometimes as the structure of action, sometimes as a series of stages in a conflict, etc. 37, 70-71, 418. See also *happenings,* 36-51.

POETRY, 83f., 156f., 176f., 184, 644-766.

POINT OF VIEW, 209-212.

PRIMITIVISTS, authors and critics who believe that the primitive and universal emotions related to physical pleasure or pain are those most significant both in life and art.

PROSODY, the science or art of metrical structure. More specifically the term is used to designate a particular theory or practice in versification, like Keats' *prosody.*

PROTAGONIST (from a Greek word meaning "first contestant"), the leading figure in a narrative. 54, 421.

PYRRHUS, 646.

RAISONNEUR, a character in a drama or fictional work who voices and supports the attitude of the author concerning the problem involved.

REALISM, variously defined, has been characterized by James Weber Linn and Houghton Taylor, in *A Foreword to Fiction,* as "the tendency to accept in *some way* the limitations which actual circumstances put on human desires and motives, and to portray *some* of the effects of these circumstances." They continue, "One must say *some* because no realist, even the apparently most unselective, can make clear all the kinds of limitation at once. But if the novelist shows even one aspect of the confining power of actuality, if he shows in any way how life actually affects people, what feelings and motives they actually have, he is to that extent a realist." 147.

RESOLUTION OF PLOT, see *denouement.*

REVERSAL, 38, 53.

RHYME, similarity in the terminal sounds of words. By nature, rhyme can be perfect (*cloud, proud*), imperfect (*woman, human*), apparent (*gone, bone*), and identical (*light,* used in two senses). According to the placement of words in poetry, rhyme can be tail or terminal (words at the ends of lines rhyming), internal (word within a line rhyming with end word), and initial (beginning words rhyming). Any of these can, in turn, be masculine (ending on an accented syllable), or

feminine (ending on an unaccented syllable). 156, 646f.

RHYTHM, the cadence created chiefly by the accent pattern, though other elements like sound values and sentence structure are contributory causes. 83-84; in poetry, 94, 645-646, 650.

RIME ROYAL, see *stanza.*

ROMANTICISM, the opposite of realism in the sense that it is a tendency to avoid accepting the limitations which actual circumstances put on human desires and motives. Contrary to realism, romanticism stresses the exotic rather than the ordinary, the individual rather than society as a whole, the subjective rather than the objective, the idealistic rather than the skeptical, a disregard for laws and conventions rather than a resignation to them in the belief that they are irresistible.

RUN-ON LINE, a line of poetry in which the sense flows without stop to the succeeding line. A run-on line is easily recognized by the absence of any end punctuation.

SATIRE, a witty or humorous criticism, in fiction, drama, or poetry, of some individual, class, institution, or idea.

SCENE, in drama, a division of an act or of a whole play which indicates (1) a stage in the action, (2) a shift in place, or (3) a change in the number of actors on the stage. 420. As background, see *setting,* 70-80.

SCENE À FAIRE, see *obligatory scene.*

SELECTION, 36-37, 79, 82, 647f.

SENTENCES, 83-84, 85.

SENTIMENTALISM, excessive emotional response—on the part of a character, the author, or the reader—to life or to an imaginative work or some element in an imaginative work.

SETTING, 70-80, 97, 207, 209, 644.

SHAKESPEARIAN SONNET, see *sonnet.*

SHORT STORY, 206-417.

SIBILANTS, sounds which resemble hissing. In English the sibilants are *s, z, sh, zh, ch,* and *j.* 84.

SIMILE, a stated comparison, usually distinguishable because of the presence of the word *like* or *as.* 82, 649.

SOLILOQUY, a speech revealing the thoughts and feelings of a character in a play, and usually delivered when the character is alone on the stage. 419.

SONNET, a short, formalized, lyrical poem containing fourteen lines and written in iambic pentameter. The *Italian* or *Petrarchan* sonnet contains an octet (eight lines) rhyming *abba abba,* and a sestet (six lines) most frequently rhyming *cde cde* or *cdc dcd.* The *English* or *Shakespearian* sonnet contains three quatrains and a couplet, and rhymes *abab cdcd efef gg.* A variation on this is the *Spenserian* sonnet, which rhymes *abab bcbc cdcd ee.* Much of the skill in writing sonnets is in making thought breaks correspond with rhyme breaks. 646f.

SPENSERIAN SONNET, see *sonnet.*

SPENSERIAN STANZA, a nine-line stanza rhyming *ababbcbcc.* The first eight lines are iambic pentameter; the last is iambic hexameter or an Alexandrine.

SPONDEE, 646.

STANZA, a group of lines composing a division within a poem. Usually these divisions are relatively short and have the same pattern. The most familiar stanzas are the *quatrain* (four lines), *quintain* (five lines), *sextain* (six lines), and *octave* (eight lines). A few special forms are the *heroic stanza* (an iambic pentameter quatrain with alternate lines rhyming), *ballad stanza* (alternating tetrameter and trimeter iambic lines which form a quatrain rhyming *abcb*), *rime royal* (a seven-line stanza of iambic pentameter rhyming *ababbcc*), and *ottava rima* (an iambic pentameter octave rhyming *abababcc*). 156, 176f.

STOCK CHARACTER, one conventionally associated with certain types of dramas or scenes; e.g., the villain in the old-fashioned melodrama who threatens to foreclose the mortgage on the farm. 150.

STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS, 211.

STRUCTURE, the selection, arrangement, and handling of details and elements in an imaginative work which give the work the form and unity it has, 156f., 179f.

STYLE, variously defined, a term used to signify (1) the language of an author, (2) the distinctive handling of language by an author, (3) the distinctive craftsmanship in general of an imaginative artist. 92f., 99.

SUBJECTIVE PRESENTATION, presentation which stresses the author's reaction to his material rather than the material itself.

SUSPENSE, (1) the excited interest of reader or spectator in what will happen next, (2) the quality or form of the work which excites such an interest.

SYMBOL, anything used to represent something else, as a word is used to represent an idea. In literature the term usually refers to a concrete image employed to designate an abstract quality or concept. 112-113.

SYNECDOCHE, a figure of speech in which a part is used for a whole or a whole for a part. *The* world *is too much with us*

TECHNIQUE, the craftsmanship employed by the author to give a literary work form and significance. 169.

TETRAMETER, 646.

THEME, 115f., 209.

THESIS, the theme, proposition, or central idea.

THRENODY, a poem in which the poet somberly writes of death and of its implications.

TONE, 95-109, 112, 207.

TONE-COLOR, the effect achieved by the arrangement of sounds. Chiefly it is dependent upon the natural pitch of vowel sounds and upon the emotional responses which we make to different sounds. Poe's *The Bells* is an exercise in tone-color. For words quoted from it, see 648. See also 84, 156.

TRAGEDY, 421ff.

TRITENESS, the quality of an artistic work which derives from the author's using phrasings or materials which have been used in other works until the reader has become tired of them.

TROCHEE, 645.

UNATTRACTIVE CHARACTER, one toward whom the reader is generally unsympathetic. 54, 100.

UNITIES, DRAMATIC, elements in drama wrongly ascribed to Aristotle and rigidly prescribed by French classicists. These include unity of time (a twenty-four-hour period), of place (one setting), and of action (one main action).

UNITY, the quality achieved by an artistic work when everything in it is so interrelated as to form a complete whole. 37f., 162, 177, 206ff.

VERSE, a line or stanza of poetry. The term also designates poetry in general.

VERSIFICATION, the art or science of metrical composition.

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